Democratic Norms & Sexual Identity

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In the last several years, if not decades, there has been a concerted effort by various non-governmental, and occasionally governmental, groups in many Western countries – and some non-Western countries too – to protect the civil rights and liberties of gay, lesbian, and transgender(ing) individuals.[1] But unlike other civil rights movements, the movement to protect sexual orientation, like that to protect the disabled, has engendered a debate about the limits of democratic protection and the boundaries of norms. Indeed, at least within the U.S., there has been an equal and opposing push-back from non-governmental, and occasionally governmental, groups in an attempt to not only stop legislative action to protect sexual orientation, but to in fact specify the normative limits of our democracy, demonstrating that sexual orientation falls outside those limits and is thus beyond protection. In essence, those opposed to protecting sexual orientation argue that it is unacceptable – morally, biologically, socially, or otherwise – and so it does not qualify for protection. This suggests that those of non-heterosexual orientations have no normative grounds, within our democracy, to appeal to for protection of their individual life plans. Furthermore, this brings to light an internal tension that exists within the principles of democracy, between the internal limits that the principles connote.

This essay – which it should be noted is an experimental exploration of the topic – argues that even though democracy is often portrayed as normatively open-ended, it is, like any political/social system, delimited by the principles that ground it. The actual arguments used to ground these norms – such as appeals to the "nature" of democracy, or appeals to certain metaphysical or worldviews that inform democracy, or appeals to epistemic processes like communication – while certainly important and in need of analysis, are less important than the act of *simply recognizing* that such normative grounds exist, at all, as opposed to the oblique norms that surreptitiously proclaim their normative neutrality, but which form power structures and lines of exclusion and inclusion. Consequently, these normative guidelines act as hegemonic power structures that masquerade as neutral, abstract, and liberally inclusive, though in fact are based in specific worldviews, are exclusionary and most important, inherently part of democracy, no matter what guise it takes.

Liberal democracy is putatively a form of social governance that can hold together vastly different worldviews, because at its core, democracy implies tolerance, openness, and protection of individuals and communities – even communitarians adhere, in general, to this definition of democracy. But stretch those core principles too far and they lose their democratic significance; in other words, tolerance becomes worthless if we begin to tolerate intolerant attitudes and conduct. For example, if we tolerate those who believe in white supremacy, we are tolerating those who are wholly intolerant, so ironically we end up

promoting the *opposite* of our original intention. Every act of defining, or clarifying, is an act of foreshortening and curtailing.[2]

As it happens, then, the core principles of democracy have limits that if surpassed, make the principles essentially empty, if not counterproductive to the mission of democracy. The problem, however, is *where* to establish these limitations, and *who* gets to establish them. Clearly, this implies a dangerous scenario of one cultural or metaphysical worldview becoming the arbiter of these limitations, which is precisely what a liberal democracy is supposed to avoid and resist. Then again, simply assuming that these limitations will be established by a neutral vetting process is terribly naïve; far too often neutrality is simply a shibboleth for dominance or majority rule.

Consequently, this is how the norms of democracy shape up. Democracy relies on openness, but not unfettered openness, otherwise there are no limits on values and principles, and a lack of limitations here would cripple all forms of judgment and argumentation, both crucial to democracy. For example, radical openness becomes suffocating relativism, and leaves us unable to criticize principles and values that work against democracy.[3] Democracy relies on tolerance, but not tolerance of all values, for some are inherently intolerant, as we saw above. Finally, democracy relies on protection of individual and community life plans, but not all life plans need or should be protected. For example, we do not protect the life plans of pederasts *qua* pederasts, do we? In short, democracy is normative because it suggests boundaries by definition, and as such, regardless of appeals to liberal neutrality, democracy actually requires an adjudicating rubric that obviates strict neutrality. In fact, calls for neutrality often mask de facto maneuverings on behalf of a dominant metaphysical stance.[4] And let us remember, the appeal to normative *democratic* neutrality – made by folks like Rawls and other liberal thinkers – does not discount specific, community based normative bounds that are established by specific worldviews; what Rawls is trying to establish, for a democracy, are bounds that are not *directly* attached to these private and personal normative bounds – hence, his claims of neutrality.

Therefore, there are normative parameters democracy cannot escape, no matter how frustrating – or worse, how potentially dangerous – the notion of such limitations. In other words, there is a "correct" and "incorrect" way for democracy to function. To be clear, talk of normative parameters mean lines of right and wrong, normal and abnormal, for the functioning of *democracy itself*.[5]

Moreover, because democracy relies on varying degrees of consent by the public, and because such consent must be explained and defended anew for each generation, the normative structures are not everlasting – though indeed, there are many who try to summon tradition as a defense for norms, even if this is a logically weak justification.[6] This means that no matter how we slice it, democracy inevitably invokes a normative structure that is always in the process

of being established, justified, and questioned, for such is the messiness of democracy.

But where do these normative parameters come from, what grounds them, and who controls them? For our purposes here, I'd like to distinguish between two possible types of normative parameters. On the one hand, there are those that drop out of readily apparent worldviews; I will call these hard normative parameters, as they make very clear they are appealing to a specific worldview, like Christianity or utilitarianism or any number of others – like Habermas's epistemic normative parameters. On the other hand, there are parameters that drop out of ostensibly no particular worldview; I will call these soft parameters, as they suggest a detachment from cultural or metaphysical allegiances. Of course, it is quite a tough task to distinguish between these two forms of normative parameters, as we shall see, for hard parameters may admit of their origins, but they often claim a sort of neutrality, or even naturalism, that amounts to the same position as the soft parameters. It is not at all clear to me that any normative grounding can ever be neutral, even under transparent circumstances.

As mentioned above, because democracy calls upon normative parameters, there is a potentially harmful state of affairs that arises when seemingly neutral viewpoints – or soft parameters – set the boundaries, because they are secretly corresponding to a specific worldview. Those who appeal to liberal neutrality, like John Rawls or Habermas, seem to be making this theoretical slight-of-hand, because they believe a politically neutral ground can be enacted.[7] Though, what separates Habermas from Rawls is that Habermas makes clear how the normative grounds of democracy are established, through the continual interaction of opposing metaphysical worldviews, whereas Rawls wants to put in abeyance such worldviews during the establishment of norms. That is, Rawls wants to abstract from the life-world we each inhabit, so as to find an original position that would make decision-making neutral; Habermas, however, recognizes that such an abstraction is: (1) detrimental to the task of decision-making, because decisions require that we reflect on our lives and the things that we want to actually protect, and (2) disingenuous because it ignores the inevitable creep of our life-worlds into the decision-making process.

One of the hallmarks of many normative models is that they try to find a "view from nowhere," or rather a point of neutrality that takes from no particular worldview. It has become, however, increasingly apparent that classical liberalism has failed at this, though theorists like Rawls have tried to rehabilitate classical liberalism in a more modern instantiation. Rawls argues that political liberalism need not be metaphysically tendentious, if what we appeal to, to support the normative structures, is an overlapping sense of reason. For Rawls, we can keep the normative parameters of democracy from becoming ethnocentric by finding consensus on political principles and then using those political principles to decide on the limits of such things as openness, tolerance,

and protection of life plans.[8] Unfortunately, consensus often means some group gets disenfranchised, for the drive towards consensus requires someone to acquiesce.[9]

In our post-traditional world, where societies have become more pluralistic, and where appeals to metaphysical and religious grounds are fraught with complications resulting from simultaneously untenable worldviews, the answer, for some, is to appeal to inherent structures of some sort, either procedures, *a la* Rawls, or communication, *a la* Habermas or Seyla Benhabib. The procedural mechanisms of democracy, so claim thinkers like Rawls, filter out the debris of our communal and personal lives, debris that would sway the formation and grounding of the democratic normative boundaries. Again, what is problematic is the normative scheme of the democratic principles, not the normative scheme of any particular individual or community. The procedural mechanisms of democracy are supposed to put distance between the governing principles of democracy and the private sphere. The mechanisms drop out of an overlapping sense of political reason that commonly connects participants in a political dialogue.

The linguistic turn in democracy essentially argues that the process of communication, which we all must rely on to stabilize our identities and gain self-realization, holds within it the presuppositions of democracy, i.e. reciprocal recognition, tolerance, equal protection, etc., and these presuppositions (1) provide the mechanisms for democratic dialogue and (2) provide the epistemic content that becomes the normative parameters. In short, the process of deliberation acts as a normative parameter for democracy without appealing to any specific worldview, and it has cognitive content, so it retains the strength of a religious or metaphysical appeal.[10] On the surface, such an appeal seems open and transparent, and as such, it establishes a hard normative parameter that is both neutral and clear about its grounding. But as authors like Jane Mansbridge, Carol Gould, Nancy Fraser, Iris Marion Young, Seyla Benhabib, and others have noted, the epistemic parameters of communication can form a not-so-neutral and not-so-transparent normative scheme, because they imply a form of communication that is arguably Western, masculine, and white. Here again, the appeal to neutrality is destructive and exclusionary. As a result, it is not at all clear that this qualifies as a hard parameter. In fact, this begs the question whether such hard parameters are even possible.

Therefore, democracy seems to imply a necessary normativity, but how this normativity gets established threatens those whose worldviews are neither overtly (hard) or covertly (soft) embedded within the established parameters. Soft parameters are clearly fraught with greater harm for minority and traditionally disenfranchised groups because these parameters masquerade as neutral or abstract when in fact they are far from that, and it is not at all clear that supposedly hard parameters, like pure proceduralism or communication, behave differently.

This leads us back to sexual identity. There are two issues we must confront to understand the complications of sexual identity and democracy. First is the process of inclusion/exclusion, especially as regards the normative parameters of democracy in general; second, sexual identity gets enveloped by the hegemony of the normative parameters, and the vertical power relations allow for control especially under these circumstances.

As we have seen, there is a tension between the thrust of inclusion and the counter-thrust of exclusion as realized through the norms of democracy – for that matter, through any norms. This Janus-faced tension connotes a tacit, though quite potent, internal struggle present in all principles. Indeed, the democratic principles are part of a field of forces which are created, contribute to, and get caught within the principles themselves. More clearly, principles like tolerance inherently define boundaries of exclusion and inclusion, and these boundaries connote a struggle within the concept of tolerance itself, a tension that if pulled too far to either extreme, destroys the concept. This inner conceptual tension of the core democratic principles creates a field of pushing and pulling forces, a field of power arrayed across the democratic landscape. Thus, democracy, like any social scheme, has a field of power relations pulling and pushing the normative parameters.

As Michel Foucault noted quite well, power relations need not be vertical and top-down; they can be horizontal, like a field surrounding and engulfing all participating parties.[11] For instance, the monarch does not have exclusive power over the peasants; they hold an opposing power they can exercise in response. Better put, the monarch is in need of the peasants, so if they choose, they can distort the relation, forcing the monarch to adjust.[12] Thus, we should be able to espy in the normative parameters of democracy, a back-and-forth power relation, such as with the struggle between inclusion and exclusion, or the tension to find the limits of tolerance, openness, reciprocity, and the like. I suggest that the political fight over sexual orientation in many countries, certainly the U.S., is an example of this inherent tension within the norms of democracy, where seemingly neutralizing measures and mechanisms act as a veil behind which metaphysical worldviews dictate how this tension gets resolved. While on the surface, liberal democracy appears to lessen these maneuvers, I suggest that the mechanisms of liberalism aid and abet them, for they give ontological cover to this field of forces and the power relations therein.

Remember, for democracy, if we stretch the core principles too far, we end up making the principles meaningless and diminishing democracy itself. Consequently, because the principles are delimited by their conceptual nature, all other connected principles – such as inclusion, diversity, equal protection, accountability, and suffrage – get delimited as well. Also, because these principles will be interpreted by soft parameter-defining arguments, many of those affected by the principles have no recognized voice in their delimitation; that is, liberal democracy and the filtering procedures – be them Rawlsian or

otherwise – give the impression of neutrality, while underneath this ontological veil, the power relations bend the principles to a specific metaphysical view of the world. Therefore, a principle like inclusion becomes a power play twice removed from many of those who seek inclusion. They are twice removed (1) because they are not part of the metaphysical worldview negotiating the norms and (2) because the negotiating process presents itself as neutral, so it becomes difficult to reveal and fight the hegemonic worldview behind it. But if there is a hidden power relation in all this, those who seek inclusion have a means of pushing back or perhaps more effectively, of pulling forward, by revealing it, by shedding light on the relations themselves.[13]

For a concrete example, let's take sexual orientation, specifically in the U.S. As is readily apparent from recent legislation and political discussion, the democratic parameters marginalize sexual orientation as an issue of inclusion. The argument has been made that sexual orientation stretches the principle of inclusion too far by including gay and lesbian couples in such entitlements as health benefits and the protections that accompany marriage. Those who make this argument say such inclusion would be a slippery slope, thus devaluing the principles of marriage and spousal benefits; as they say, if we include gays and lesbians, why not include polygamists? But this is a clandestine exploitation of the limits of tolerance by a specific metaphysical worldview. And because this metaphysical view of the world adopts the language of their "opposition", language that is ostensibly neutral, they diffuse their opposition's rebuttal. This is the same tactic (a power game) used by those who oppose Affirmative Action; they invoke the language of King and the civil rights movement, and call for color-blindness and the content of one's character, in order to use this language against Affirmative Action supporters by hollowing it out and stripping it of any meaning. This is stretching of the principle so far, that the principle loses its meaning, which, by the way, is precisely what is said *against* the inclusion of various sexual identities under the auspices of tolerance – that is , those against the inclusion of certain sexual identities claim that their inclusion would stretch the principle so far it becomes meaningless.

Furthermore, because the structure of diversity has been co-opted by the "majority" – though it is disguised as inherent or even natural (democratically natural, that is) – sexual orientation becomes a matter of reified stereotypes hanging on the margins of a mainstream culture that does not condone them. That is, diversity has been enveloped by the mainstream hegemony in the following way: difference is acceptable, so long as you (a) bring with your difference something that is good for all and (b) do not use that difference to exploit a cultural rift.[14] For instance, if you're an African-American male, your acceptance at a college on the grounds of diversity means you better show some difference that can help the whole campus, and you better not use that difference to actually change the principles of the campus, i.e. you better know your place. In essence, it is a way of acknowledging difference, while simultaneously

marginalizing and de-fanging it through hard and fast categories and stereotypes that are cloaked under the veil of "neutral" principles like tolerance and inclusion.

Hence, the parameters of democracy as they now stand, demarcate the normative in such a way that inclusion is seen – in a very particular way – but certainly not heard, because the particular rubric of inclusion stipulates a façade of inclusion. This is especially so with sexual orientation; if you are gay or lesbian or transgender or questioning, you will be tolerated, but only so long as you remain innocuous and do not try to actually hold a stake in "our" democracy, and certainly not if you begin to demand a deeper notion of inclusion. What is most damaging is that people buy into this scheme; actually, this is how hegemonies function – they get you to buy into your own disenfranchisement.[15] Again, this is something Foucault claims is part of the field of power relations: one group gains control over the other by establishing a normative structure that justifies such control. However, such control is tenuous, for it relies on the acceptance of the "other" group. Think of it like a game of cards, where one player is winning all the hands. If the "weaker" player refuses to play, the "stronger" player must now plead with the other to remain in the game; she must beseech the other player to accept such punishing results. Such pleas often lead to concessions. (Perhaps the stronger player will fix the other lunch, or buy her drinks.) Concessions, however, are easier to come by if the weaker player understands her power, consciously recognizes the situation for what it is, and exploits the other's need for her to play the game.

But where then is this related opposing power in our democracy for those who are excluded, or for those with minority worldviews? How do gay and lesbian individuals, who have been doubly delimited by the normative parameters of democracy, and who have been convinced to accept the basic content of this structure, have a countervailing power mechanism? Well, perhaps it comes out of the effort, by the prevailing culture, to define, limit, and identify those who don't fit. The proliferation of rules to limit means there also must be a proliferation of categories of those who will be limited; and such people must be placated and given space in the hegemony, even if it is essentially meaningless, otherwise, they will not "accept" their oppression. Ironically, there are two results from this entire structure. (1) The greater the proliferation of categories, the more people you inevitably include *in* these limited categories. So, one begins with gay, lesbian, and transgender folks, and eventually you are talking about anyone who deviates from a growing normative structure that dictates abnormal behavior – because remember, normative connotes normal, which in turn implies abnormal. As Foucault points out, we should think, for example, of Victorian England and their myriad laws and rules about abnormal behavior, which was accompanied by their endless classifications of inappropriate conduct. (2) In order for the hegemonic structure to survive, it requires the assent of those who are oppressed by it, and therein rests the real countervailing power. Imagine gay, lesbian, and transgender individuals calling the bluff of the "prevailing" culture (for

what is prevailing at this point?) and as part of the hegemony, pushing the limitations to an extreme, thereby uncovering the meaninglessness of inclusion and diversity as it now stands. Inclusion can only work if those who seek inclusion accept the rules whereby they would be included.

A good illustration of challenging the normative parameters and confronting the hegemony is the notion of covering one's identity and passing for something else. While on the one hand passing is a matter of acquiescing to the norms, it is also a form of guerilla infiltration into the hegemony and can be used to exploit it from within. For instance, the woman who hides her identity to pass as heterosexual might be submitting to the norms in an outward sense, but she can also disrupt them by subtly (or not so subtly) questioning them from within the hegemonic power structure of the majority; she can assume a position from within and thus renegotiate the norms themselves. Conversely, the woman who flaunts her sexual identity, who refuses to bend to the norms, is also striking out against them, but in a different manner. She is, by her living example, questioning the norms from without, thereby exposing their limitations and demanding an explanation for these limitations. Importantly, however, both persons are, in different ways, challenging the hegemony, stretching the classifications of sexual identity, and pushing back against the normative boundaries. The worry, of course, is that the person, who hides her identity, may in fact either lose her identity over time, by being part of the hegemony that is pushing against her, or she might actually reinforce the norms by passing for something she is not. The question is: can one retain a sense of one's "authentic" identity while acquiescing – at least on the surface, if not below – to a power relation that oppresses her? Analyzing this question is too much for us here, but I am hesitant to dismiss passing as simply giving up and giving in; it seems rather necessary in challenging hegemonic power structures that there be folks who are willing to get inside "the machine" and do some internal re-wiring. Might one be more effective in pushing back against the norms by internally confronting them?

Another important counteraction, as Foucault noted, is to *play* with the power relations as they are configured. Especially in democracy, resistance to normative parameters is part of what solidifies and condones those parameters, so contesting them and playing with their meanings, their limits, and their existence is an appropriate form of resistance and restructuring. Indeed, large scale protest movements are part of all power relations – in fact, they are assumed within them because of their ubiquity. However, to play with the parameters, to toy with the rules of inclusion and the demands of diversity, disrupts the parameters; for instance, confusing the stereotypes and refusing to play the game of difference, exposes the parameters and thereby moves them and shifts them, because now they must be reset and the game must be replayed again and again for a new outcome. Also, by highlighting the parameters, one highlights those in control of them, perhaps then forcing

concessions out of the majority, as was done in the civil rights movement. Inclusion becomes the partial possession of the dispossessed, if they begin to play with the hegemony and its parameters.

The struggle for recognition and inclusion by those of non-heterosexual sexual orientations or identities peals back the norms of democracy to reveal inherent boundaries that are supported, structured, and reinforced by particular worldviews. While the premise of liberal democracy is to limit the influence of such worldviews to private and communal settings, it seems that this ignores the norms of democracy and the process of their formation. I have suggested that the normative parameters can be either soft or hard, but I am dubious about whether hard parameters – which are openly expressed and acknowledged as coming from a particular conceptual stance – can ever exist. The lesson for those in the fight for inclusion, specifically of sexual identity, is to expose the normative nature of democracy, recognize how democratic norms come to be, and play with the power relations that are latent within these norms. Furthermore, fighting for inclusion means addressing the concept and protecting it from the vacuity of hegemonic control, whereby those on the margins condone their own oppression.

End Notes

1. Often, the push to protect the LBGT community amounts to a form of human rights rather than mere civil rights, as human rights are seen as more ontologically primary, and thus more basic, and because the protection of civil rights runs through human rights first. As Henry Shue argues in his text *Basic Rights* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1980), subsistence rights (or basic rights) are more primary than political and civil rights; therefore, the protection of one's life – or self-preservation – is prior to, and necessary for, exercising *later* (ontologically, though not necessarily temporally), one's political and civil rights. Those of the LBGT community, who live under circumstances where their lives are threatened because of their civil dispositions, appeal to human rights *naturally*, before appealing to civil and political rights.
2. This is, as Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida and the whole postmodern movement tells us, the stasis of metaphysics of presence. In our attempt to grasp and define, we limit and truncate because we prevent the fluid movement that defies such limitations.
3. While I certainly take issue with a number of points Allan Bloom makes in his text, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Touchstone Press, 1987), anyone who has taught in a liberal arts classroom in the past twenty years can personally attest to the problems of openness stretched too far. Openness, in the democratic sense, seems to lose its force and spirit when there are no longer any evaluative mechanisms to navigate the open society.
4. This is precisely the argument made by the critical race theorists in the U.S., who suggest that calls for race-neutral governmental policies are a means to (a) defang critiques of institutional racism and (b) cripple any attempt to correct such racism. As Paul C. Taylor, in his text *Race: A Philosophical Introduction* (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), notes when analyzing Reagan's (in)famous speech about the "welfare queen" in 1980, "Reagan's coded appeal highlights one of the keys to late modern racial hegemony: the establishment of color blindness as a political norm" (80).
5. We should recognize that such normativity is flexible and changing by its discursive nature, though of course some try to attach the normative to non-discursive mechanisms. Yet, even those non-discursive appeals – perhaps the most well-known today being Habermas's appeal to the epistemic presuppositions of communication – require explanation and interpretation, especially, as Habermas readily admits, in the affirmation of values and principles that fall out of the public deliberation of

democracy. See for example Habermas's essay, "A Genealogical Analysis of the Cognitive Content of Morality," in *The Inclusion of the Other* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1998).

6. Appeals to tradition are logically weak, for they beg of greater justification. Once one admits of human fallibility, such appeals become suspect, for arguments based on tradition stand or fall based on the authority of prior generations. Of course, some might suggest that tradition remains because it is vetted by the testing of time and repetition. This is the pragmatic argument, that experimentation and favorable results have, over time, produced tradition. However, such pragmatic appeals ignore the influence of ideology and hegemony in erecting and supporting tradition.

7. For John Locke and his adherents, the structure of democracy is defined by inalienable principles, or rights, which are organized and ordained by religious tenets; basically, natural rights are natural because they are given to us by God, and thus they are inalienable, for what better claim to a right than to say it is given to you by the supernatural Father. Rawls, while certainly distancing himself from Locke's religious claims, tries to find a neutral point through a Neo-Kantian method of establishing the principles by which a just contract between the people and the government can be grounded.

8. See John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

9. See for instance Carol Gould's essay "Diversity and Democracy: Representing Differences" in *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political,* ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1996).

10. For an example of a religious worldview that provides normative parameters, consider the Judeo-Christian commandment not to steal. While this normative parameter can be grounded in other worldviews – such as deontology or utilitarianism – those who ground it in the religious worldview are appealing to a particular, non-universal grounding element. The presuppositions of communication, however, have the strength of the particular worldview, but they are universal in nature.

11. See especially *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Random House, 1975) and *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1 (Vintage Press, 1990).

12. See for example E.P. Thompson's analysis in *Customs in Common*, which demonstrates that historical events happen for social reasons that defy the normal top-down power mechanisms.

13. This is why the Greeks used the term *aletheia*, or unconcealment, which we translate as 'truth'. Truth for the pre-Socratic Greeks was an unconcealment of what is hidden. This is where the notion of deconstruction comes from; we are deconstructing in order to reveal what lies beneath.

14. For a more complete discussion of the culture of difference, see Richard T. Ford's text *Racial Culture* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 2004). Point A listed here is best exemplified in the Bakke and Grutter Supreme Court decisions in 1978 and 2004, respectively, where the justices argued that Affirmative Action is defensible on the grounds that diversity is good for the education of all students. But as Ford argues, this puts undue pressure on students to demonstrate their significant difference, and it fails to address the social hierarchy of racism.

15. Paul Taylor writes: "This is how hegemony works. A hegemonic formation – the alliance between ruler and ruled that makes the control without forcible coercion possible – encourages the disadvantaged to see themselves as stakeholders in the system that generates their disadvantage; it does this in part by granting concessions to them, thereby winning their consent to the system's continuation" (77).