

ENGAGING CONTRADICTIONS

Theory, Politics, and Methods
of Activist Scholarship



Edited by

*For Michael Zinzun
in memoriam*

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C. R. H.

NOTES

1. Robert K. Merton, *The Sociology of Science* (1968; repr., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973).
2. Michael Burawoy, "For Public Sociology," *American Sociological Review* 70, no. 1 (2005): 4–28.
3. Charles R. Hale, "Toward a More Public Social Science," *Items and Issues* 5, nos. 1–2 (2004): 12–14.
4. Donald Stokes, *Pasteur's Quadrant* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute Press, 1997).
5. Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962; rev. ed. 1970).
6. Pierre Bourdieu, "The Corporatism of the Universal: The Role of Intellectuals in the Modern World," *Telos* 81 (1989): 99–110.
7. Before modern science, philosophy (note the etymology) already tended to exalt *sophia* above *phronesis*, as a purer kind of knowledge. Aristotle differed from Plato partly in emphasizing the practical as much as he did. The dominant tendency was reinforced by Christian thinkers who viewed the study of universals as an approach to God and practical knowledge as more concerned with the mundane world.
8. Greenwood's efforts to revitalize anthropology—and the tradition of applied anthropology—through thinking about *phronesis* should be read together with Bent Flyvberg's similarly grounded *Making Social Science Matter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) and Alasdair MacIntyre's effort in *After Virtue* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1984) and elsewhere to revitalize moral reason in a way that overlaps social science rather than remaining contained by philosophy.
9. See, e.g., Pierre Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice* (1980; repr., Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).
10. I have elaborated this way of thinking about critical theory in *Critical Social Theory: Culture, History and the Challenge of Difference* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995) and elsewhere.

Introduction

Charles R. Hale

Although this activity appeared to follow the standard "academic workshop" format of papers-discussion-conclusions, it also departed from that format in important, formative, at times radical ways. The Coalition Against Police Abuse (CAPA) offices, located in the heart of South Central, are a living museum of 30 years of ongoing community struggle for social justice, with a primary emphasis on the lives and struggles of African Americans. A mural on one wall depicts this history in Diego Rivera style; another on the adjacent wall memorializes the "gang truce" between the Crips and the Bloods, which CAPA helped to forge in 1992. Pictures, posters, and other artifacts of community activism fill every available space in the main conference room. Directly across from the table where we worked for the two days hangs a frame, with pictures of two Black men who the police shot down on the UCLA campus in the days of Black Panther activism. As our first session began on Friday morning, Ruthie Gilmore briefly remembered one of these men, John Huggins, her cousin, who had been like a brother to her. This moment of reflection drove home the deeply felt personal and political immediacy of the workshop, and set the tone for the discussions that followed.

My own notes from the L.A. Workshop on
Activist Scholarship, CAPA, April 2003

Strong passions are necessary to sharpen the intellect and help make intuition more penetrating. . . . Reality is a product of the application of human will to the society of things. . . . Only the man who wills something strongly can identify the elements which are necessary to the realization of his will.

ANTONIO GRAMSCI, *Prison Notebooks*

The primary purpose of this volume is to provide a broad and grounded counterpoint to the standard admonition to students entering social science and humanities graduate training programs: "Welcome, come in, and please leave your politics at the door." Some aspects of our message

are already conventional wisdom. It has long since become a truism, perhaps best illustrated in the biting satiric novels of authors such as David Small and Karin Narayan, that academic politics of the "small p" variety is rampant in our universities. More substantively, poststructuralist theorists of varying affinities have delivered the basic critique forcefully and persistently over the past three decades: all knowledge claims are produced in a political context; notions of objectivity that ignore or deny these facilitating conditions take on a de facto political positioning of their own, made more blatant and unavoidable by the very disavowal.¹ Further, if we consider the full spectrum of affiliations that the word *political* entails, we find politics in academe at every turn as high-level professors shuttle back and forth between the university and government or private sector pursuits. Nevertheless, graduate students and junior faculty members are regularly warned against putting scholarship in the service of struggles for social justice, on the grounds that, however worthy, such a combination deprives the work of complexity, compromises its methodological rigor, and, for these reasons, puts career advancement at risk.

This volume advances the opposite argument—that research and political engagement can be mutually enriching—and offers a wide range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives on how the two have been brought together. The essays collected here are meant to chart some paths taken and to inspire others to follow, not by glossing over difficulties and contradictions, but by confronting them head on. One of the principal reasons for the skeptical reception of activist scholarship within the academy in the past has been the tendency for proponents to make the case in terms that sound overly celebratory or sanguine. In contrast, by naming and confronting the contradictions from the outset, we deflect the common objection that activist scholars seek reductive, politically instrumental truths at the expense of social complexity. Another principal reason that activist scholarship of the type documented here has made only small inroads in our universities is that the institutional powers that be find it threatening. Such conflicts are real and at times daunting. Yet the essays here in general emphasize a different scenario, in which modest institutionalization of activist scholarship, as one option among many, can help universities resolve specific problems and can enrich the entire spectrum of scholarly and pedagogic goals that universities encompass. The fact that support for this volume came from the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) constitutes a resounding vote of confidence in this pluralist scenario; such support illustrates

broader trends in the United States and internationally, to be revisited later in this introduction, that substantiate the steady increase in legitimacy and recognition of activist scholarship today.

At the same time, activist scholars, at least in North America and Europe, are still mainly located at the margins of mainstream academic institutions and often prefer to speak from these locations. The contributors to this volume, for example, are predominantly scholars of color, many of whom are associated with ethnic studies programs and have greater affinities with imagined political-intellectual communities revolving around feminist theory, critical race theory, and activist scholarship itself than with the disciplines in which they were trained. The preponderance of scholars of color in this volume stems neither from a superficial celebration of diversity nor from a facile elevation of experience as a privileged source of analytical insight and political authority. Rather, it is the expression of a basic principle: for people who feel directly and personally connected to broader experiences of oppression and to struggles for empowerment, claims of objectivity are more apt to sound like self-serving maneuvers to preserve hierarchy and privilege; and the idea of putting scholarship to the service of their own communities' empowerment and well-being is more apt to sound like a sensible, if not an inevitable, way to practice their profession. For those, like myself, who do not claim such experience-based connections, the move is one of active alignment, avoiding the righteous fervor of a convert/traitor while rejecting the privilege-laden option to remain outside the fray. Activist scholarship, in this sense, is inevitably (at least for the foreseeable future) a practice from the margins, undertaken for us all out of motives that variously combine necessity and choice.

The essays gathered here are intended to till a field, not to fill a container. A review of the literature on activist scholarship, known by an array of specific names (*action research, participatory action research, collaborative research, grounded theory, public intellectual work, engaged research*, and the like), yields a large number of works of the "container" variety: attempts first to stake out definitional ground and then to establish rules, procedures, and best practices, often in the tone of a "how-to" manual. Such texts have their place, but they can also be constraining. In contrast, the challenge here is to provide a general mapping of how people think about and practice activist scholarship, while leaving the research process fully open to contradiction, serendipity, and reflexive critique. The authors in this collection have met this challenge by taking a strongly experience-based approach: explaining what they

do, what the consequences are, and how a certain kind of scholarship has emerged from their own particular blends of political commitments and research practice. Some of the essays are more general and programmatic, others more empirically focused, and taken together they constitute not a unified method but an open field with a fair amount of shared ground.

At the risk of unwarranted enclosure of the field, this introductory chapter attempts to identify the shared ground and briefly to explore some of the implications that follow. Each author makes her or his political alignments explicit, rejecting the assertion that this would somehow undermine scholarly rigor. Alignments with specific groups of people, in turn, foster a commitment to listen closely to them, to assign special importance to their agency and standpoint. This requires a certain practice of qualitative research methods, not as a sole defining feature, but as a necessary element to ensure that these people's voices are heard. The practice of qualitative research methods is not sufficient, however, given the further principle that the people who are subjects of research play a central role, not as "informants" or "data sources," but as knowledgeable, empowered participants in the entire research process. Once the research topic has been determined through horizontal dialogue of this sort, the participants assume a special responsibility for the validity of the research outcome, knowing that it is apt to have direct applicability in their own lives. For all the variation in discipline, empirical focus, and method represented here, this last feature stands out as fundamental: activist scholars work in dialogue, collaboration, alliance with people who are struggling to better their lives; activist scholarship embodies a responsibility for results that these "allies" can recognize as their own, value in their own terms, and use as they see fit. In this way, activist scholarship redefines, and arguably raises the stakes for, what counts as high-quality research outcomes; this, in turn, gives it the potential to yield knowledge, analysis, and theoretical understanding that would otherwise be impossible to achieve.

This summary is intended not to close discussion but to invite critical scrutiny and reformulation, some of which will come from these very pages. To make the invitation complete, the argument needs to be filled out, especially in relation to three assertions embedded in the preceding paragraph, regarding methodological rigor, scholarly privilege, and theoretical innovation. Each can be framed and explored in relation to a countervailing challenge. First, how can activist scholarship claim methodological rigor while rejecting the positivist notion of objectivity that

has been the lynchpin of such claims throughout the twentieth century? Second, once political engagement has been established as a defining feature of one's scholarship, doesn't this mean relinquishing the control necessary to ensure a high-quality outcome? Third, isn't activist research more accurately portrayed as the "praxis" side of the theory-and-praxis combination, which in turn leaves it poorly suited to yield theoretical innovation? In the pages that follow, I briefly recount the genesis of this volume, from a proposal to the SSRC-sponsored International Peace and Security (IPS) program to its current state. I then draw on the essays in this volume to elaborate on the assertions and to address their countervailing challenges, devoting one section to each.

HOW THIS VOLUME CAME TO BE

For me the account begins in revolutionary Nicaragua. During the 1980s I worked for about five years with a Nicaraguan organization called the Center for Research and Documentation on the Atlantic Coast (CIDCA), which carried out research and analysis in critical support of the Sandinista revolution. Simultaneously, I carried out research on my dissertation, focused on conflict between the Sandinista state and Miskitu Indians, and on the eventual negotiated settlement, sealed when the central government granted rights to autonomy for indigenous and black inhabitants of the coastal region. From this experience I gained an introduction to activist scholarship, became convinced of its promise (even amid intense contradictions), and developed something of an expertise in the broader topic of "ethnic conflict," which would gain great prominence in global post-Cold War political and intellectual agendas. This expertise, combined with the practical, problem-solving orientation that activist research embodies, left me well suited to join the Global Security and Cooperation (GSC) program associated with the SSRC and funded by the MacArthur Foundation.² First as a postdoctoral fellow (1989-91), and later as a committee member, I maintained a thirteen-year association with this program, participating in many of the yearly fellows' conferences and later in the selection of fellows and, as the sole anthropologist on the committee, working with others to bring an anthropological and "human security" perspective to the program. Not until 2001, however, did the opportunity arise to make a direct connection between my activist research experience and the GSC program.

In 1999 the MacArthur Foundation renewed a five-year cycle of support for the GSC program, with a bold two-pronged methodological in-

novation. The new guidelines mandated a vigorous internationalization of peace and security studies and required fellowship research proposals to have a "collaborative" component, understood as research designed to cross the boundaries of distinct realms of knowledge production (i.e., academics in cooperation with nongovernmental organization [NGO], government, private sector, or social movement intellectuals). In keeping with the first objective of internationalization, the new thirteen-member committee had only two U.S.-born scholars and included a fascinating, dynamic roster of accomplished intellectuals who combined scholarly endeavors with political engagements of diverse sorts and sequences. In addition to fellowships and the yearly conferences, this GSC program allocated a certain portion of its budget to "field-building" projects, proposed by committee members, with the purpose of exploring and strengthening some facet of the program's new mandate. After long discussions with others on the committee, especially Dani Nabudere and Francis Loh, I submitted a proposal for a field-building project to explore the contributions of "activist scholarship" to the broader rubric of "collaborative research." This proposal, which included a workshop and commissioned essays for a volume, was finally approved in our biyearly committee meeting of early September 2001.

That turned out to be the last selection meeting that the GSC program ever had. Global turmoil in the months after the 9/11 attacks and new leadership in the MacArthur Foundation converged to produce an abrupt change of course in the foundation's nearly two-decade program of support for the progressive transformation of "security studies." While the pre-9/11 programmatic goals had included decentralization of U.S. dominance in security studies, methodological innovation, and distinctly plural notions of security, the post-9/11 MacArthur funding, we were informed, would shift (back) to terrorism, technology, weapons of mass destruction, and other U.S.-centered definitions of the field. While commitments already made would be respected, all remaining funding would be reallocated toward these new goals, and the GSC Committee would be disbanded. By the time of the activist scholarship workshop in Los Angeles (April 2003), the GSC program was closing accounts, and the audacious alternative vision of security studies, while arguably more urgently needed than ever before, had lost a major source of both economic backing and institutional legitimacy. The SSRC continued to support this book on activist scholarship, even though forces of global change had conspired to eliminate the stimulating programmatic setting from which the idea had originally emerged.

To plan the Los Angeles workshop and to gather the participants for this volume, I drew heavily on the activist scholarship communities taking shape at the University of Texas. My colleague João Costa Vargas had recently completed a long stint with the Coalition Against Police Abuse (CAPA) and offered to arrange for our workshop to be held at the CAPA offices in East Los Angeles, with the endorsement of CAPA director Michael Zinzun. CAPA turned out to be a uniquely stimulating locale for this workshop. The concrete and often urgent character of CAPA's work served as a constant grounding, and CAPA members, especially Zinzun himself, participated actively in our discussions, offering forceful reminders of how political practice and broader analysis could enrich one another. In the subsequent months we began planning at the University of Texas for the first annual "Abriendo Brecha" Activist Scholarship Conference (held in February 2004), which provided ample space for further discussion of these issues and keynote venues for early versions of the chapters of Ruth Wilson Gilmore (chapter 1) and George Lipsitz (chapter 3). Other authors were recruited to the volume with multiple goals in mind: diversity in disciplinary coverage, substantive focus, and methodological approaches to activist scholarship, as well as shared political sensibilities.

This last criterion merits further explanation. Although I have not inquired systematically about the authors' political principles and commitments, I suspect they vary widely in many ways; some of these differences surely announce themselves in this volume. By shared political sensibilities, I do not mean homogeneity, but rather a shared commitment to basic principles of social justice that is attentive to inequalities of race, gender, class and sexuality and aligned with struggles to confront and eliminate them. This volume makes no pretense of encompassing the full political spectrum in the name of equal coverage or balance, and indeed such an approach would not be viable. I contend that there is a strong elective affinity between the authors' shared political sensibilities and the activist research methods they employ and that the politics and the methods challenge and enrich one another. While it is possible in an abstract sense to speak of "activist research of the right," an explicit practice along these lines is unlikely to emerge for two reasons. First, to the extent that right-wing or conservative ideologies tend to uphold and justify social inequalities rather than contest them, the pretense of value neutrality is a much more effective means to this end than explicit political alignment with the powerful. Second, even if an "activist research of the right" could be aligned with the relatively pow-

erless (e.g., conservative Christians, heartland antiabortion activists), the activist research methods (horizontal dialogue and broad-based participation in each phase of the research; critical scrutiny of the analytical frame; thorough critical self-reflection) would tend to be antithetical to the political goals and vision of the people in question. In short, activist scholarship methods themselves embody a politics, which the authors affirm and critically explore; this affirmation, in turn, far from an admission of "political bias," is a step toward deeper reflection on the entanglement of researcher and subject and, by extension, toward greater methodological rigor.

RECLAIMING METHODOLOGICAL RIGOR

One can reduce biases and increase objectivity within social science. However, such cannot be achieved through repetition of the formula "I am objective," but through examination of the impact of ethical and political decisions upon social research.

GIDEON SJOBERG, preface to *Ethics, Politics, and Social Research*

Any attempt to make the case for activist scholarship runs directly up against objections, encapsulated in three powerful words: positivism, objectivity, and rigor. In most essays of this volume, the authors acknowledge these critiques and hold their ground, often by advancing explicit counteranalysis. In part, this counteranalysis is fueled by the now-familiar deconstructive moves: against positivism as an apology for Western imperial reason; against objectivity as a smoke screen for alignment with the powerful; against methodological rigor as a fetishization of data in the absence of critical scrutiny of underlying social categories and precepts. Yet in part the authors' commitments to activist scholarship also engender a different strategy: endorsing deconstructive counteranalysis, while at the same time taking care not to throw out the baby with the bathwater. The impetus here is not some spurious notion of balance but rather a need to make sure that, when dialogue begins with an organization, social movement, or group of people in struggle, the activist scholar has concrete and potentially useful research skills to bring to the table. While the deconstruction of "bad" science will often have an important role to play, it is rarely enough. In the move from critique to alternative, the very terms being critiqued, especially *methodological rigor*, may need to be reclaimed.

For good reason, the term *positivism* has come to epitomize the social science tradition against which activist scholars must take a stand. But at first glance it is not completely clear why this should be so. The bare-bones elements of positivist research methods, especially in their twentieth-century "logical" variant, are partial and naive but otherwise disarmingly mild: pose only those questions that can be answered by marshaling verifiable (replicable) data; apply rationalist logic; seek parsimonious explanation.³ The twentieth-century history of professionalization of the social sciences can be recounted as a systematic process of harnessing these elements to sweeping precepts of societal organization, which can easily be shown to be profoundly ideological: that the natural sciences provide the best model for understanding and organizing human interaction; that value- and location-neutral data collection (the research equivalent of the market's "invisible hand") is the underpinning for just and valid societal decision making; that, correctly applied, these precepts will yield steady progress toward a good society. Standpoint theorists such as Sandra Harding (2005) and Patricia Hill Collins (2000) have been especially effective in exposing the noxious effects of these precepts, their barely concealed articulations with the enduring inequalities of our times. In chapter 10, Jessica Gordon Nembhard advances a closely parallel critique of neoclassical economics, perhaps the most well-defended safe haven of this positivist ideology in the social sciences. While decades of critique have made some headway in revealing the organic relationship between positivism and these inequalities—along the lines of gender and racial or cultural difference, for example—such arguments have achieved most traction when advanced in the language of science, showing, for example, that embedded assumptions of invisibility or inferiority are "bad science." The general result is small (if at times substantive) reformulations in the positivist repertoire that do not challenge its overall relationship to the reproduction of patriarchal and racial capitalism.

While it is tempting, and at times necessary, to present this full-throttle critique of positivism's noxious ideological affinities as the final word, a number of the essays in this volume suggest a more nuanced position. Unqualified endorsement of the deconstructive critique of positivism does not leave the activist scholar well positioned to carry forward his or her project for two distinct reasons. The first has to do with the kinds of knowledge production that the activist scholar's allies are carrying out, and asking for, to advance their struggles. The offices of CAPA, where Vargas worked, are filled with archives on cases of police

abuse, each one carefully registered and correlated with other data on the LAPD. Samuel Martínez (in chapter 7) and Shannon Speed (in chapter 8) both describe research in conjunction with legal struggles that hinge upon positive evidence on rights and their violation. Gordon Nembhard, after her critique of neoclassical economics, turns to her own ambitious research agenda on "democratic community economics," which includes an effort to determine the conditions for success and failure of cooperative subaltern economic enterprises. Each of these examples also points to the second rationale for a distinct position: not only is there at times a need for knowledge with positivist attributes, but also positivist knowledge claims are hegemonic in most settings where our allies work and struggle. To defend or advance a given position, we often have no choice but to state the case in the language of science, even while harboring critical reservations about the dominant role that language often plays. Together, these two rationales add up to a dual stance, mildly contradictory but inevitably so, in which the Western positivist tradition is both thoroughly deconstructed and partially reclaimed. The particulars of this duality vary widely by project and, as Laura Pulido insightfully notes in chapter 13, by the temperament and training of the activist scholar; at times the requirements of the duality can best be met by a collective approach, whereby different individuals do different parts. Yet in general, Sandra Harding (2005, 349) seems right to suggest that full-throttle antipositivism can inadvertently lend support to the neopositivist camp by portraying the target of critique in such encompassing, homogeneous, and all-or-nothing terms. In good subaltern fashion, there may be more subversive potential in a strategic duality that both advances the critique and reclaims the assertions that connect data collection and analysis to notions of the good society, insisting that this chain of connections is something about which we have a lot to say.

A parallel, more specific recovery effort already has met with some success in the case of the term *objectivity*. The critiques are well known and well deserved. Over the years, notions of objectivity have been consistently deployed to keep women, African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans out of academic positions, to defend white privilege, and to conceal the specific power relations in which social science research is inevitably enmeshed. During the Cold War, persecution of left-leaning scholars was often justified with reference to supposed violations in the notion of objectivity, as David Price's (2004) new book on anthropology painstakingly documents. There is evidence to suggest

that such persecution may again be on the rise; if so, objectivity is sure to be pressed into service once again. The problem, as João H. Costa Vargas pointedly argues in chapter 6, is the two-pronged disavowal that has turned the recourse to objectivity into a tendentious challenge: claiming objectivity has come to be equated with a refusal to acknowledge the intersubjective character of data collection in social science research; and speaking objectively has come to mean that the speaker has no history, identity, or social position that has shaped his or her perspective. This challenge is tendentious because it disguises a blatant political-ideological stance in methodological garb and then, in a perverse reversal, dismisses these methodological postulates (intersubjectivity and positionality) as political interventions that compromise good science.

One effective way to do battle against such tendentious uses of objectivity is to reclaim the term by giving it a new meaning. Many decades ago, in a pioneering examination of the ethics and politics of social science research, Gideon Sjoberg (1967) pointed in this direction, suggesting that greater objectivity could be achieved by a deepened awareness of the ethical-political context of research. More recently, Donna Haraway (1988) gave this alternative reading a more elaborated feminist grounding, advancing the explicit argument that "situated knowledge" is more insightful, complete, and accountable. Haraway's famous justification for positioned objectivity in feminist approaches to science—that otherwise we would be forced into the position "They're just texts anyway, so let the boys have them back"—seems equally applicable to activist research in general. The stakes are too high and the mantle of objectivity is too powerful for us to simply refuse association with the term; according to the resignified definition, after all, activist scholarship can plausibly be presented as more objective.

This recovery might even begin with Max Weber and his iconic text on objectivity in the social sciences (Weber 1949). Although Weber ultimately defends the ideal of objectivity, he does so while acknowledging that any given notion of objective social science will be culturally and historically particular, shaped by provisional societal consensus rather than by universal standards of validity. This leads him to admit that the "highest ideals" of Western societies, which "move us most forcefully" and frame "our" notions of objectivity, can prevail only through "struggle with other ideals which are just as sacred to others as ours are to us" (72). He defends this struggle, while acknowledging that "our" culturally and historically particular frame remains "perpetually in flux, ever subject to change in the dimly seen future of human culture" (111).

Weber's proposed resolution to this subjectivity problem sounds surprisingly convergent with Haraway's later intervention: any given evaluative frame on which notions of objectivity rest is historically given and must be subjected to critical analysis itself. Somewhere along the way Weber himself undermined this key insight by assuming that a certain variant of Western rationality was both ascendant and superior, an assumption that made full critical scrutiny of his own standpoint both difficult and unnecessary. (His latter-day interpreters may well have reinforced this abdication.) But the resignified notion of objectivity may draw even on Weber (along with the usual roster of activist scholar "ancestors") as a source of inspiration. This requires explicit critical reflection on one's own subjectivity as a researcher (as Martínez notes in chapter 7, not just where you stand, but where you come from; not just how you think about yourself, but how you are viewed and positioned in the social context of your work) and systematic monitoring of how our relationship to research subjects affects both the content and the meaning of the data we collect. Since activist research orients reflection and analysis precisely along these lines, we are well positioned to claim a resignified objectivity, while at the same time critiquing its hegemonic (mis)use.

The same argument applied to the term *methodological rigor* has an even more compelling rationale. It is crucial that activist scholars claim rigor because in practice our research requires precisely that. Given the collaborative character of activist research projects, getting it wrong means not only unfavorable reviews from academic peers or a delay in one's promotion schedule but, much more seriously, data and analysis that could harm or mislead our allies. Moreover, as Davydd Greenwood points out in chapter 12, activist research methods have a built-in test of validity that is much more demanding and stringent than conventional alternatives: Is it comprehensible to, and does it work for, a specific group of people who helped to formulate the research goals to begin with? The principal barriers here are the mainstream's association of methodological rigor with the scholar's ultimate and absolute control over the research process and its fetishization of large quantitative data sets as proof that findings are valid and incontrovertible. The question of control I take up in the following section; suffice it to say here that if rigor stands in direct contradiction to horizontal dialogue and egalitarian distribution of the benefits from research, then this highlights the parts of the term's baggage that we are well advised to stop carrying. The second barrier is less challenging: quantitative methods certainly

have their place in activist scholarship so long as they are combined with the kind of qualitative research that generates healthy skepticism of the data and their categories and that opens a space for our allies to scrutinize and participate actively in pragmatic evaluation of the results. After taking these provisos into account, it seems both appropriate and necessary for activist scholars to endorse the canons of methodological rigor most applicable to their topic, to scrupulously follow them, and to assertively report this compliance, both in scholarly settings and in dialogue with allies, who will have their own abiding interest in getting the research right. Especially given that the criteria for rigor have been expanded and made more stringent in that they include systematic reflection on the positioned and intersubjective character of the research process, activist scholars would seem to be ideally situated to make this case.

If these arguments for reclaiming the very tools that have been used to delegitimize activist research are to be persuasive, the contradictions involved in such an effort cannot be denied or downplayed. In the first place, as already mentioned, to subvert the hegemonic meanings of terms like these inevitably involves a certain degree of compromise: the hegemonic power of the term *objectivity* must be partially endorsed for the full potential of its alternative—*positioned objectivity*—to be realized and for this struggle for rearticulation to be worth waging. Moreover, there are inherent contradictions between the two parts of the dyad of activism and scholarship that we cannot reasonably expect to eliminate and that have a direct bearing on the methodology: differences in the time frame for doing the analysis; long-standing institutionalized inequalities along the lines of race, class, gender, and sexuality among the bodies that populate academia and in the societies that we study; specific power differentials that derive from the relative privilege of advanced research training; the tension between scholars' conditioned drive for comprehensive knowledge and full disclosure and activists' more instrumental and selective proclivities—the list goes on. The point is that most of these tensions arise in mainstream social science research as well, especially when such research is focused on processes of social domination, mobilization, conflict, and change. Activist researchers may at times accentuate the tensions, but we also make an explicit commitment to name and confront them. Herein lies the principal basis for the claim to methodological rigor: a deeper and more sustained analysis of the sociopolitical conditions that frame the research question and the research process. Finally, amid the contradictions that activist scholarship

brings to the fore, some constitute a proactive agenda for social change in the academic realm: against the unearned privilege embedded in mainstream forms of knowledge production, and for a democratization of research, to go hand in hand with the much more commonly advocated (though still only sporadically practiced) democratization of pedagogy and education. This productive contradiction is the focus of the following section.

CHALLENGING INEQUITY, UNLEARNING PRIVILEGE, AND FINDING A HOME

Not one of the authors in this collection feels completely at home in his or her discipline or in the university setting where he or she works. Many have found a more hospitable environment in interdisciplinary programs or ethnic studies departments; Dani Wadada Nabudere (chapter 2), who once worked in established African academic institutions, founded the Afrika Study Center, which allows him more fully to pursue his activist scholarship commitments. Even for those who have supportive immediate work environs, Shirley Suet-ling Tang's description, in chapter 9, of a "nepantla" space, a term borrowed from the late Gloria Anzaldúa, is still apt to resonate. Commitments to activist scholarship can leave one feeling torn (if not mildly schizophrenic), stretched too thin, and resentful, especially toward the larger academic community, whose reaction generally ranges from indifference to outright hostility. Gordon Nembhard is hard at work studying what most reasonable people would agree are among the critical life-and-death societal problems of the twenty-first century, yet she finds her economics colleagues largely unreceptive; Greenwood's essay (chapter 12) expresses a cumulative frustration with anthropology's indifference to activist research, which he argues is rooted in the systematic, concerted banishment of collaborative knowledge production from the academy. Part of the project of activist scholarship, in light of these experiences, is to effect institutional change, creating more supportive space for the particular kind of research that we do.

Central to this agenda for institutional change, as many of the authors in this volume forcefully argue, is to challenge and unlearn the deeply embedded unearned privileges of social science and humanities research. The adjective *unearned* is crucial here, deployed with a meaning roughly parallel to the one invoked by critical race theorists who have urged us to think about unearned privilege in racial hierarchies

(e.g., Lipsitz 1995; Frankenberg 1994; Fine et al. 1997). Many facets of a recent PhD's newfound expertise are well earned: skills, experience, and wisdom that form the basis of what activist scholars have to offer in the first place. In this sense Gilmore's admonition (in chapter 1) to would-be activist researchers who lament that they have nothing to offer to social movements is important. But other privileges associated with higher education almost everywhere have little or no rationale in relation to the basic goal of scholarly excellence. These begin with the race, class, and gender composition of our universities, as Jemima Pierre (chapter 4) forcefully argues. The reinforcement of white privilege, which inevitably occurs, for example, when predominantly white researchers study social processes in racially diverse societies, is not just ethically wrong; it also makes for parochial scholarship. As Pierre suggests, diversifying the cadre of scholars, especially in relation to certain key issues under study, is an indispensable first step in any effort to make an institutional home for activist research.

Challenges to other forms of privilege logically follow. Nearly all the authors in this volume report that a good part of their insight and analysis—not just their data—comes from the communities, organizations, and movements with which they are aligned. These long-term involvements, in Peter Nien-chu Kiang's narrative (chapter 11), have always been the primary source of inspiration and guidance for his work within the academy. In chapter 3, Lipsitz presents this relationship as a generalized feature of activist scholarship, with benefits that flow in both directions. This being the case, another, even more fiercely guarded privilege of mainstream academia is called directly into question: privilege associated with ultimate authority and control over the process of knowledge production. At each stage in this process—from the selection of the research topic to the ownership and dissemination of the results—if the subjects of research have an additional quota of real control, the researcher will have devolved some significant quota of her own. Tang, in chapter 9, makes this point especially powerfully in her narrative of her research experiences and their goals: her research is designed primarily to enhance the capacity of organized Khmer American communities to identify, analyze, and devise solutions to the key problems that they face. This goal directly challenges the standard privilege-laden alternative: for the researcher to produce original, innovative results that advance the frontiers of knowledge in a given area. Martínez, in chapter 7, expresses the same insight in a different way: conventional scholarship is designed to achieve maximum output (where *maximum* is

variously defined in quantity and quality terms), while activist research seeks equitable returns. To acknowledge the privileges associated with "maximum output"—even when the output is social justice aligned, what Gilmore (1993) calls "luxury production" progressive scholarship—is to highlight the fundamental, age-old question that activist scholarship always brings to the fore: "Research for whom?" The answers that activist scholars give to this question are widely varying and often multifaceted, including but also adamantly reaching beyond the conventional monothematic response, "For other scholars like me."

This insistence on posing the "Research for whom?" question makes for a generally awkward relationship between activist scholarship and "luxury" knowledge production—even of the progressive variety. Proponents of the latter generate crucial data and critical analysis that can expose the workings of power inequities, help engender fresh understandings of complex analytical questions, and push us to ask new questions or forge new approaches to existing problems, all of which can have great practical and strategic value for a given organized group in struggle. Yet it is also very likely to remain one step removed, in accordance with its primary and explicit purpose: to speak to other scholars and scholars in the making who read the same work, engage one another in dialogue, and belong to the same imagined intellectual community. Within anthropology, I have suggested, this is the realm of "cultural critique" (Hale 2006); activist scholarship needs cultural critique (and presumably the converse is also true), but the two can be sharply differentiated on methodological grounds with regard to the relationship between the researcher and the political process under study. Pierre, in chapter 4, usefully points out that some activist research takes place in alignment with an imagined organized group in struggle before that struggle has explicitly emerged and that the activist scholar's political alignments—with the African diaspora in her case—call into question any neat dichotomy between inside and outside academia. The awkwardness follows: it seems important to defend these dichotomies (inside/outside; cultural critique/alignment with an organized group in struggle) and also to acknowledge that the resulting categories are fluid and fraught. The "Knowledge for whom?" question, as Pierre's essay demonstrates, rests on an implied concreteness and specificity that can be misleading. Yet if that question is not centrally posed, and the answer is not systematically probed, we can reasonably assume that the unearned privileges of conventional research methods are being left unchallenged.

A parallel complexity arises in relation to the question of institutionalization: How important is it for activist scholars to have a home? One could argue, with perhaps only a hint of irony, that one source of activist scholarship's integrity is that it has been practiced mainly by individuals and networks of scholars throughout the world in the relative absence of institutionalization. This may be especially true in the United States. Kiang's essay eloquently narrates this predicament in the case of Asian American studies: how the field has gradually drifted away from its "revolutionary origins," partly as a consequence of the protagonists' ability to negotiate with, and gain entry into, mainstream academia. Ironically, the skills, experience, and wisdom gained in the prior phase of community organizing and direct political action worked all too well. Greenwood's essay offers a political-institutional explanation for this outcome: the systematic suppression of an egalitarian and reciprocal mode of knowledge production—what he calls *phronesis*—that has occurred with the professionalization of one social science discipline after another.

A somewhat different caution against institutionalization comes from activist scholars with strong poststructuralist affinities, which engender an abiding skepticism of any organized effort that involves wielding (rather than simply contesting) power. The founding statement of the World Anthropology Network (2003), in general an inspiring, parallel effort to the ones documented here, vividly frames this tension. The goal, they argue, is to create a fluid network of "nonhegemonic" scholars who ask all the critical questions, practice anthropology differently in accordance with their answers, yet assiduously avoid anything that could even faintly resemble an alternative structure with its own ideologies, practices, and forms of governance (see also Ribeiro 2006). The principled consistency of this position is appealing, especially when understood in the spirit of the visionary projects of Third World feminists such as Chela Sandoval (2000), who challenge us to develop radically new ways of thinking and doing politics. The danger that Sandoval's challenge warns us against is depressingly familiar: organized struggles for social justice that, for a combination of reasons, end up taking on noxious features of their adversaries and oppressors. In my own reading of the essays collected here I sense a general, hearty endorsement of Sandoval's warning and vision, with perhaps a mild Gramscian corrective: we need to create and defend safe spaces from which to carry out activist scholarship within often inhospitable environments; this requires us to wage a struggle from within, to negotiate and even to

wield the modest quotas of institutional power to achieve our goals, while remaining especially vigilant toward the destructive allure of the elitism and hierarchy that surround us.

While seeking this delicate balance within academia, to the extent that we continue to make our provisional homes there, the source of confidence that we are on the right track will come primarily not from academic validation or rewards but rather from the people with whom we build activist research relationships. As Martínez perceptively notes in his reflections on his activist research experience in the Dominican Republic (chapter 7), his activist-intellectual allies were not especially impressed with his academic credentials; they placed much greater importance on efficacy, trust, and long-term commitment. Bringing a geographer's sensibilities to this question, Pulido, in chapter 13, identifies "place" as a critical feature of her own activist research practice, place as socially constructed and peopled, an imagined community of which she forms a part, such that efficacy, trust, and commitment have to do with how she leads her life, quite apart from their role in her research method. This same reverence for place led Jennifer Bickham Mendez (chapter 5) from activist research among *maquila* workers in Nicaragua to similar work on fair-wage campaigns on her own university campus, a move toward "homework" that is essential if activist scholarship is to be held accountable to its own demanding principles.

This accountability, in turn, has to be the most important counterweight to the elitism and hierarchy that pervades conventional forms of knowledge production. Anthropology, for example, has long been constituted around the hallowed principle of telling stories, doing analysis from the "native's point of view." However important this principle, and despite its vaguely populist implications, it carries no inherent impetus to unlearn the privileges associated with the scholar's ultimate control over the research process and sole authority to interpret its results. The same goes for textual reflexivity, which purports to dissipate this authority simply by acknowledging it afterward in an eloquently written anthropological text. When Tang describes her own research priorities, the counterpoint comes especially clearly into focus. Produce some exciting theoretical breakthrough that her colleague-gatekeepers will recognize and reward as such? Perhaps, but this goal will have to wait its turn, patiently, behind two more important ones: capacity building and problem solving, according to the express needs of her place, her communities in struggle. If these priorities are forcefully present in the modest institutional homes for activist scholarship that we create, they

will provide a conducive environment—without guarantees, of course—for the egalitarian patterns of knowledge production, and even the alternative ways of wielding power and doing politics, to which activist scholarship aspires.

Yet Tang's resolute statement of priorities, echoed in varying ways by all the authors in this volume, also frames a predicament of individual and collective viability for all those who practice activist scholarship in mainstream university settings. Is there, in fact, a tradeoff between this specific criterion of efficacy and the broader goal of advancing the frontiers of knowledge on a given topic? If so, then the quest to create a home for activist scholarship in institutions where the "frontiers of knowledge" criterion remains intact and dominant is advisable only for those who have job security, who are resigned to willed marginality and to job satisfaction that comes, in the fine tradition of Sisyphus, from constant struggle rather than forward progress. But I fear that even these stalwart few are bound to grow tired and resentful sooner or later. In part the authors gathered here affirm this predicament, and a close reading reveals that nearly everyone is contemplating and exploring, if not actively creating, alternative homes where activist scholarship can be practiced under more hospitable, if less secure and less well-compensated, conditions. Another response to this predicament, very much in the spirit of social struggle that these essays encapsulate, is to change the criteria by which universities evaluate and reward their faculty. There is no reason, as Martínez, Greenwood, and others suggest, why well-documented activist scholarship, evaluated according to its own criteria of efficacy and contribution to social justice struggles, should not enter into the assessment of a given faculty member's value to the university. Yet in part also the authors respond with a direct counterchallenge: making sure first that the "frontiers of knowledge" criterion is sufficiently open and pluralist, and then moving directly to the audacious claim that activist scholarship, quite apart from its other attributes, can also be a privileged source of theoretical innovation. The third and final section of this introduction is devoted to exploring this counterchallenge.

EPISTEMOLOGY AND THEORETICAL INNOVATION

Activist scholarship, as noted earlier, is practiced under many different specific names, which at times connote key methodological, analytical, or

political distinctions and at times simply reflect academic product differentiation. Nabudere (chapter 2) provides an intellectual genealogy that also helps to explain one very important political-methodological distinction, between the more institutional "northern" and more empowerment-oriented "southern" variants of our craft. Lykes and Coquillon (2007), Naples (2003), and Bickham Mendez (chapter 5) all reference currents of activist or action research that, despite lofty egalitarian rhetoric, end up reinforcing patriarchal structures, ideology, and practice. Similarly, there is serious reason to question to the extent to which activist scholarship, carried out by predominantly white scholars in Third World settings, or among communities of color in the North, is capable of countering the structured hierarchies of racial privilege. This question highlights another fault line, between variants of this practice that are "race critical" and those that are not. The term *activist research* is not meant to define a clear category beyond all these internal differences; and I sincerely doubt that any author in this collection is interested in devoting energy to defend one self-descriptive term instead of another. Perhaps the only easily and usefully agreed-upon connotation of the term *activist research*, in relation to the others, is an acute awareness of all these fault lines and a commitment to work on them, without any expectation that they will go away. This broad and pluralist approach should then free us up to formulate and explore a general proposition: research that is predicated on alignment with a group of people organized in struggle, and on collaborative relations of knowledge production with members of that group, has the potential to yield privileged insight, analysis, and theoretical innovation that otherwise would be impossible to achieve.

One point of departure for probing this assertion is the notion of "positioned objectivity" discussed earlier. The very conditions of activist research place the scholar in an advantageous position to develop a deep, multifaceted, and complex understanding of the topic under study. The chapters of this volume are filled with examples of this "positionality" advantage. Bickham Mendez (chapter 5) takes part in strategy sessions of workers' rights struggles in both Nicaragua and Williamsburg because she has positioned herself as an ally of, and participant in, those struggles. Nabudere (chapter 2) convincingly argues that the indigenous knowledge systems he seeks to understand would remain hidden or invisible in the absence of simultaneous efforts to strengthen and valorize them. Pierre (chapter 4) adds another facet to this argument by emphasizing how interpellation by societal categories created and produced

quite apart from individual intention or volition helps further to constitute this positioned objectivity. When she and the Ghanaians she worked with were all barred from entering a nightclub, and when she, along with them, responded with political outrage rather than aseptic ethnographic curiosity, the event became a critical juncture in her forging of a distinctive analysis of racism and racial formation in Ghana. This example also serves as a caution against celebratory portrayals of the purported positionality advantage: there can be risks and hurtful consequences, there are always difficulties, and as Martínez reminds us (in chapter 7), the desired or ideal relationship of positioned objectivity is often not fully achieved. But every essay in this volume provides affirming examples of the relationship, which cumulatively make for a very powerful argument: that activist research methods regularly yield special insight, insider knowledge, and experience-based understanding.

This argument opens onto another that moves us from positionality to the actual process of knowledge production. Standpoint theory, by making visible the "relations between politics and the scientific production of knowledge" (Harding 2005, 359), has set the stage nicely for activist scholars to pose the analogous self-reflexive question about our own work: How do our political alignments, and the corresponding methodological commitments, shape the forms of knowledge that we produce? Lipsitz's essay (chapter 3) provides a broad answer to this question, arguing that social movements are carriers of unique knowledge of the immediate conditions of their struggles and that scholars aligned with these movements are at times permitted to share in that insight. Crucially, he goes on to provide a series of specific topics—from the prison-industrial complex, to environmental racism, to the intersectional character of global inequality—whose key conceptual advances, recognized as such by mainstream academia, came from activist scholarship. Speed's ethnography (chapter 8) provides another concrete example of this theoretical innovation by showing how participation in an indigenous community's struggle for land rights led her to rethink, at the indigenous activist-intellectuals' resolute insistence, the notions of identity as fluid pastiche and of "strategic essentialism" that have become standard contents in the anthropological tool kit. Joanne Rappaport (2005), conducting activist research with indigenous movements in Colombia, came to a similar conclusion.

Finally, this proposition ultimately raises questions of epistemology. Greenwood (chapter 12) offers the most explicit epistemological explanation for why activist scholarship is well positioned to yield theoretical

innovation: it uses a collaborative mode of knowledge production he calls *phronesis*, a practice that draws out the vast knowledge of the protagonists themselves, to put this in horizontal dialogue with the scholars' distinctive perspective and to keep the resulting creative tension intact as an experience-based challenge to conventional academic wisdom. Others might take issue with some of the specifics of this formulation. Vargas, for example, traces most of his theoretical insight directly back to the wisdom already present in repertoires of the activist-intellectuals with whom he works, and he presents himself more as an apprentice and a scribe than as a full-fledged co-producer of knowledge (chapter 6; see also Vargas 2006). Tang, as mentioned earlier, suggests that even to think of this co-produced knowledge as theoretical innovation within academia may be an unwelcome distraction from the primary objectives of her work. There is no need to seek uniformity in these details to register consensus on the broader point: whatever we contribute, as activist scholars, to struggles with which we are aligned, we are apt to learn much more from these struggles; key elements of what we learn are linked directly and exclusively to activist research methods; these elements are especially apt to challenge existing academic knowledge on the topic.

These contributions materialize not through some idealized fit between activism and scholarship but rather through engagement with their multiple contradictions. In the first place, social struggles themselves are born in contradictions: between the protagonists' aspirations for well-being and the oppressive social conditions they confront; between their own analysis of their surroundings and dominant representations of their oppression as justified or inevitable. Indeed, the challenging alternative forms of theoretical knowledge that these movements' intellectuals carry may even be located in the contradiction between their own understandings of their struggles and various external representations—including academic analysis—of their realities. Examples abound of social struggles of this sort, where the protagonists needed to contest and reformulate dominant representations of themselves and their conditions in order to advance their struggles, and where eventually these new representations became canonized as "theory." Most feminist theorists would acknowledge a primary intellectual debt to women's struggles against patriarchy and sexism. Black militancy has taken the lead for years in efforts to destabilize and discredit "blame-the-victim" explanations for persisting racial hierarchy, debates that subsequently have played out in strictly academic realms. Theories

of intersectionality (Combahee River Collective 1983; Collins 2000) emerged first in the context of political struggles against attempts to prioritize one of people's multiple axes of oppression, a practice that inevitably deprives the others of attention and importance. Gramsci developed his theory of hegemony and political subjectivity through efforts to address the bitter contradictions of Italian workers' consciousness and practice under the ascendant influence of fascism. While it is frustrating that the activist origins of theoretical innovation are so often ignored, the basic assertion is hardly controversial: social contradictions and political struggles are generative sources of knowledge.

Yet this same insight is much less frequently applied to the research process itself, a connection that the authors of this volume make repeatedly and systematically. The research process in social sciences and the humanities is an inherently contradictory affair, at least for those who hold out for some connection, in the broadest sense, between this research and the social good. The scholarly endeavor embodies hierarchies and inequalities that we purport to oppose; there is a strong tendency for the knowledge we produce to be irrelevant, if not alienating, to the primary subjects of research; even when this "liberating" knowledge is publicly conveyed, through pedagogy or various public intellectual endeavors, all kinds of institutional patterns end up reinforcing the very inequities that the knowledge ostensibly contests. A large part of the richness of activist research comes precisely from humble, forthright engagement with these ethical-political contradictions of our work. Bickham Mendez and Martínez (chapters 5 and 7) give such engagements a prominent place in their narratives; Pulido's letter to her activist graduate students (chapter 13) conveys an integrity and charisma that comes from naming these problems, grappling with them, admitting mistakes, and trying again, without pat answers or formulas. These essays are not raising these questions for the first time, in some completely original way: poststructuralist scrutiny of social analysis, after all, has been doing this for some time. The distinctive contribution of activist scholarship, rather, is to enact an alternative way of doing research that attempts to contribute to the social good and to modestly advance the frontiers of knowledge, while training a bright light of critical scrutiny on the inequities of university-based knowledge production and attempting to ameliorate these inequities through the research process itself. It is hard to imagine how our universities could not benefit—deeply and extensively—from such efforts.

	<i>Academic audience</i>	<i>Extra-academic audience</i>
<i>Instrumental knowledge</i>	Professional (theoretical model building)	Policy (emphasis on means, not ends; applied research)
<i>Reflexive knowledge</i>	Critical (cultural critique, critical theory, etc.)	Public (public intellectual work, activist research?)

FIGURE 1. Dimensions of Disciplinary Knowledge. Adapted from Burawoy 2005, 512.

In this vision, activist scholarship becomes a source of indispensable enrichment of our universities and research institutes, not simply a replacement of other approaches. Activist scholars, in our training and our ongoing efforts to fulfill our method's promise, can make good use of the distinctive modes of knowledge production that universities encompass. Michael Burawoy (2005) offers a neat four-cell diagram to encapsulate his analysis of the current crisis in U.S. academia. While he would place activist research in the lower right-hand cell, as a variant on his category of "public knowledge" (see Figure 1), the authors in this volume would probably hold out for a reformulation of the diagram that would portray activist research more as a largely suppressed alternative mode of knowledge production all its own (see Figure 2). In any case, Burawoy's broader point resonates with the cumulative argument of this volume. Every author has had mainstream academic training, enhanced by political experience and commitments, as well as critical non-academic intellectual traditions. We all have chosen to adopt and adapt certain elements from our university training while adamantly rejecting others. It is now high time for this process to become more mutual: for activist scholarship to offer salutary critiques of mainstream academics that academic institutions can hear and take into account. Kiang (chapter 11) makes this point forcefully in his call for Asian American studies to reconnect with its own revolutionary beginnings: this call expresses his own ethical-political commitments and at the same time launches a methodological challenge. Analytical insights that derive from direct involvement in the political struggles of Asian American communities, quite apart from the potentially important and useful results for these communities themselves, make a crucial contribution to mainstream

	<i>Conditions of intellectual production/reception: academic</i>	<i>Conditions of intellectual production/reception: extra-academic</i>
<i>Instrumental knowledge</i>	Professional/theoretical model building, etc.	Applied/policy
<i>[Suppressed form of knowledge production]</i>	Activist scholarship	
<i>Reflexive knowledge</i>	Critical theory, critique, epistemology	Alignment with subjugated knowledges/politics

FIGURE 2. Dimensions of Disciplinary Knowledge and the Place of Activist Scholarship. Adapted from Burawoy 2005.

Asian American scholarship. Perhaps it is time, then, for administrators to create safe spaces for activist scholarship, out of universities' institutional self-interest, quite apart from their deference to or affirmation of ours.

CONCLUSIONS: PUTTING THIS BOOK TO WORK

We hope this book will both document and contribute to a trend toward greater acceptance of activist scholarship among mainstream research institutions. Basic elements of this practice, of course, have long been a feature of the scholarly landscape, and we all have our particular "ancestors" to acknowledge. But a number of prominent recent publications have pointed to shifting conditions that converge to yield a more favorable environment for this kind of research. In anthropology, Louise Lamphere (2004) has noted how diverse research practices formerly under such headings as *applied*, *advocacy*, and *public* have converged, yielding increasing receptivity to what we are here calling activist scholarship.⁴ Burawoy (2005) makes a parallel observation from the discipline of sociology, arguing that "public sociology" is an indispensable part of the solution to problems of parochialism and fragmentation in the social sciences. The Latin American Studies Association is on record in giving high priority to public and collaborative scholarship, and other area studies organizations have similar positions. The specific name or phrase

that categorizes this type of research has little importance, as long as key underlying principles are being strengthened and legitimated.

At the same time, we hope this book will provoke debate that springs from our having helped to crystallize key questions, problems, and predicaments that anyone doing this kind of work is bound to confront. Some will say that the notion of activist scholarship put forth here is too restrictive in the type of politics that we support or too limiting in the suggestion that the first step is alignment with an "organized group in struggle." There also are sure to be disagreements with various elements of the strategic approach to activist scholarship presented in this introduction, from the bid to reclaim and resignify key concepts like "methodological rigor," to the challenge to unearned academic privilege, to the insistence on the special role that this research has for mainstream theoretical debate and innovation. These and other objections are welcome, especially if they stimulate further rounds of collective work to create a loosely defined "we," to clarify the work we do, and, in so doing, to contribute to a mapping of the field.

Most important, we hope this book will be used as a resource, for inspiration, and for guidance by those who are carrying out activist research or who aspire to do so. For those inclined to work toward institutional change to create hospitable conditions for activist scholarship, the online appendix, and many particular insights from the essays, should also be welcome. This particular institutional agenda will not be everyone's preferred course of action and cannot be the central focus here. Our primary purpose, rather, is summarized simply and powerfully by Pulido's closing words to her activist graduate student scholars: "Live your truth." You do not have to choose between your deepest ethical-political commitments and your desire to become a scholar. If this combination is your truth, then live it, knowing that the path will be difficult but rewarding, that others already have helped to clear the way, and that we will do everything possible to have your back.

NOTES

1. These affirmations are broad enough to be endorsed by most poststructuralist theory, whether primarily influenced by Foucault, Lacan, Derrida, or combinations thereof. For a recent meditation on "the political" by prominent theorists who take these poststructuralist affirmations as self-evident, see Butler, Laclau, and Zizek (2000).

2. The name varied considerably over the program's fifteen-year history. "International Peace and Security," and "Conflict, Peace and Social Transforma-

tion" are two others that appear in my notes. To my knowledge a comprehensive analysis of this important and fascinating bid to transform "security studies" has never been published.

3. See, for example, the entry "Positivism" in the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (Sills 1968, 12:389-95).

4. See also Fox and Field (2007), Lassiter (2005), and Sanford and Ajani (2006).

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PART I

Mapping the Terrain