ISSUES OF ETHICS IN DEVELOPMENT.
DILEMMAS IN SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH.

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"What is 'legal' is, in each instance, determined by the words on a piece of paper and those which are spoken, in elucidation of them, by two specific lawyers, a specific judge, and twelve selected citizens; what is 'moral' are the words from on high which we hear far below; what is 'political' advances the interests, as what is 'social' defines the standards, of designated people. It follows that what is legal may not be moral, what is moral may be politically unwise, what is socially desirable may be politically impossible, and what, in each of these respects, is entirely right for one person may be very wrong for another."

(Cited by Harold Orlans in "Ethical Problems in Relations of Research Sponsors and Investigators")
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Introduction

Intrinsic to any process of development is the capacity of each society to deepen the understanding of its past, inquire about its present, and advance in accumulated wisdom to move towards the future. The complex dialectics by which people progress in the accumulation of knowledge involves the examination of social and natural phenomena, an understanding of which ultimately results in scientific and technological advancement. The practice of science, thus, does not occur in a vacuum. It reflects the values, dominant ideas, myths and power relations in a given socio-cultural formation at a point in time, and like any other human activity is conditioned by cultural and historical factors.

In development, the practice of science has been the subject of long standing controversies. Today, the relations of dependency characterizing the flow of scientific and technical knowledge between advanced-industrial societies and Third World countries have led to the acceptance of several assumptions about the nature of science and the ways in which it must be conducted.
A dominant assumption regarding the principles governing scientific and technological advancement is that they are culturally boundless. Science within this logic rests on the premise that processes leading to the accumulation of knowledge are neutral and follow universally accepted methods and theoretical paradigms.\textsuperscript{2} In Western societies,\textsuperscript{3} however, this criterion not only applies to the ways in which scientists theoretically frame and methodologically approach the understanding of natural and social facts, but also to the values they apply to regulate the process of inquiry itself. Science is thus perceived to be governed by universally valid moral principles and ethical norms which in turn guide what is considered to be the "right" conduct of science. Historically, this belief has led to the conclusion that there are norms to manage the dialectics of science that are universal, functioning independently of the societal context in which scientific production takes place. This tendency becomes specially acute when the focus is on the conduct of the social sciences.

This paper argues that the conduct of science in research for development, specifically in the social sciences, acquires a different and more complex dimension from the traditional paradigm outlined above. The ethical conduct of social research for development cannot be examined independently from the relationships between advanced-industrial societies and developing countries, and from the cultural specificity where it takes place.

To explore these issues, three broad, non-exclusive, areas of social research practice are identified as reference points, although not discussed in detail.\textsuperscript{4} These areas are considered to be relevant to the question of how to
conduct social research for development from an ethical standpoint. The first reference point includes research carried out in developing countries by social scientists in cultures other than their own. Comparative and cross-cultural social research falls in this category. Research carried out by social science researchers in their own culture applying methods and instruments developed and tested in other social-cultural contexts constitutes the second point of reference. This category may comprise evaluation research, achievement and performance testing, survey research, modelling and simulation research, and experimental social research among others. The third group includes social science research undertaken by national researchers but with technical assistance and financing from external sources.

The analysis focuses on this last category. This is the more comprehensive of the three and perhaps the less systematically studied in terms of its implications for the conduct of social research. A large proportion of social research undertaken in the Third World can be grouped in this category. This paper examines some of the dilemmas that arise when research for development carried out with foreign assistance becomes conditioned by ethical norms which are culturally specific. In so doing, it discusses, first, the risks found in reducing complex ethical research issues to normative procedures to minimize possible cases of unethical conduct, and second, the assumption that normative ethics in social research can be applied across the board independently of the cultures, methods and disciplines involved.
Social Sciences, Development Paradigms and Ethics

Both neo-classical and radical development paradigms recognize that on a world scale, development is the differential outcome of a network of influences and power relationships. Neo-classical approaches have argued that development is the result of economic, geo-political and socio-cultural relations of inter-dependence among countries that find themselves at different stages of economic growth and modernization (Rostow, 1971). Radical approaches contend that development is the historical product of relations of domination and dependency between societies with different modes of production and accumulation of wealth and scientific and technological knowledge (Amin, 1974; Kay, 1975; Carnoy, 1984).

Under colonial relations first and dependency later, the answer to the question of how research in developing countries ought to be conducted has been taken for granted. Western scientific tradition, accepted in Europe and North America, has transmitted from generation to generation through education, and from society to society through political and economic international relations, what is considered to be the true meaning and correct practice of science. This formal and universal notion of science determines the approaches and methods applicable to any form of acquisition and generation of knowledge. Science is thus subjected to basic and indisputable laws. The concern, therefore, is not how research must be conducted, but how to teach the laws of scientific inquiry. The assumption is that a scientist who knows these laws will automatically follow the ethical norms that regulate the conduct of research.
This notion of science applied to natural and social research has its foundations on the principles of positivism (Comte, 1875; Hempel, 1965; Nagel, 1971; Popper, 1969). For years, the training of scientists, in developed and developing countries alike, has focused on developing the capacity to understand and apply the logic and rationale of the scientific method. Such understanding is envisioned to provide people with the intellectual means and the techniques to inquire systematically about the surrounding world, and to reflect upon facts interrelated in an universal order ruled by principles considered to be valid. The scientific process is thus objective, value free, and neutral. The role of the scientist as a dispassionate observer is to understand the systemic and empirical interaction of facts. It is also to manipulate and reflect them according to methods external to his own practice.

In research for development the positivist paradigm has dominated the practice of the natural and the social sciences. In the latter case, cultural specificity is often considered to the extent that it constitutes the setting where the scientific process is taking place. Attempts to incorporate such specificity into the rationale or methods of research are rare. Some of the most recent trends to emphasize the importance of cultural and societal traits in social research follow good intentions but are driven by narrow and naive views of the political economy factors that condition the research and development processes. The societal setting is still the "mine" full of empirical facts. The researcher is still the "miner" who by using the proper tools should be able to extract data, and process and disseminate them. No
other issues are of concern but those that refer to the appropriate choice and use of tools, to the minimum protection of the "mine" to make possible its continual exploitation, and to the "marketing" of the results.

Although this positivist and systemic perspective has been strongly criticized by approaches such as the dependency (Galtung, 1967; Dos Santos, 1970) and the critical theory (Schroyer, 1973; Habermas, 1975; Berstein, 1976), its influences are still present. This discussion points at the impact of positivism on the practice of social sciences, particularly in regard to issues of ethics.

As in the natural sciences, social research has also been understood as part of a universal scientific rationale to comprehend the world. The assumption under the positivist approach to sciences has been that "there is but one way of understanding the world and that every scientist who knows his method can apply it" (Whitley, 1972). Similarly, there is one way of carrying out social research. As long as the social scientist applies the scientific method, all aspects of the practice of science, including its ethics, are protected. It is thus the method and not the means that regulates the conduct of research. The positivist approach to social research permits the scientific activity by itself to become its own ethical justification.

Extrapolating from the natural sciences, earlier views of social research focused on aspects of method, particularly in experiments, and on issues derived from the practice of biomedical research dealing with human subjects. Only in the last thirty years has there been a growing and more direct
concern about the conduct of social research for development. Rather than viewing social research in a monolithic fashion, the attention focuses on the variety of disciplines and professions studying the interactions among individuals, and between them and the institutional structure of their societies.

Ethical issues in social research remain little understood and they are still seen through the prism of natural sciences. Even within the social sciences ethics may have quite different connotations for disciplines such as economics, sociology or education. Discussions about ethics in the social sciences often address three general areas of concern. The first area refers to ethics in relation to the attitudes and behaviours of the social scientist. Researchers are expected to be objective, value free and ideologically detached from the reality they are studying. The second area concerns ethical issues that arise as a result of the methods applied by the researcher. The concern may be with the way in which data are collected, processed, analyzed and presented to the scientific community or to the public. The third area refers to ethics in relation to those who constitute the subject of the research. Thus ethical issues arise regarding both the formal relationship between two individuals, the researcher and the subject, and the extent to which the latter can be affected by the risks and benefits of the scientific inquiry.

Within this framework, the practice of the social sciences is still perceived to be external to the researcher and to the participant in the research process, and regulated by external norms of conduct. Because of this,
attempts are constantly being made to establish means to control the ethical practice of research through procedural and legal norms. Some of the dilemmas found in the implementation of this approach are discussed in the next section.

Dilemmas in the Conduct of Social Research

Studies on ethics in the social sciences have shown that there is often tension between the methodological principles applied by societies to norm the scientific process in general, and the socially acceptable values that can be enforced in the conduct of social research in particular. This tension reflects the conflicts between different views of ethics in science.

Ethical absolutism, the most orthodox, argues that the making of science, both natural and social, must be regulated by external universal principles grounded in natural law or derived from a hypothetical social contract (Macklin, 1982; Pinkard, 1982; MacIntyre, 1982). Ethical relativism argues that the making of science is socially based and culturally determined, and depends to a large extent upon the researchers' values and conscience and upon their actions' consequences (Elms, 1982; Wallace, 1982). The former is based on deontological theories and leads to a view of science as an ideologically and culturally neutral practice that is independent of its social setting. The latter rests on utilitarian theories and although it recognizes that there may be methodological principles that apply to science production in general, the standards regulating how that process takes place, and therefore how
scientific methods are applied, are determined by socially and culturally rooted values.

An issue that is of considerable importance from the utilitarian perspective, is the emphasis given to the individual as a the centre of ethical concerns. In spite of the extensive rhetoric found today about the ethics of research carried out in developing countries, both ethical decisions and ethical benefits tend to be seen in regard to the person as an individual, being a researcher or a subject, rather than to the person as a member of a social group. The ways in which issues such as privacy, confidentiality, and consent among others are treated, illustrate the positivist-utilitarian outlook that predominates in social research.

Thus the dilemmas faced by the social sciences for development that derive from these views rest at the foundations of the ethical practice of scientific research in Western societies. The historical origins of these perceptions can be found in two philosophical arguments. One of them is held by those who see science as a process guided by universal moral principles which determine fixed notions of right and wrong in research. The other is held by those who see the praxis of science as being determined by ethical norms that emerge from the research practice itself. These norms permit the individual to establish guidelines of good research behaviour within social formations and particular disciplines.

The basic premise is that moral principles and ethical norms help scientists to follow certain universal values, avoid strategies that may endanger them,
and balance those that may be in conflict. In summary, the values that constitute the ethics of science are expected to help researchers in following socially acceptable goals in their practice thereby protecting the welfare of the participants in the research process. In actual fact, however, this is much more complex.

A central point seldom directly addressed is the role played by the dominant axiological and epistemological paradigms determining the practice of research for development. In social research in developing countries, this question touches upon one of the most sensitive issues about the conduct of the social sciences. The subordinate position that developing countries have historically occupied in scientific and technological development has led to the practice of the social sciences in these societies being assessed according to the ethical concerns and values that are predominant in developed societies. Thus, the social sciences for development have become a primary target of ethnocentric ethical tendencies in science.

Despite the lip service paid to the importance of recognizing cultural diversity in social research, aspects such as the high dependence of developing societies upon external funding to carry out social research contribute to an ethnocentric view about how social research ought to be conducted. Lyons points out in this regard that (Western) "ethnocentrism interferes with the sensitive observation of other groups' practices and with an appreciation of the many ways in which societies can be organized to serve human needs" (1989: 17). He suggests that "the rejection of ethnocentrism does not imply that 'anything goes,' but is meant to make us more appreciative
of the varied ways in which human needs may, or may fail to be, served." However, the recognition of the impact of this phenomenon on the conduct of social research beyond anthropological research is relatively recent.

A discussion that began in the late fifties with the dependency theory in Latin America, and that has continued with the contributions of the critical theory and the political economy approaches to research, has addressed these issues more directly. It states that colonial experiences first, and relations of economic dependence and interdependence later, result in the practice of science, including social research, being influenced by the same factors that determine the uneven scientific and technological development in the Third World. Thus, the conflicting views that may exist today about how sciences for development should be conducted have several implications for the ways in which societies understand, apply and use social research.

The uses and abuses of research have led national and international communities to establish laws, norms and regulations to define universal notions of right and wrong and codes of good behaviour for the practice of science (Horowitz, 1971). The most commonly cited examples of international codes of ethics are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Nuremberg Code of 1946, and the Declaration of Helsinki of 1964 (Davison Reynolds, 1979). However, it is accepted that these and other attempts to regulate the conduct of science face great limitations because of difficulties in their enforcement.
Thus, there are two major ethical dilemmas encountered in the practice of social research for development. These are, first, the conditioning role played by moral standards that reflect values rooted in specific processes of enculturation, and second, the contradictions that are present in the application of moral standards within and across cultures.

Lyons (1989) rises a point of critical importance for the relationships between developed and developing countries in social research. He argues that "like other aspects of culture, moral attitudes can be viewed as more or less conducive to group survival, but - the argument goes - they cannot be appraised on their own merits. For any standards that we use to evaluate them will simply reflect the values we have acquired in the process of our own enculturation" (1989: 11). This allows him to argue later that "nations have built empires by subjugating other groups, and this process has been reinforced by ethnocentric attitudes - the idea that we can export 'civilization' by imposing our social system on other people" (1989: 17).

At the international level, the application of universal ethical codes of conduct in scientific research depends upon geo-political and economic relations among countries. The interests that underlay international relations among nations make ethical codes for research difficult to monitor and even more so to sanction. At the national levels there are profound differences, particularly between developed and developing societies. These impinge not only upon the specific ethical aspects emphasized by each society, but also on the scope of their content, the types of activity they cover, the power they have to regulate the practice of research, and the interests to
which they respond. Ethical concerns that are raised in the contexts of the relationships between developed and developing societies around the practice of social research require still further and more careful consideration.

Given the dependence of developing countries on the financial resources of the industrialized world, the expansion of social research in the Third World has often been confronted by conflicting culturally-specific values. Usually, this takes the form of norms and regulations about the conduct of social research attached to the granting of technical and financial resources flowing from the developed to the developing world. Rarely, however, are the issues resulting from ethnocentrism directly addressed. There is frequently a naive tendency to assume that the power inherent to relationships based upon the granting of technical and financial assistance has, per se, a value that permits the cross-cultural application of ethical norms and regulations.

Social research in the Third World, however, is more complex. "One does not succeed in making law simply by providing guidelines for behaviour not even if he succeeds in channelling behaviour as he desires. Something is not law in isolation, but can be identified as law because of its place within a system of law" (Lyons, 1989: 76). In research for development, such a system of law is culturally based in the society where the process of social research is carried out, rather than in the society that may be in the position of facilitating that process.

Perhaps, one exception concerning the effective application of cross-cultural codes of conduct in research is found in biomedical sciences involving human
subjects. In this field, it is more common to find shared values across cultures about basic moral principles applied to science. However, even so there are many examples in which medical research originating in developed societies is carried out following different ethical standards when applied in developing countries.\textsuperscript{12} Two issues related to the practice of biomedical sciences are relevant to the application of social sciences research for development.

One of these issues emerges from the increasing recognition of the complexities implicit in understanding development. This has led international organizations and researchers to emphasize the need for multidisciplinary approaches in the practice of science in developing societies. This trend raises a series of new ethical dilemma in research for development in the social sciences which are yet not clearly understood.

Social research is being perceived more and more as interlinked with other fields such as health, agriculture, the environment, and engineering and technology. A question not fully addressed, however, concerns the ethics specific to multidisciplinary social research. A widespread assumption is that ethical concerns specific to particular fields or disciplines can be satisfactorily addressed independently from each disciplinary platform. The emphasis, however, is primarily on the different methodological components present in the research process rather than on the distinct moral issues that emerge from the interaction of two or more disciplines. Bower and Gasparis argue that "social research is such a mixed bag of procedures that there is probably no one prescriptive or proscriptive package that could be used across
the board in assessing ethical issues and reaching agreeable solutions" (1978: 50). Little attention continues to be paid in this holistic and systemic view of research for development to the deeply rooted disciplinary traditions predominate in the conduct of science.

A second issue refers to the main focus of concern regarding the ethics of social research for development. Following the experience of biomedical and psychological sciences in the developed world, it is universally accepted that an issue central to the sciences and professions involved with human subjects is the protection of the individual. This translates into a preoccupation with the individual's general welfare, physical and psychological well-being and basic human rights. In some instances, this preoccupation is even expressed as a concern for the human beings' intellectual and cultural "property" (Canada Council, 1977: 1).

Ethical guidelines, legal statutes, professional codes, and the implementation of review committees to supervise the practice of research are just a few means used to protect the subject of the research. Mostly, these mechanisms are society, profession or even organization-specific. A controversy around the establishment of these types of regulations, particularly those embodied in legal statutes, contracts or documents establishing binding conditions is that they tend to represent a political response to scientific problems. Concerning this view, Bower and Gasparis comment that "it is likely that if concerns with ethical principles increases within the wider society, notably within the federal government, the movement will gain greater force. Such
codes, however, are not universally seen as a panacea to all the problems involved in the protection of the rights and welfare of subjects.

A serious objection to codes of ethics is made by those who see their prime purpose as that of protecting the profession instead of the public. According to this view, a code of ethics is little more than a public-relation documents, designed to allay the public's fears, and has little real substantive content" (1978: 55). If this bears true, then several unresolved issues remain when this point is addressed in connection with social research carried out in developing countries with external assistance.

Nevertheless, what is perhaps one of the most important realization of the last three decades about ethics in social research is that principles and norms that apply to one type of scientific endeavour may not be applicable to others. "Absolute rules do not offer useful solutions to conflicts in value. What is needed is wisdom and restraint, compromise and tolerance, and a wholesome respect for the dignity of the individual" (cited by Diener and Crandall, 1982: 1).

Thus, from the traditional assumption that ethical principles valid in biomedical research are applicable to the practice of science in general, including social research, there has been progressive movement towards recognizing that different sciences, disciplines, methods and issues may involve completely different ethical problems. Over the years this has translated into the realization that as far as the problem of ethics in sciences is concerned there are very few absolute rules. Although this
represents a substantial progress in the normative approach to the praxis of science, it presents complex new dilemmas to those responsible for controlling the ethical conduct of scientific research. It seems to be no longer possible to approach ethical issues in science through universal or standard sets of norms and procedures in order to bind the conduct of research across the board in a society or across societies.

The Theory and Practice of Ethics in the Social Sciences

Monitoring the practice of ethics in social science research for development is a difficult and complex process that often escapes the power of formal ethical norms and procedures. The problem becomes even more pronounced, if ethics in social research is approached taking for granted "an entire range of epistemological, organizational, and methodological practices of conventional research" (Hamnett, et al. 1984: 8).

In practice, the conduct of research in the social sciences is influenced by four characteristics found in the ethical exercise of science. First, from a social perspective, ethical behaviours do not necessarily happen naturally in the conduct of research. Social research being a process driven by the values, ideology and world views of individual and institutional interests in specific social formations may result in vast differences in what is considered to be an ethical behaviour. This depends upon an array of circumstances, such as personal motives, culture, historical trends, and capacities of researchers and institutions. Thus, ethical behaviours in
research from the perspective of the North may differ considerably from what are considered to be moral principles of right and wrong, or acceptable rules of good behaviour in the South.

Second, these differences are a result of the influence of axiological paradigms determining the conduct of research at a particular point in time. Such influence in turn is the corollary of contextual socio-political forces acting upon the goals and objectives of the research process. Thus, for example, the societal principles regulating the practice of research carried out under a repressive political system are different from those found in a democratic society.¹⁵

Third, ethical factors that affect research for development are inclusive rather than exclusive. Procedural enforcement of one ethical goal does not necessarily ensure the ethical conduct of the research process in its entirety. This raises questions regarding attempts to focus ethical concerns in isolation, for example, on issues such as confidentiality or privacy without looking at the ethical implication beyond concerns of the individual.¹⁶ As long as the central preoccupation is the individual as a single entity in the research process, there is a tendency to ignore the fact that ethical aspects in research are interrelated with socio-political and cultural dimensions.

Fourth, ethical issues in research seen primarily from the perspective of the individual become particularly sensitive if they disassociate professional from social roles. The influence of positivism in science has established a
separation between the morals of the person and the ethics of the professional and citizen. This leads in some instances to the treatment of ethical behaviours in research as if they are independent from personal ethics.

Given these characteristics, a central issue that brings together the theory and practice of ethics in social research within this perspective is the concept of "risk of harm" to the individual. In practice, this translate into the risk of infringing upon participants’ rights which is often associated with issues of confidentiality and privacy. However, these rights represent only a fraction of the ethical problems faced in social research. When approached in isolation they reflect ethical concerns based primarily on a positivist scientific paradigm in which individualistic rather than societal factors play the central role.

Privacy refers primarily to a state affecting the individual and has been defined as the right to control "whether and to what extent information about himself or herself will be shared with anyone else" (Boruch and Cecil, 1979: 23). In other words, the right to determine when, how, under what circumstances, and to what extent personal information can be communicated to others (Diener and Crandall, 1982). Confidentiality in turn refers to the state of the information about the individual and is understood as the steps taken to maintain anonymity and prevent the disclosure of such information to anyone else (Boruch and Cecil, 1979: 25). It is also associated with "the original use to be made of the data and their deposit for possible re-use" (The Canada Council, 1977: 17). The application of these principles, however, does not depend exclusively upon the control that may be exercised
over the research process by the researcher or by an external agency. If these principles are understood from a societal rather than an individual perspective they become dependent upon factors external to the research. The political or economic relevance of the research, the organizational or institutional interests within which the research is framed, or the degree of power that institutions like the State exercise over the nature, the process and the outcomes of research may determine the extent to which respect for principles such as confidentiality and privacy can be achieved.17

Another aspect to be considered regarding the way in which these two principles are often approached is the emphasis on ethics from the point of view of the results of the research process in terms of the steps taken and the decisions made by the researcher to ensure that no risk of harm is involved. To a large extent, this view transfers the control over ethical rights from the subject participating in the research to an external agent, the researcher or the research institution. Thus, the actual involvement of the subject in decisions about privacy and confidentiality becomes mediated and dependent upon considerations external to his or her own viewpoint. When this occurs, the fundamental definition of what is ethical regarding privacy and confidentiality is imposed upon the individual or the community.

This leads to the argument that in practice the more fundamental principle of social research ethics from the point of view of the participant is informed consent. This idea addresses the right of persons to make free and voluntary decisions about their participation in research based on a full knowledge and understanding of the risks and benefits that may result from such
participation. This principle, which rests at the root of the relationship between the researcher and the participant, is also one of the most vulnerable. How much information is required to give informed consent, and how do researchers ensure full understanding of risks and benefits? are central questions that demand careful consideration. It is also at this point that contextual and personal factors and characteristics of the subject as a socially-based actor play a central role. Aspects such as level of education, degree of awareness of circumstantial conditions, power relations established between the participant and the researcher, and the participants' own perceptions of the meaning of the research determine the degrees of freedom available to the subject to make informed decisions about participation.

These questions become even more relevant in the case of members of particular social groups, such as subjects from lower income sectors, children, women and ethnic minorities (Diener and Crandall, 1982). It also becomes critical when social research takes place in societies where personal and collective rights are often at risk because of the type of relationships that exist between the State and the civil society. In such cases, neither the researcher nor the participant may be in the position of making a full assessment of the risks involved throughout the research process, or what is even more important, the consequences that may be associated with the dissemination and use of the results.

This last issue raises other concerns still not fully addressed in social research for development: the social and individual risks resulting from the use of research results, over which the researchers, the subjects, or the
institutional research infrastructure may have little or no control. This is perhaps one of the most critical ethical issues in need of further examination from the perspective of international organizations financing social research in developing countries. Among the aspects to be addressed from such a perspective are the redefinition of social scientists' ethical responsibilities in research, the value of norms and procedures applied to regulate the ethical conduct of research, and the responsibilities shared among financing institutions, local research institutions and researchers. Particularly relevant in these cases is the problem of deception.

Deception in social research refers to the concealment, intentional misleading or control of the information given to the participants about the risks involved in the research or about its specific nature to obtain their participation (Diener and Crandall, 1982; Beauchamp et al. 1982). Once again, issues of particular complexity emerge in the practice of social research. Closely related to the type of information which is provided to the participant, and to the degree of understanding of such information, the risk of deception is present not only at the beginning of the research process, or only in relation to the subjects' participation, but throughout the research, including the stage of dissemination and use of research results. Deception thus also applies to the social and political impact of research on policy, which represents the central social dimension of social science research.18

It has been argued that research in certain social science disciplines may be prone to deception, and even that sometimes it is possible to consider an "acceptable" degree of deception. This argument has been applied, for
example, in evaluation research and in some forms of socio-psychological experimentation dealing directly with individuals. In such cases, the "acceptability" of a certain degree of deception is explained in relation to the needs arising from the nature of the research or the method being applied. It is considered that the handling of certain types of information about the research by the participants may influence their behaviours and therefore alter the outcomes of the research. This approach has several ramifications in terms of contradictions between ethical theory and practice in social research.

At what point and under what circumstances, for example, does a researcher or an institution become reprehensible for deception?, and how can such deception be prevented? These are issues that require careful scrutiny in cross-cultural research. Other factors besides individual morals can play a role in this regard. These may be associated with the ultimate aim of the research and its intended use. In other cases they may be related to the pressures acting upon the researcher or the research institution, being these pressures personal, political, financial or a combination of them.

In research that is socio-politically sensitive, for example, researchers can be faced with a dilemma between deception and the need to examine areas or address socially relevant problems that otherwise would remain unknown. This may also apply to the relationship between the researcher and the institutions and organization related to the research with are in positions of political or financial authority. Is it permissible, for example, to only disclose part of the intended purpose of the research in societies where the social sciences
are equated with dissent?, or is deception acceptable when the emphasis of social research is accommodated to the perceived ideological stand of the supporting or funding agency? The response based on moral imperatives or corporate ethical principles is obviously no.

The issue, however, is more complex than the direct application of principles and norms when analyzed from a development perspective aimed at social change. In social research for development, deception may acquire special connotations, particularly in those circumstances in which the implementation of research depends upon external funding sources. In this case, the ideological setting of priorities, the lack of context-specific understanding of the relevance of the research from the point of view of the local socio-political environment, or the pretended neutrality in the conception of social research, can become the building blocks of deception. A question to be raised in this regard is the extent to which relations of dominance, inherent to the dependent links created by financial assistance indirectly lead to deception as a means to circumvent demands and procedures that respond to corporate agendas of donor institutions.

Perhaps one area in which this type of concern is more evident is that of the benefits of social research carried out in the Third World. Unlike research in other scientific fields, the benefits of social science research do not necessarily take a concrete and demonstrable form at the conclusion of the research process. Much has been written about the "diffuse" nature of these benefits, the difficulties in explaining or proving them in causal terms, and the time lag between the completion of the research and the manifestation of
its impact. However, social researchers who depend upon external sources of assistance are expected at the outset to show the worth of their research based on expected results, while often no provisions are made to facilitate the assessment of the research outcomes when these are immediately apparent.

Informed consent, privacy, confidentiality, and deception as matters of ethics in social research are all aspects interrelated through judgments made about the potential risks and benefits both to the person and to the community to which the participant belongs. It is often argued that the burden of proof to demonstrate both risks and benefits rests with the researcher. From the perspective of research for development, however, the researcher is only one of the many actors responsible for the ethical conduct of social research and for the possibility of risks and benefits. Research institutions, professional associations, the community of social scientists, governments, and sponsoring organizations all share ethical responsibility in social research. The issue to be addressed, therefore, is the extent of their responsibility. This becomes particularly relevant if ethical issues in social research are approached from the point of view of their regulation.

What determines the roles that different actors play in regard to the risks and benefits of research is the extent of their involvement in allowing, facilitating or carrying out the research or part of the research process. Although this view of ethics in social science research is unorthodox, it permits social scientists to have a broader and more comprehensive understanding of the dilemmas faced in social research for development and the alternatives that may be available to deal with them. It also allows one to
situate properly, within a social rather than individual perspective, the cost-benefit criteria applied in the assessment of ethics in social research when this takes place in developing societies.

Implicitly in some cases and explicitly in others, an approach often applied in Western societies to assess risks and benefits in social research carried out in the Third World is the cost-benefit ratio (Diener and Crandall, 1982: 24-26; Beauchamp et al. 1982: 180-84). In its most formal and neutral expression this translates into concerns about the welfare and well-being of participants, and leads to the implementation of formal procedures and to the application of norms aimed at preventing ethical misconduct (Smith, 1975). Often, however, the well-being of the research subjects is only one among many factors guiding the ethics of social research.

In its more explicit form, the cost-benefit ratio applied to social research is rooted in criteria pertaining primarily to the consequences of decisions about allocation of resources. At this point, risks and benefits of the participants become entangled with the risks and benefits that may be brought about by the consequences of reaching specific results through the research. In other words, if the results of the research involve risks that may jeopardise the participant and bring about "costs" to the public image, in political or economic terms, of the researchers, the profession, the research institution or the sponsoring agency, then greater emphasis is given to the ethics of research and further efforts are made to regulate its conduct.
Given that in research for development, risks and benefits in social research from an ethical viewpoint are difficult to predict, hard to measure, and almost impossible to assess in terms of impact in the short term, the cost-benefit ratio offers a manageable gauge for those actors with vested interests in the research. Also, it offers socially acceptable arguments, first, to explain support for or opposition to particular types of social research, and second, to rationalize the implementation of mechanisms to regulate its conduct within and across societies.

A final comment should be made about the situation in which ethical aspects related to the conduct of social research for development is addressed from the perspective of agencies funding research in the Third World. In such a case, the sponsoring agency is the facilitator, a regulatory body, and often one of the consumers of the research products. The relationship between the agency and the researchers and the research institutions is one of power, determined by political and economic interests, by world views and ideological positions, and by axiological paradigms. Orlans argues that "money is not a free good, available for any scholarly purpose, and those with funds to dispense do so for purposes and under conditions of their own choosing" (1967: 4). A critical question to be raised about this relation then is related to whose interests, world views and axiological paradigms should predominate in determining and assessing the ethical conduct of social research.

It has been argued that "indigenization is a necessary step in creating more equitable and ethical social science research" (Hamnett et al. 1984: 77). This requires that the ethical concerns that arise from the relationships
between donor agencies and developing country researchers go beyond prescriptive stages and beyond the preoccupation with and provision of normative codes for the conduct of research. In social research aimed at social change, some of the most uncontrollable ethical problems are the product of a conflict of fundamental principles about the position and role that individuals play within a social structure rather than a result of disagreement with the principles themselves as moral imperatives.

Conclusion

Ethical analyses of the scientific practice in Western societies have been characterized by relying heavily on the legal vocabulary of informed consent law and a concern with biomedical sciences. However, it has become evident that "legal distinctions ... are not necessarily equally pertinent to all types of research" (Beauchamp, et al. 1982:5). This and the growing recognition by governments and the scientific community of the importance of social research for development has brought the issue of ethics in the social sciences to the forefront of the discussion. There is an increasing acknowledgement that the multidisciplinary nature of the social sciences presents important ethical problems that are not yet well understood.

This paper has argued that ethical concerns in social research for development constitute a highly complex set of issues, with dimensions that require more careful examination. The ethics of social research for development go beyond the effects of single research processes on the well-being or the rights of
single individuals. They have a tremendous potential impact at the societal level that must be cautiously assessed.

The complexity of dealing with ethics in social research emerges from the recognition that "social research is such a mixed bag of procedures that there is probably no one prescriptive or proscriptive package that could be used across the board in assessing ethical issues and reaching agreeable solutions" (Bower and Gasparis, 1978: 50). The magnitude of this problem is multiplied when prescriptive or proscriptive attempts to regulate the conduct of social research takes place across societies, as is the case in social research carried out in developing countries with foreign assistance. In such instances, the conduct of research becomes regulated not only by national ethical codes if they exist and by the values and principles of good behaviour of the researchers, but also by the notions of right and wrong for the conduct of social research held by the donor organization.

Although this situation may be seen as conducive to ensuring that social research follows "categorical imperatives" of moral behaviour grounded in natural law or derived from a hypothetical social contract (Macklin, 1982; Pinkard, 1982), it rests on the same assumptions underlining the relationships of dependence between developed and developing societies. The ethics of social research in developing countries would not be more at risk because it respond to values that are not those of the donor society. The reality is that both in the developed and the developing world, the conduct of social research is replete with ethical dilemmas caused by the confrontation of conflicting values that are culturally rooted.
Notes

1. The history of science has been built on conflicting views about the understanding of the world. From the Greek tradition of Plato and Aristotle, to the Judeo-Christian interpretation of reality, to Compte and Kant, to the marxist materialist philosophy, the practice of science has been evolved through relations of correspondence and contradiction.

2. The concept of paradigm is used here to mean "the constellation of belief, values, techniques shared by members of a given." A paradigm acts as a filter through which a given practice is assessed. It constitutes the "assumptions or conceptualizations -either explicit or implicit- underlying any data, theory, or method." Paradigm act, therefore, as a world view from which research questions and problems can be derived (See H. W. Smith, 1975).

3. The Western tradition in science in this paper refers to the developments in the philosophy of sciences that took place in Europe and North America in the nineteenth and twentieth century.

4. Most of the literature on research methods deals with the particulars of the types of research that fall within each of these areas. It is important to notice, however, that few authors make explicit reference to ethical issues in research.

5. Until recently, the training of social scientists at the undergraduate and graduate levels has predominantly focused on the acquisition of traditional empirical research methods. In developing countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa, the programs for the development of human resources for research at the university level have replicated those found in North America. At the same time, the research communities in these countries have reinforced the distinction between "empirical" and "theoretical" research. Such a dichotomy has been maintained in the context of research for development by identifying "applied research" with the empirical, positivistic, understanding of the world.

6. The concept of a "value-free" science implies that "the only values that were supposed to influence research were the scientific values placed on truth, objective methodology, and the open distribution of knowledge. Recently the value-free conception of science has been challenged and important issues have been raised about the appropriate relationship between scientific work, objectivity, the role of science in society, and scientists' values and beliefs" (Diener and Crandall, 1982: 181).

7. The fact that the predominant notion of science does not attribute the same importance to theoretical research as to empirical investigation has been also seen as a means to perpetuate the dominant role of the positivist paradigm of science. Theoretical research provides researchers with the opportunity to critically approach social phenomena, thus involving a higher risk of questioning the foundations of the prevailing interpretations of the world.
8. Perhaps one of the most clearest examples of this tendency in social research for development is found in the application of research approaches such as participatory research and qualitative and ethnographic methods in developing countries. As a reaction to traditional empirical views of social phenomena promoted by developed countries, the emphasis in social science research in the Third World has shifted towards more "ethnographic," "qualitative" and "participatory" methods. In the process of doing so, however, criticisms are often raised about the tendency of Third World social scientists to "over emphasize" political and cultural aspects in their interpretation of social phenomena.

9. There are different opinions about the appropriateness of the term "subject" to identify the person involved in the research process. Some argue that the idea of subject reflects the conceptualization of individuals as passive sources of information, similar to the concept of "patient" used in medicine and psychology.

10. The dramatic bio-medical experiments carried out by Nazi scientists during the Second World War, and the attempts to use social science research for political and military purposes by the U.S. government through the Plan Camelot in the 1950s are considered typical examples of disregard of moral and ethical principles in the application and use of research.

11. The Report of the Consultative Group on Ethics of the Canada Council indicates in this regard that although there is a need to ensure that research is conducted according to ethical principles that appear to be universally accepted, "problems seem to arise out of the considerations brought to bear in their application" (Canada Council, 1977: iv).

12. It is not uncommon that large multinational corporations involved in the production of new drugs, for example, test their products in developing countries before they are allowed to market them in their countries of origin. This phenomenon is not, however, limited to the relationships between developed and developing societies. An example in this regard is found in the psychological experiments conducted in Canada in the 1950s for the CIA.

13. The literature on this topic shows that there is a long standing discussion about the effectiveness of these forms of regulation. At the most general level, it has been argued that monitoring and enforcement presents great difficulties even in those situations where legal regulatory bodies has been established for this purpose. At a more specific level, it has been argued that focus-specific codes of ethics, such as those for particular professions, have as a primary purpose the protection of the interest of professional associations rather than the right of the individual subjects of research.

14. This addresses not only the issue of broad political interests in a society in general, for example the formation of the "new man" in socialist societies, but also the corporate interests that may be present at the national and international level, and which determine the supply and demand for research.
15. The ethical responsibilities of researchers and research institutions operating in repressive societies are greater to the extent that the options available to address certain socially sensitive issues are fewer, and the degree of risk involved for those who participate in the research both as researchers and subjects is greater. In such cases, the transgression of basic ethical principles in the research process may not be an issue to be seen primarily in connection with the researcher or research institution but rather with the socio-political system within which they operate.

16. The emphasis often found in advanced Western societies on ethical concerns regarding privacy, consent, confidentiality, deception, harm and alike tend to focus exclusively on the individual. By ensuring the protection of such principles, often the social ethical implications of research are ignored. In most cases, however, the major ethical threat imposed upon social research in the Third World does not come from the infringement of individual but social ethical rights.

17. There has been a series of typical examples in the history of the social sciences illustrating the complexity in the application of these principles. One of them is the case of "Springdale" reported in by Vidich and Bensman in Small Town in Mass Society, considered to be a classical example of the impact upon privacy and confidentiality of social research. Another type of example is found in societies where research institutions are vulnerable to external intervention. In such cases, the protection of confidentiality and privacy of the information about the participants in research become dependent upon the extent to which basic civil rights are respected in the society as a whole.

18. The socio-political dimension of research refers here to the interactions affecting or resulting from the research process that revolve "around power, influence and authority. Research is political to the extent that it affects the ability of individuals or groups to impose their will, to pursue their interests, or to be seen as legitimate authorities" (Warwick, 1983: 316).

19. Social research in developing countries often depends upon external assistance. This dependency has shifted from being heavily focused on technical assistance to a combination with financial resources, to the extent that only a small proportion of social science research for development is carried out today without the financial contribution of foreign agencies. International organizations, particularly those which are government based, avoid areas of research that can be seen by local governments as interfering in local affairs. This leads them to carefully scrutinize the research topics identified as relevant by developing country social scientists, the potential use of the research results, and in some cases the terminology used in the research plans. Although these concerns may respond to the internal logic of the agency in practice they operate as pressure mechanisms upon the researchers.

20. This view of risks and benefits in social research is closely associated with the principles of utilitarianism as a normative theory. The utilitarian approach in general, "does not discriminate among interests that people have. Furthermore, it does not care how benefits and burdens are distributed, so long as net benefits are maximized" (Lyons, 1989: 119).
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