THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND THE UNIVERSITY: SUPPORT FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH AND THE IMPACT OF PROJECT CAMELOT

1. Government-University Relations


Useful background material is provided in this volume, including an historical account of "Federal Policies and Practices in Higher Education." Sponsorship of university research is discussed, including such issues as "Project Selection and Administration," "Secrecy in Research," "Publications," and "University Participation in Government Policy Making.”


This article appears in a special issue devoted to the "Academy." In it the author discusses "Federal Support and the Universities," "Federal Priorities and the Response of Science," and "Science for What?" Besides blocking economic and scientific development, massive military subsidies increase the chances and destructiveness of war. Social scientists who might be expected to warn of this danger are often seduced into harmless research by government and foundation grants.”

Hughes, Thomas L. "Scholars and foreign policy: varieties of research experience." Background (International Studies Association, School of International Relations, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, Calif. 90007), November, 1965. pp. 199-214. $1.50.

In the aftermath of the Camelot Project, responsibility for overseas research in sensitive areas was placed under the auspices of the Department of State. The Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the State Department outlines the procedures his office will use in reviewing proposed research projects which might adversely affect United States foreign relations. He quite clearly attempts to reassure worried researches.

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** Items from this list should be ordered directly from the publisher. Addresses are given in connection with each reference.
ers that this type of review by the State Department does not usher in a new era of strict censorship of social science research.


This is an expose of the role of Michigan State University in supporting and covering for the C.I.A.'s South Vietnamese operations from 1955-1955. Wide-spread publicity was given in the New York Times and other newspapers throughout the country to this extensively detailed charge that universities were exchanging scholars' services and support for attractive overseas assignments and contracts. Members of the MSU faculty and administration did not consistently deny or affirm the report.

2. Government and Other Support for Social Science Research


The then United States Senator and Chairman of the Subcommittee on Reorganization and International Organizations of the Senate Committee on Government Operations advocates a policy of greatly expanded support for social science research. He cites the paucity of federal resources for this effort and the nature of the contribution which this research can make toward solving major domestic and international problems. The editors of the American Behavioral Scientist then emphasize the importance of appointing a distinguished committee to study the feasibility of implementing Humphrey's proposals, the need to specify major research problems, and the possibilities of raising private and government funds.


Provides an excellent overall account of government sponsored research. Federal funds invested are analyzed according to the type of agency involved and the nature of the project supported. Numbers of social scientists employed by various agencies are cited and recommendations are presented to facilitate research in areas hitherto relatively neglected.

Rossi, Peter H. "Researchers, scholars, and policy makers: the politics of large scale research." Daedalus (American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University, 7 Linden St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138), Fall, 1964. pp. 1142-1161. $1.50.

Authors from a variety of disciplines and with divergent perspectives discuss the major issues confronting the university. Rossi's article describes the growth of social science research centers, the factors facilitating their development, and the organizational tensions associated with them. Financing of large scale research is probed and instances of neglect of vital issues are cited and put into perspective.
Latin American Research Review (The University of Texas, Box 1, Austin, Tex. 78712), Fall 1965, Spring 1966, Summer 1966. $6.00 per year for individuals, $8.00 for institutions.

This journal is an excellent source for those interested in contemporary research on Latin America. Review articles appraise the state of the field. Ongoing projects are listed according to investigator, location, and source of support.

3. Project Camelot

Horowitz, Irving L. “The life and death of Project Camelot.” Transaction (Box 43, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo. 63130), November/December, 1965, pp. 3-7. $3.50 per year.

To understand “the life and death of Project Camelot” it is necessary to analyze its inception, those involved in its planning, and the circumstances of its demise. Professor Horowitz accomplishes all of these tasks. Termination resulted from a variety of political factors and represented “an expression of the contempt for social science so prevalent among those who need it most.” Criticism is also made of Camelot’s acceptance of military assumptions, the neglect of the positive consequences of revolutionary upheaval, and the avoidance of the issues associated with the use of social science findings.


One of the most distinguished scholars in the field of Latin American studies clearly and decisively outlines the impact of the Camelot Project on other field work in Chile and in other countries. Resident in Santiago and acquainted with the major participants, Silvert reports on the reaction to the project in the Chilean press and social science community. Camelot, while more dramatic, is in no sense unique. United States academics have engaged in similar projects for many years, “the only inhibitions being their personally held standards of conduct.” The Camelot episode poignantly reveals the ethical, methodological, and theoretical shortcomings of many scholars who have recently been recruited to the field of Latin American studies.

Relevant excerpts of these hearings can also be found in the American Psychologist, May, 1966. Members of Congress questioned Dr. Theodore Vallance, Director of SORO, among others, on the aims and formulation of the Camelot Project, the relationship between research and application of military policy, and the feasibility of a military agency conducting sensitive research in developing countries.


In one of several articles devoted to Project Camelot and its implications in this issue, the Director of the Army's Special Operation Research Office defends the project. It was planned as an unclassified, basic research effort, highly affirmed by many reputable scholars, and intended to be conducted with full knowledge of foreign governments involved. Its failure resulted in lessons for all involved which are detailed here. Vallance briefly describes the greater degree of sensitivity which accompanies government-sponsored research and gives attention to the inherent difficulties of policy-making agencies doing basic research.


A military analyst and professor of political science reviews the relevant background of the Camelot Project. Using the hearings held by the House Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements of the Committee on Foreign Affairs as his major source, he discusses the origin and development of the project in Defense Department research offices, and the early criticisms and interests of the State Department and other agencies. He then reviews briefly the sequence of events which led to the demise of Camelot in Chile and reports critical reactions in the United States by the government and social scientists. The conclusion offers an explanation for the reasons such projects are undertaken under military auspices, the suspicions this type of research engenders, and the role of United States foreign policy in creating this distrust.


Field research always presents a wide variety of challenges to the investigator. This report provides pertinent background for those interested in factors resulting in the failure of Project Camelot. Completed one year before Camelot's encounter with Chileans, it analyzes the basis for cordial and hostile relations between United States researchers and Chilean students. Excerpts have appeared in Erritch, the popular Santiago weekly. An unpublished expanded version discussing the implications of military sponsorship of field research is available upon request from the author.