

Disciplinary-Professional Relations in an Era of Anthropological Engagement

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This essay is devoted to exploring the nature, roles, and relationships of the anthropological discipline and its professions over time and their implications for matters of policy and practice in American society. The interdependence of discipline and profession in the emergence of anthropology is considered first, setting the stage for reflecting upon several matters: (1) lessons drawn from the history of British colonialism and other engagements; (2) the difference between problems *of* others and problems *for* others; and (3) a contemporary ease involving disciplinary-professional-boundary tensions. This discussion raises the question of whether anthropology is approaching the issue of engagement with contemporary problem contexts as innovatively and creatively as we might, considering all that we know of our history and the challenges facing us today.

Key words: discipline, profession, British colonialism, ethics, military

Background: Discipline and Profession

Since this essay considers the relationship between *discipline* and *profession* in anthropology, it is important to distinguish between these constructs. The modern use of the term *profession* evolved during the English Renaissance, when it came to signify a vocation or occupation in which an individual “professed” to some knowledge that could be *used or applied to the affairs of others*, or in the practice of an art founded upon a branch of science (OED 1989:572-73). The earliest use of the term *discipline* was in the context of instruction that is imparted to disciples or scholars; alternately, it meant learning, education, or schooling imparted through exercises or practice. Soon, it was used to refer to a branch of instruction or education, or a department or branch of science or art in an educational context, thus, implying a structure of knowledge (OED 1989:734-36). Eventually, a related meaning developed, focusing upon the instruction that shapes the proper conduct, as well as the mental and moral characteristics, of a pupil.

The term *discipline*, then, concerns the transfer of knowledge and ethics to students in an educational context, while the

term *profession* signifies a promise to deliver skills that will enable a practitioner to earn a living through service to others. Most, if not all, professions rely upon disciplines to provide the skills that practitioners offer as a means of earning their living. Thus, many professions rest upon the knowledge and courses of instruction provided to students within disciplines. Disciplines and professions appear to be interdependent in that professions are the means to livelihoods, and disciplines often hold a monopoly on granting credentials that are the gateway to the professions (Reader 1966).

Yet, professions have not always relied upon disciplines to impart gateway skills. At times, classical education or practical training has been preferred (see Kuklick 1991), and universities have not always been equipped to support professional training (Stocking 1995). Thus, to view disciplines as always existing prior to professions is to put a contemporary spin on the past. For example, prior to the 20th century, anthropology was neither a discipline nor a profession, and it was not entirely clear that it would become either. Attaining professional status had to be attempted more than once, using various institutional strategies (Kuklick 1991; Mills 2002; Pels and Saleminck 1999; Stocking 1995).

This history sheds light on some of the nuances of global-institutional politics and agency that have contributed to ethical quandaries in American anthropology for nearly four decades. One of these is a question regarding the propriety of practice related to social change that may call for cooperation with powerful institutions (e.g., defense or security agencies, global corporations), and whether such practice is consonant with anthropologists’ ethical responsibilities. Such issues can be traced back to British and other social anthropologists who attempted colonial reform (Firth 1976; Stocking 1995). By

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exploring this history, we may possibly view current dilemmas from a vantage point that provides alternative paths to transcendence (Asad 1973).

Relations between anthropological disciplines and professions are also of concern to applied and practicing anthropologists. There are cases in which the capacity of professional anthropologists to pursue legitimate and ethical practice is influenced by discipline-oriented professionals. This essay suggests that, even though ethical guidelines should be developed and disseminated within the framework of a discipline, ethical *guidelines* created within the context of one profession should not necessarily become the basis for specific policy *rulings* within the context of another.

The Struggle for Professional Standing in Anthropology

Prior to the 20th century, anthropologists were not educated in a discipline that prepared them for the practice of their profession; they were classically trained amateurs, usually gentlemen with leisure to explore their interests, and so-called “practical men” who gained what they knew through occupational life (e.g., the entrepreneurial industrialist, colonial administrators) (see Coleman 1973; Kuklick 1991; Stocking 1995). Resources for anthropological research were sparse and largely produced from membership subscriptions, small grants, and donations from wealthy participants (Stocking 1995). Between the close of the nineteenth and middle of the twentieth centuries, however, anthropology and colonialism were to witness startling changes, and with those changes the two phenomena became consciously intertwined in one another’s destinies (Mills 2002). This dual involvement strategically engendered the establishment of social anthropology as a profession and a discipline.

Three different strategies or models for the establishment of social anthropology as a distinctive profession emerged: (1) the government bureau strategy, (2) the colonial administration strategy, and (3) the academic discipline strategy. These did not emerge in perfect chronological sequence, but overlapped one another, as they competed for funding, approval by authorities, and, ultimately, for success or failure. They differed along one or more dimensions, including sources of funding, emphasis on research versus teaching, and the relationship of policy decision-making to knowledge production. The differences between the strategies are relevant to discussions and debates that are current in American anthropology today.

The Government Bureau Strategy

Toward the end of the 19th century, proponents sought to make anthropology a recognized profession and a university subject, based on the notion of anthropology as an aid both in the scientific understanding of human behavior and in practical decision-making related to the colonial endeavor (Stocking 1995). Many of those then interested in anthropology had not been to university; they were active in worldly

affairs and saw anthropology as a *technical skill*, such as medicine or law, which required practical certification *outside* the university (Kuklick 1991). Since anthropologists would not contract with individuals for their employ (as physicians or lawyers do) and the universities were not well funded, it was believed that government might be the best hope for funding and employment, though museums and universities also were expected to contribute.

A proposal was developed for a government-supported Imperial Bureau of Ethnology with dual objectives: to record human varieties that were rapidly disappearing and, thus, increase scientific knowledge, and to interpret the cultures of peoples under British domination and, thus, assist colonial administrators (Kuklick 1991; see also Stocking 1995). Although the ethnological bureau was established in the British Museum under C. H. Read (Kuklick 1991), there were never enough funds provided to realize its accomplishment, and the “practical men” who staffed colonial administrations generally rebuffed the advice of anthropologists as impractical and esoteric (Kuper 1983).

The Colonial Administration Strategy

Parallel to the government bureau strategy was an effort to offer the teaching of anthropology to colonial administrators, missionaries, and traders both in the universities of Great Britain and in the Empire Dominions. The earliest notions of institutionalizing anthropology in the academy derived from discourse among colonial administrators regarding “desirable contact with the colonized,” and from this, anthropologists attempted to shape an academic curriculum for colonial ethnography, a move that was welcomed by authorities keen to press forward their agenda for social engineering in a welfare state (Pels and Saleminck 1999). It was in curricula such as these that the name “applied anthropology” first emerged. This particular model of professionalization rested upon a triadic relationship among academic anthropologists (to deliver instruction in universities or schools), colonial administrators (to conduct research, essentially becoming ethnographers), and “subject peoples” (as objects of research) (Pels and Saleminck 1999). Funding came from the colonies if ethnographers were employed by the colonial state as “government anthropologists” or from universities where lecturer positions or chairs in anthropology were established.

Ultimately, the parallel strategies of government bureau and colonial administration did not succeed. Despite efforts to “discipline” colonial administrators with anthropological training, competition with and disdain from “practical men” within the colonies (essentially the practitioners of colonialism), together with the virtual lack of a body of theory in which to frame training, appears to have stifled a professional position for anthropologists within the British Empire. The proponents of anthropology could argue that their approaches were “useful,” but the same could be said of the “practical men” who were already filling the professional niche in question as colonial administrators. Without a

source of funding, would-be professional anthropologists had no means to sustain themselves in the conduct of fieldwork, and only a small number could support themselves through teaching courses to colonial officials, who in turn had little incentive to support their teachers' research.

One interpretation of the situation is that a distinctive profession of anthropology qua anthropology (i.e., not based upon another profession, such as colonial administration) could not be established without a recognized academic discipline. The strategy needed to develop such a discipline emerged not from Great Britain but from the United States, and not from colonial administration but from a corporate foundation.

The Academic Discipline Strategy

A resolution to the funding problem for anthropological research came from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial in the United States. When Beardsley Rumel (Ph.D. in psychology, Chicago) was appointed director of the Memorial in 1922, he shifted its focus from social welfare concerns to basic social science that could provide a "scientific basis of social welfare," and the Memorial began to fund social scientists in the United States and Great Britain (Goody 1995). A goal of the Memorial was to develop the social sciences from a state of conceptual abstraction toward an emphasis on empirical observation.

Bronislaw Malinowski, a critic of the ethnographic research undertaken by "practical men," proposed that the London School of Economics (LSE) seek Rockefeller Foundation fellowships and grants to enable academically based anthropologists to engage in field research in the African colonies (Goody 1995). The Foundation made grants for this purpose in the 1920s and was a primary contributor of monies for anthropological research to British social anthropology during the 1930s (Goody 1995; Stocking 1995). A new model of professional anthropology thus emerged, with academically based anthropologists delivering both research and instruction and with funding provided by an assortment of agencies through universities and other research-oriented institutions. Graduates from such doctoral training programs became academic anthropologists in other universities as anthropology entered a period of expansion.

A. R. Radcliffe-Brown also established a productive relationship with the Rockefeller Foundation, though his views regarding the relationship between anthropological research and policy differed significantly from Malinowski's. Malinowski aggressively promoted the practical value of anthropology and believed that applied anthropology could address contemporary problems and even attempt to "control" change in societies. Radcliffe-Brown, on the other hand, demurred that pure science must develop prior to the application of knowledge, and that anthropologists should not be involved in policy interventions, nor should they attach any judgments of value to their objects of study.

These differences sharpened during the 1940s when funding for fieldwork in British social anthropology shifted from the

United States to the British Colonial Social Science Research Council (CSSRC), a government body patterned after the Social Science Research Council in the United States and another beneficiary of the Rockefeller Foundation (Goody 1995). With this shift, a struggle emerged in British social anthropology. Anthropologists at the LSE (e.g., Audrey Richards and Raymond Firth) were reformers who believed that they could cooperate with colonial bureaucrats to improve the situation of colonial subjects. Other anthropologists, such as Max Gluckman at Oxford, did not approve of anthropological involvement in colonial policy or pragmatic problems of the state. Gluckman, who had founded his own hybrid of Marxian thought and Durkheimian structuralism, was an open political activist who supported radical causes related to social justice (Firth 1976). Gluckman disagreed that academics should support the "demands of the colonial government for research workers" and feared that a focus on practical problems would lead to the "lowering of professional standards" (cf. Mills 2002).

Over time, Oxford became something of a center of resistance against anthropologists affiliated with the LSE. Tensions between the two camps involved not only ideology, politics, and personalities, but also competition for resources. Even though the Oxford anthropologists appeared to oppose colonialism, their goal was to gain control of funding from the CSSRC for their own purposes—academic research within the colonial context (and ultimately, they succeeded in gaining such influence). Regardless, the academic discipline strategy was an overall success. It appears that the discipline and profession had to emerge simultaneously, as professional standing required an independent base of legitimacy and authority in academia—not simply a practical utility—although without a pragmatic agenda at the outset there would have been no opportunity for theory or methodology to advance. The symbiotic interaction or interdependency of theory and pragmatics is important to acknowledge.

Reflecting Upon the Historical Case: A Matter of Legitimacy

A discipline and its cognate profession(s) do not exist in a vacuum. In order to establish a profession, there must be a consensus within the social-institutional context that it would bring value to the affairs of others; or, to put it another way, a profession must establish its legitimacy. Kuklick (1991) has argued that in early 20th-century Britain, anthropology gained legitimacy for three reasons: (1) its promoters were prominent, respected figures in the scientific establishment; (2) the state was able to strengthen and promote its colonial agenda through anthropological research and the emergence of a "science" or theory (see also Mills 2002); (3) and anthropology was incorporated as "part of the repertoire of the conventionally cultured educated person," suggesting a general public interest in the subject. All of these influences in concert helped to establish anthropology as a legitimate academic discipline, which, in turn, enabled the establishment of permanent university posts (i.e., a profession).

The knowledge or learning that is constructed within the context of a discipline's development must be related in some way to that profession's role(s) in society. While the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake remains an Aristotelian ideal (*theoria*), it is necessary, but not sufficient, for sustainability of a profession (Flyvberg 2004). "Disciplinary problems," which are defined by Ong and Collier (2005:4) as "domains in which the forms and values of individuals and collective existence are problematized or at stake, in the sense that they are subject to technological, political, and ethical reflection and intervention," are also factors. The role of the larger society with respect to such problems or issues is essential to the question of legitimacy—society and institutional actors have expectations for professions that should be understood and acknowledged.

A central problem in anthropology is the relationship between the core discipline and its professions. Since much of the discipline remains focused on teaching and research concerning formerly colonized peoples (i.e., "exotic" societies; Shankman and Ehlers 2000), relations with the state or corporations often are viewed as analogous in some way to neo-colonialism (Ferguson 1997). While anthropologists working with state or corporate actors often engage in research or teaching, they also may be involved in interventions, and it is these interventions that create controversy (Bennett 1996). Those who prefer distance generally object to intervention, while those who choose to engage may believe that distance is not appropriate or not an option, given the context (see Schensul and Schensul 1992; van Willigen 2002).

The schism between anthropologists who maintain their distance from powerful institutions and those who join professions that are in some way connected to them recalls the LSE-Oxford disjuncture. Although the term "pure" anthropology is no longer in common use, the actual situation on the ground probably has not changed all that much. Critical anthropology may be interpreted as an effort to achieve "purity," while "institutional" anthropologists (medical, educational, legal) (Bennett 1996) may adopt reformist agendas, interventions, or hopes for systemic change in their agendas and activities.

The dichotomy between academic/discipline-oriented professionals and "other" professionals appears to replicate itself when new anthropological subfields emerge. Ferguson (1997:169) has discussed the "evil twin" syndrome that afflicts anthropology in the area of development:

We are left then, with a curious dual organization binding anthropology to its evil twin: the field that fetishizes the local, the autonomous, the traditional, locked in a strange, agonistic dance with the field that, through the magic of development, would destroy locality, autonomy, and tradition in the name of becoming modern. Anthropology is left with a distinct resentment of its evil twin, Development, but also with a certain intimacy, and an uneasy recognition of a disturbing inverted resemblance.

A single discipline binds us, yet we enact our professional practice in (sometimes) "inverted" social contexts: one discipline,

multiple professions. Other "evil twins" have emerged in the study and practice of corporations and business firms. Now it appears that the twins may be birthed once more in the military, intelligence, and security fields (the term *intelligence* as used here refers to its colloquial meaning; e.g., Albro 2006; Foshier 2007; Price 2007). Anthropology appears to be experiencing a schismatic dualism that is separating the core discipline from some of its professions in a way that could be injurious over the long term. The legitimacy of anthropology depends on social and public perceptions of the field's role in the larger society. Legitimacy required decades to gain and could erode in the same way it was built.

Interpreting the History of British Social Anthropology and Other Contemporary Engagements

One lesson from the partially enshrouded past seems to be that problems presented within certain institutional contexts (e.g., the state, corporations) carry grave risks and, therefore, may best be avoided. Yet, is this the primary lesson that should be drawn from the history of British social anthropology? Research conducted in colonialist environments gave rise to functionalism and structural functionalism, which provided social anthropology with sufficient intellectual heft to become an academic sub-discipline (distinct from physical anthropology and archeology). The argument here is not that the ends justify the means. Rather, our discomfort regarding the interaction between anthropology and colonialism should not engender a mechanical objection to association between our discipline, its professions, and political/economic institutions. Such prohibitions, which may be or become political or ideological in nature, forestall our understanding rather than encourage our enlightenment.

The age-old philosophical and institutional tradition that advocates the separation of lofty contemplation from the purposes of practical utility, which has been conceptualized in the differentiation between "pure" research or science on the one hand and "applied" research or technology on the other, might not provide the most effective approach to engagement. In fact, the pressures emanating from a social context may help drive intellectual creativity. Advances in disciplinary learning may follow from inquiry situated in a problem-oriented surrounding where researchers pursue questions of interest to both their discipline and their society.

The careers of several significant figures did not follow the "pure" versus "applied" pathway in important ways. For example, the investigations of Louis Pasteur crossed the lines between "pure" scientific discovery and "applied" invention many times and appeared to gain intellectual momentum from such hybridization. In his writing about Pasteur, Donald E. Stokes (1997) criticizes the "pure" versus "applied" dichotomy as a reification of idealism. He argues that research has two distinct aspects: one a fundamental dimension that pursues questions of interest to disciplines; the other a problem-oriented dimension related to the issues of a society or constituency. While a researcher may choose

to address only one of these dimensions, Stokes believes that the most significant research—that which yields the greatest insights and most lasting impact over time—is informed by both simultaneously. Stokes called the fusion of these two dimensions “Pasteur’s Quadrant” (a quadrant in a two-by-two matrix that crosses both dimensions), and he contrasted this quadrant with one represented by the work of Niels Bohr, whose quest for a model atomic structure was “a voyage of pure discovery,” and with one represented by the work of Thomas Edison, who cared only for invention and not the underlying science (Stokes 1997).

In the history of American anthropology, W. Lloyd Warner’s Yankee City Study may be viewed as consonant within Pasteur’s Quadrant. This study was not “applied” in the usual sense of focusing on specific problems originating outside anthropology, but rather sought to understand contemporary American society and its problems through ethnographic inquiry in the context of a small town. Warner appears to have created a “third way” to envision anthropology that is neither strictly “pure” nor “applied,” but that imaginatively integrates both fundamental and urgent questions to seek the frontier of learning and could serve as a model for what a fundamental, engaged, and urgent anthropology might become.

If Stokes’ thesis regarding Pasteur’s Quadrant has merit, then problem-oriented contexts should generate intellectual ferment not only among individual practitioners, but also at larger scales. David Frank and Jay Gabler’s (2006) examination of the rise and fall of entire fields of academic disciplines across the globe provides a lens with which to examine this proposition.

Frank and Gabler’s (2006) data show that universities in the British Commonwealth were dominated by the natural sciences in 1915 (nearly 60% of faculty), with the humanities taking second position (more than 30%), and the social sciences barely on the register (with less than 10%). The natural sciences peaked around the time of World War II and then experienced a slight downward drift. Intriguingly, the humanities and the social sciences then traded places with the humanities experiencing a prolonged decline and the social sciences showing a marked increase, particularly up until the 1970s. By 1995, the social sciences had increased to nearly 30 percent of the faculty composition, while the humanities comprised around 20 percent.

Frank and Gabler attribute these trends to shifts in global-institutional forms that have taken focus away from disciplines with the least practical emphasis and toward those with the most. It is not that social science theory has been confirmed. Rather, the social sciences claim to address a number of problems with pragmatic approaches, in some cases with what appear to be short- or intermediate-term “solutions” (e.g., cognitive therapy, forensic science, risk assessment). Institutional actors appear to prefer approaches that offer coping strategies over those that provide only critique. In this context, it is noteworthy that American anthropology as a *discipline* has experienced a relative movement away from the social sciences and toward the humanities for the

past quarter century (what some have called the “cultural turn.”) This shift has been accompanied by an increasing emphasis on criticism (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Marcus and Fischer 1986) and, at times, a hesitancy or reluctance to offer pragmatic approaches to institutional actors (Pels and Salemink 2006).

Frank and Gabler (2006) have argued that there may be a tendency in anthropology to reproduce binary divisions, premised upon assumptions that are unstated or untested empirically (i.e., a “culture of anthropology.”) Such a tendency (if it exists) may stem from the historical roots of the discipline and its central organizing principles, which were evolutionary, hierarchical, and classificatory (see also Ferguson 1997). As much as anthropology has done to compensate for the biases of its colonialist legacy, the founding principles appear to be (at least partially) reproduced in the academic professional, geographical, and power/status preferences of the discipline’s fieldwork choices (e.g., in “exotic” locales, with relatively powerless peoples) (Shankman and Ehlers 2000) and in the continual spinning-off of new kinds of “evil twins.” A historical tendency toward categorical or binary divisions may be at least partially responsible for tensions between the discipline of anthropology and its ramifying professions.

Problems of Others and Problems for Others

The relationships between disciplinary problems and the problems of others beyond anthropology have shifted in significant ways, raising hopes for new forms of engaged inquiry and praxis that transcend the old distinction between “pure” and “applied” anthropology. Anthropologists are concerned with the problems of others and, to a certain extent, others’ problems *are* our problems—epistemologically, methodologically, ethically, and even politically (Ong and Collier 2005; Pels and Salemink 2006).

In contemporary terms, the issue may not be so much what kinds of issues or problems the anthropologist is interested in or working on, but *for whom* or *with whom* the anthropologist is working—meaning (in literal terms) what exactly are the anthropologist’s terms of employment? This question sometimes comes down to a matter of profession, and since a significant number of anthropologists who belong to the *academic* profession have a certain degree of latitude in selecting the courses they teach, the content of these courses, and the subjects they pursue in research, there is a tendency to assume that “academic freedom” is a right or a responsibility of all anthropologists and that those who do not exercise this assumed prerogative are in some way deficient.

For instance, in response to a query in the *Anthropology News* (Peacock 2007) regarding whether or not announcements of fellowships, grants, or job openings sponsored by intelligence and military agencies should be published, one anthropologist answered that it depends on:

...the conditions under which anthropologists are hired. For me, that would mean no strings attached, for example,

the right to ask whatever question the researcher wishes, provided it is generally relevant to intelligence or military; freedom to publish whatever the researcher deems important; the right to an ethic of research that allows the anthropologist to study "up, down or sideways," e.g., study the designated enemy or the interaction between both; that the military recognize our professional code of conduct both manifest and latent; that human rights and the Geneva Convention not be violated. In other words, the intelligence and/or military agencies would be funding transparent, non-censored work that befits a democratic country. (Nader 2007:5)

These are laudable criteria for selection of projects and sponsors, yet the commentary carries the implication that something like "academic freedom" is required, and nothing less will do. There is no acknowledgement in such a fiercely independent stance of a legitimating role for the larger society that is essential to professional status, and, in some ways, such a purist posture resembles the pre-professional position from which educated gentlemen pursued their intellectual interests, without much regard for larger obligations beyond family and class (see Kuklick 1991).

Ironically, the expansion of anthropological professions beyond the academy is in part a direct result of academic professionals' actions, at least within the United States. The number of anthropology Ph.D.s in the United States has increased by 19 percent over the past decade (National Science Foundation 2006), while the number of academic positions available to them in the discipline has declined by around 15 percent over the same period (based upon an analysis of position announcements in the *Anthropology Newsletter*, using methodology developed by Givens, Evans, and Jablonski 1997). As a result, the academic profession is producing a substantial number of professional anthropologists who have no choice but to practice in extra-academic professional niches. Despite these trends, many faculty members in Ph.D. producing departments continue to prepare their doctoral students for academic roles, though the reality of the professional employment situation appears to be out of synch with this process. Who or what is watching over the entire process of Ph.D. production in the United States is anyone's guess. The commons of our discipline appears to be left up to the individual to navigate.

The Center for Innovation and Research in Graduate Education (CIRGE) at the University of Washington in Seattle recently completed a survey of relatively new social science Ph.D.s in six fields, including anthropology, yielding career data spanning from the beginning of graduate school to about six to 10 years out from the doctorate (Rudd et al. n.d.). According to the CIRGE survey ($N=371$), within six to 10 years of completing the Ph.D., 19 percent of anthropologists were employed as tenured faculty, 34 percent were in tenure track roles, 13 percent were in non-track positions, and another 12 percent were in other academic jobs not leading to tenure. The remaining 22 percent found employment in business or industry (7%), government (7%), or the non-profit sector (8%). Though most anthropology Ph.D.s were employed

full time (82%) in jobs they found satisfying, anthropologists were less likely to be tenured than other social scientists in the CIRGE survey. Though more than three-quarters rated preparation in critical thinking as excellent, and half rated data analysis and synthesis preparation excellent (Rudd et al. n.d.), more than two-thirds rated their doctoral program's preparation in skills such as presenting, writing, publishing, and grant writing as adequate or poor.

Anthropology's ambivalence toward professions beyond the academy is reflected in the CIRGE data. Serious attention often is focused on reproducing the next generation of scholars, yet less effort may be given to those who are headed for other destinations. The component of anthropology reserved for the knowledge and skills of trans-disciplinary professions often is demarcated as "applied" and limited to certain specialized courses, programs, or departments. The magnitude of this mismatch is rarely addressed and can only be glimpsed from the CIRGE survey; the "anthropological commons" has no accurate measure of this phenomenon.

A Case Illustration of Disciplinary-Professional Boundary Tensions

Disciplines are intended to shape proper conduct, as well as mental and moral characteristics of persons who wish to practice as professionals. Codes of professional conduct (ethics) translate societal morality into terms that make individuals responsible to the society in which they practice (Killian and Smetana 2006); professional codes signal to society what forms of conduct are considered appropriate and what are not, to protect professionals, the profession, and the public from abuse by power-holders. In the United States, the most elaborate code of professional conduct for anthropologists has been developed by the American Anthropological Association (AAA), which promulgated its first Principles of Professional Responsibility in 1971 during a number of ethical crises in the Vietnam era related to anthropological involvement in counterinsurgency activity (see Horowitz 1967).

Given their nature as normative structures (i.e., what professionals *should* do, but not necessarily what they *actually* do), it seems reasonable to consider ethical codes a form of "cultural text" that embody a deeper structure of moral (socially constructed) meanings regarding what is "good" or "right" (and by implication, what is "bad" or "wrong") within a professional context. Ethical codes might also reflect discourse regarding underlying relations of power within a professional community or set of communities, with larger and more powerful communities embedding their norms in the code on a disproportionate basis. In anthropology, the academic profession has had the largest influence over the AAA Code of Ethics (about 80% of the members of the AAA hold academic appointments), which other professionals are expected to adhere to even though the code does not provide specific guidelines for some forms of professional practice (e.g., policy-making) and does not always recognize the nuances of professional practice in non-academic settings.

A recent ethical controversy illustrates the way in which the AAA Code of Ethics may be invoked as a normative structure and a means of enforcing the academic discipline strategy (i.e., academic priorities) among professionals. It also may act to replicate old fault lines in anthropology that have been obscured by place and time (e.g., reformism vs. resistance), reflecting and reinforcing tensions at the boundaries of discipline and profession(s), as anthropologists grapple with new and emerging problem contexts.

The Human Terrain System (HTS) and Human Terrain Team (HTT) reflect one aspect of a new and more sophisticated approach to counterinsurgency that was developed and deployed in the global “War on Terror” (Kipp et al. 2006; Ricks 2008). They also reflect one (rather limited, yet highly charged) way in which anthropologists have recently been engaged with military institutions. The new counterinsurgency approach focuses upon “winning the hearts and minds” of the people through enhanced interaction and understanding between military personnel and local populations, thereby potentially reducing violence (Rohde 2007). The HTS/HTT approach is designed (theoretically) to enhance cultural understanding, intelligence, and operations of military commanders and their troops on the ground. The “human terrain” in question is defined as the “social, ethnographic, cultural, economic, and political elements among whom a (military) force is operating” (Kipp et al. 2006:9); the team is the social science support provided to a commander and his/her staff to understand and analyze it. The focus on counterinsurgency is important, as there is ambiguity regarding the tactics that may be used to “counter” insurgency. Information gleaned from anthropological reports could be interpreted and/or acted upon in varying ways, including the targeting of antagonists, leading to human deaths (e.g., see Price 2008).

Specifically, a HTT is a group of professionals that includes social scientists (potentially anthropologists), a military team leader, and additional research analysts (Kipp et al. 2006). Such teams are embedded with United States Army units and deployed into conflict zones to support military commanders at the Army Brigade (Army) and Regimental (United States Marine Corps) Combat Team level. The teams gather information openly (not covertly), locally, and from a variety of sources (contractors, local people), and they use social science concepts and methods to analyze and interpret the information and respond to questions from their commanders. The HTS concept involves a Reachback Research Center (RRC) where data is collated, catalogued, and placed into a central database to be (again, theoretically) accessible to commanders as they rotate through field assignments. The intent is to access a network of experts throughout government and academia. RRC personnel are supposed to periodically rotate in-theatre to reinforce the knowledge and skills of the HTTs (Kipp et al. 2006; McFate 2005). Whether the enactment of HTS/HTT represents *research* as defined under the Common Rule (a federal policy regarding Human Subjects Protection) that would make HTTs subject

to Institutional Review Board oversight, or *intelligence collection* as defined by the military and defense communities and subject to another set of regulations (or whether it is something else) remains one of the key issues to be resolved.

An ethical controversy surrounding the HTS/HTT concepts and their implementation is relevant to the relationship between discipline and professions in anthropology and raises concerns regarding ethical discourse and power relationships among professional communities. The process and results of a debate surrounding HTSs/HTTs within the AAA reveals the prominence of the academic discipline strategy and the relative weakening of voices from other professions that have just as much at stake.

On October 31, 2007, the Executive Board (EB) of the AAA issued a statement disapproving of HTS/HTT on ethical grounds, largely on the basis of two brief memoranda issued by an Ad Hoc Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with United States Security and Intelligence Communities (CEAUSSIC). It should be noted at the outset that CEAUSSIC (n.d.a) had not been established to investigate HTS/HTT, nor did it have sufficient time or resources to gather empirical information regarding these phenomena (CEAUSSIC n.d.d), but drew much of its information on HTS/HTT from news items. The substantive rationale for CEAUSSIC had been established by the AAA in January 2006 for the purpose of exploring issues surrounding the publication of announcements of fellowships, grants, or job opportunities sponsored by intelligence and/or military agencies (see Peacock 2007). The CEAUSSIC (n.d.b) explicitly cautioned the AAA EB against reliance on journalistic reporting in making decisions regarding HTS/HTT, as such reports had not conveyed nuanced accounts of such activity. At the time of the AAA EB’s statement in October, very few HTT had been fielded, and they were still rapidly evolving. It was estimated that at least another year would be needed to know how data compiled by the HTT would be used (Glenn 2007).

Nevertheless, the AAA EB issued its statement which read in part:

...[T]he Executive Board of the American Anthropological Association concludes (i) that the HTS program creates conditions which are likely to place anthropologists in positions in which their work will be in violation of the AAA Code of Ethics and (ii) that its use of anthropologists poses a danger to both other anthropologists and persons other anthropologists study.

Thus, the Executive Board expresses its disapproval of the HTS program.

In the context of a war that is widely recognized as a denial of human rights and based on faulty intelligence and undemocratic principles, the Executive Board sees the HTS project as a problematic application of anthropological expertise, most specifically on ethical grounds. We have grave concerns about the involvement of anthropological knowledge and skill in the HTS project. The Executive Board views the HTS project as an unacceptable application of anthropological expertise. [www.aaanet.org/issues/policy-advocacy/statement-on-HTS; dated October 31, 2007]

This statement was issued within the context of publicity and concern regarding HTS/HTT that appeared prior to and during the 2007 AAA Annual Meetings and continued through 2008.

Anthropologists' individual assessments of the HTSs/HTTs are differentiated and complex. One perspective argues that HTSs/HTTs might enhance integration of cultural knowledge within the United States military and could improve relationships between local people and United States military units, which in turn could reduce violence. Early reports regarding the HTS/HTT program credited it with reducing combat operations by as much as 60 percent, supposedly enabling soldiers to focus on "improving security, health care, and education for the population" (Rohde 2007: A1), but these reports have been questioned as largely anecdotal. Journalistic accounts included one narrative provided by an anthropologist called "Tracy" (tellingly, she would not give her last name), who identified a concentration of widows in one village whose financial needs might drive their sons to join well-paid insurgents (Rohde 2007). In response, American officers developed a job training program for the widows. Such anecdotes won supporters for HTSs/HTTs, such as Liam Murphy, an Associate Professor of Anthropology at California State University, and Felix Moos, a Professor of Anthropology at the University of Kansas.

Others, however, postulate that the HTS/HTT program is not capable of meeting the standards of the AAA Code of Ethics for research, specifically the requirement to "do no harm" and for informed consent. Ethical objections are cited as reasons not to recognize HTSs/HTTs as a legitimate form of anthropology and are voiced most clearly in the substantive objections that underpin the AAA EB's disapproval of HTSs/HTTs. As Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, Professor of Anthropology at Rhode Island College states:

Anthropologists on the ground with military operations, whether they're in civilian or military dress is just over the line. That's just not what we do.... This is not something that we comfortably recognize as anthropology. (Glenn 2007:A12)

One other aspect of the critical perspective objects to the use of social science to support a military occupation (Rohde 2007). This perspective may be viewed as political and/or ideological, relating HTSs/HTTs directly to colonialism and neo-imperialism, and raising concerns that HTSs/HTTs will harm anthropology over the long term. The political critique envisions HTTs as a high risk or dangerous approach that entangles anthropology with counterinsurgency and might actually increase violence, while harming anthropology and the people anthropologists study. Such views may have been fostered by Montgomery McFate's (2005:24) provocative suggestion that anthropology was *the* essential missing ingredient in the United States military's new strategy on "countering" insurgency:

Countering insurgency in Iraq requires cultural and social knowledge of the adversary. Yet none of the elements of

United States national power—diplomatic, military, intelligence, or economic—explicitly take adversary culture into account in the formation or execution of policy. This cultural knowledge gap has a simple cause—the almost total absence of anthropology within the national-security establishment.

McFate's focus on "the adversary" was noted and criticized by anthropologists who interpreted her reference as "an ideological justification for military occupation through appeals to orientalist stereotypes" (Gonzalez 2007:18).

Some of the more politicized resistance has come from groups such as the Network of Concerned Anthropologists, which organized a "pledge of non-participation in counter-insurgency" that gained 1,056 signatures. This petition was submitted to AAA President Setha Low at the 2008 Annual Meetings in San Francisco. The pledge states in part:

We, the undersigned, believe that anthropologists should not engage in research and other activities that contribute to counter-insurgency operations in Iraq or in related theatres in the "war on terror".... While often presented by its proponents as work that builds a more secure world, at base, it contributes instead to a brutal war of occupation which has entailed massive casualties. ([<http://concerned.anthropologists.googlepages.com/NCA-pledge.pdt>; accessed September 8, 2009])

Such political critiques are sometimes also linked to presumed ethics violations (e.g., the pledge also reads, "Such work breaches openness and trust"). The pledge does not necessarily rest upon empirical evidence of the relationship between HTS/HTT activity and covert operations or reported instances of breaches in trust. Ethical violations appear to be assumed or asserted, while the foundational analysis is political (i.e., a stance against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan).

It is important to distinguish, however, between personal and professional ethics. A given political or theoretical stance (e.g., neo-Marxian, feminist) may prompt a particular form of morality or ethics that an individual anthropologist has every right to embrace. However, such moral/ethical formulations must be distinguished from the AAA Code of Ethics, which has been adopted by the association as a set of professional guidelines for all anthropologists, regardless of their personal political or theoretical orientation. Such distinctions are not always made clear in political writings.

As when Gluckman made cause with Radcliffe-Brown over control of funding for research in the colonies, the potent mixture of political/ideological fervor together with other elite intellectual objections (theory once, ethics now) establishes an almost insurmountable set of normative obstacles to anyone wishing to pursue a different course—in this case, personal involvement with the United States military in field operations. Two linked themes—political and moral—were clearly sounded in the AAA EB's resolution.

Since the AAA EB's ethical critique of HTSs/HTTs was *not* grounded upon systematic analysis of empirical data, but rather upon a few brief, journalistic accounts, together with AAA members' speculations regarding what *might* happen with

respect to HTSs/HTTs in the worst case scenario, it is reasonable to suggest that alternative approaches (i.e., other than the ones proposed by the United States Army) that might have permitted anthropologists to engage with such problem contexts were not seriously considered. The EB raised five objections to the HTS/HTT program on ethical or security grounds (four of which followed arguments presented by CEAUSSIC), and none of them exclusive to the particular context in question or impossible to address by alternative methods.

At this point, a disclaimer is necessary. This essay is not an argument for or against anthropological engagement with HTSs/HTTs. Whether such engagement is ethical, feasible, or warranted should be based upon a carefully considered assessment of the activities and actions of such systems and teams, in conjunction with ethical principles that are relevant to contexts of knowledge production and utilization. The argument set forth here questions whether the ruling of the AAA EB with respect to HTSs/HTTs was based upon such a carefully considered assessment, integrated with relevant ethical principles, and does *not* represent a claim that anthropologists should engage with HTSs/HTTs at this time.

The EB's objections and hypothetical responses to them (*in italics*) are discussed as follows:

1. As military contractors working in settings of war, HTS anthropologists work in situations where it will not always be possible for them to distinguish themselves from military personnel and identify themselves as anthropologists. This places a significant constraint on their ability to fulfill their ethical responsibility as anthropologists to disclose who they are and what they are doing. *Other professions (physicians, clergy, journalists) work with or near the military for professional reasons, and they have found ethically defensible ways to distinguish themselves from the military (e.g., insignia), so why is it assumed that anthropologists would not also be able to do so?*
2. HTS anthropologists are charged with responsibility for negotiating relations among a number of groups, including both local populations and the United States military units that employ them and in which they are embedded. Consequently, HTS anthropologists may have responsibilities to their United States military units in war zones that conflict with their obligations to the persons they study or consult, specifically the obligation, stipulated in the AAA Code of Ethics, to do no harm to those they study (section III, A, 1). *The risk of divided loyalties is encountered in many professional contexts where anthropologists manage multiple relationships in complex institutional settings. A difference here is the level of potential violence, yet anthropologists often work in violent areas, as do other professionals, such as those mentioned above. The Code of Ethics requirement for a primary obligation to "the people with whom they work" (section III, A, 1) is often ambiguous and complex for professionals beyond academia where dyadic relationships in research are not necessarily the norm.*
3. HTS anthropologists work in a war zone under conditions that make it difficult for those they communicate with to give "informed consent" without coercion, or for this consent to be taken at face value or freely refused. As a result, "voluntary informed consent" (as stipulated by the AAA Code of Ethics, section III, A, 4) is compromised. *This situation is analogous to that faced by anthropologists working inside large, complex institutions where interviewees may be selected by institutional representatives and "volunteered" for interviews or focus groups. These arrangements may be a component of access negotiations and included in Institutional Review Board requirements (i.e., organizational approval). Do such situations constitute "informed consent?" One potential risk in such situations is that the anthropologist will be lied to, either by the employees (to protect themselves) or by managers (to get information that they know the employees and the anthropologist wouldn't willingly give them otherwise). There may be perceptions that there will be "consequences" if cooperation is not forthcoming. There are ways to be "smart and ethical" about such dilemmas, sufficient to satisfy Institutional Review Boards, but these require specific safeguards and training.*
4. As members of HTS teams, anthropologists provide information and counsel to United States military field commanders. This poses a risk that information provided by HTS anthropologists could be used to make decisions about identifying and selecting specific populations as targets of United States military operations either in the short or long term. Any such use of fieldwork-driven information would violate the stipulations in the AAA Code of Ethics that those studied not be harmed (section III, A, 1). *This dilemma parallels that of an anthropologist working in an institutional context in which management would like him or her to "target" certain groups or individuals for downsizing or performance evaluation. Even if an anthropologist is unwilling to do such work, he or she may be manipulated into contributing to it without her knowledge. This happens very rarely. When it does happen, the anthropologist typically walks out, based on pre-agreed professional compacts. Do rare instances mean that all such institutional work should be banned? Formal prohibitions against targeting and memoranda of understanding with the Army or the establishment of independent Institutional Review Boards could make anthropology's position very clear; and any actions to the contrary would mean that anthropologists are removed from the engagement.*

The Executive Board indicated that it had one additional concern, which did not specifically follow the advice of the CEAUSSIC (whose fifth point focused on classified work):

5. Because HTSs identify anthropology and anthropologists with United States military operations, this identification—given the existing range of globally

dispersed understandings of United States militarism—may create serious difficulties for, including grave risks to the personal safety of many non-HTS anthropologists and the people they study. *Currently, the number of anthropologists working with, in, or for the United States military is sufficient to justify the formulation of a separate list serve (military anthropologists' network or "man.") Anthropologists on the contemporary military scene engage in a wide range of activities that in most cases do not appear to be qualitatively different in nature from those of other anthropologists working in large, complex institutions of the state or private sector (see table in CEAUSSIC n.d.c:12). HTS/HTT raises concern because it embeds anthropologists directly within military units, creating the potential for blurring or fusion of anthropology and military identities; this is the source of danger, not the presence of anthropology with/in/for the military alone. This risk could be reduced by clarifying the status of HTS/HTT with respect to the Common Rule. Knowing whether HST/HTT is research, intelligence collection, or something else, and providing appropriate mechanisms for oversight, would differentiate among activities that belong to the family of anthropological professions (and those that do not), and, thereby, enable provision of appropriate guidelines for ethical conduct, thereby reducing the risk noted in this objection.*

A key point is that if the AAA EB's ethical challenges are interpreted more broadly and extended beyond the HTS/HTT domain, they could become a normative challenge to curtail or even forbid other forms of professional practice that are analogous to those reflected in HTSs/HTTs (e.g., research-related activity in complex institutions involving proprietary or sensitive research, which was banned under the 1971 AAA Principles of Professional Responsibility). What influence such discourse would have upon the evolution of professional practice in anthropology and the legitimacy of the discipline in larger problem-oriented contexts has important implications for everyone associated with anthropology.

The AAA established its Code of Ethics to serve as a set of *guidelines* for professionals to consider in various situations, each of which is distinctive and complex, and may involve dilemmas that cannot be addressed by any code (AAA, Code of Ethics, section II, Introduction). Yet, in the case of the HTSs/HTTs, the AAA EB is setting forth a specific *ruling* for a set of professionals beyond the domain of its primary professional strategy, prior to the collection of systematic empirical data on the situation and, apparently, without full consideration of the alternatives. In other words, there has been a rush to ethical judgment in the context of a politically unpopular war, with one casualty being respect for the autonomy of professionals who have chosen or may choose to work in specific settings. The disapproval of HTSs/HTTs by the AAA EB means that any anthropologist

who decides that he or she would like to be involved in this activity has to make a difficult choice: obscure your personal identity ("Tracy"), shed your professional identity (become a "former" anthropologist) (Wright 1995), or risk being labeled "unethical" by peers. More worrisome, this alienation means that whatever anthropological activity is taking place within HTSs/HTTs may not be reviewed by peers, but may be self- or semi-regulated and, thus, is even more likely to experience the worst of what has been predicted. It may be the case that some or all of the AAA EB's concerns are well founded, yet the nature of its preemptive disapproval makes it less likely that we will be able to find out. This should not be the future that we envision as we confront the global "War on Terror" and new military, intelligence, and security strategies in an overcrowded academic job market.

Conclusion

In Ong and Collier's (2005:4) definition of "disciplinary problems," the notions of "technological, political, and ethical reflection and intervention" were introduced. There is broad scope implied in this construct, from contemplation, to advocacy, to active resistance, or even to reform. There is value in a broad conceptualization of anthropology's interests in the "forms and values of individual and collective existence" (Ong and Collier 2005:4). However, there also is risk if anthropologists polarize within this field of possibilities, and given the political and ethical dimensions that have been made part of the discipline's mission, this is not only possible, but also probable, if all forms of "intervention" are considered equal.

One of the ways in which we talk to ourselves about ourselves has to do with a long unsettled debate about whether it is acceptable to work within flawed institutions. Yet, we always have done so, and perhaps a more relevant question becomes: what are, could, and should be the relations among our varied roles? Even if we remain enamored of "exotic" societies, they too are increasingly institutionalized, so it will not be possible to avoid the question of our institutional roles indefinitely. Sooner or later, we will find ourselves boxed into a corner with nothing left but us and that question. There will be no way out but with an answer.

One goal of this essay has been to juxtapose the meanings of discipline and profession, to examine their relationships from various vantage points, and to suggest that they are inseparable. Whatever harms we have unwittingly enacted upon ourselves, or on others in the past, do not negate the entanglement of these forms that are inherently institutional in structure and process, as well as in their constructions of meaning and practices. It may be time for a new vision of anthropology that appreciates the harmonies of discipline and profession(s) in all their myriad forms, one that can inspire the symphony that anthropology must become in the century ahead. The academic disciplinary strategy that was forged under colonialism was only that—a strategy. It was not an end

in itself. Knowledge for its own sake cannot gain legitimacy under conditions of the current century. Legitimacy requires purposes for other actors, as well as our own. Do we know what these purposes are or should be? It could be time to think about a new strategy—one that recognizes the crucial role of the academic discipline while also acknowledging and incorporating the voices of other professionals and the others they work among.

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