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A Critical Commentary on the AAG Geography and Military Study Committee Report

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The formation of the American Association of Geographers (AAG) Geography and Military Study Committee by the AAG Council in April 2017 and the submission of the report by the Committee to Council in February 2019 were important events for the discipline. Yet, to date, the Committee's report has received very little attention or comment. This article provides a critical analysis, focusing on the report's claim that the AAG should leave it up to individuals whether to engage with the military, an argument made on the grounds of diversity and academic freedom. Although the report's description of the status quo appears accurate, we find the ethical reasoning and recommended policy changes wanting. Notwithstanding its limitations, the report provides a valuable basis for a clear public discussion about the role of the AAG during a period of focused involvement and investments by the U.S. military–intelligence community in the discipline of geography. *Key Words:* AAG, Cutter committee, ethics, military.

The discipline of geography has a long and complex history with state power and its military form. By implication, the shape of the discipline cannot be fully grasped without consideration of its relationship with the state and the military at a given time. Fortunately, historical geographers have produced a series of important works to track the role of the military in the formation of our discipline (see, e.g., Barnes and Farish 2006; Cowen and Gilbert 2007; Tyner 2010; Bowd and Clayton 2013; Wainwright 2013a; Belcher 2014). Because most of this historical work builds on archival sources, it does not necessarily illuminate the present as clearly as we might like. At any rate, historical scholarship never delivers simple answers to our ethical questions.

Consider the contemporary interrelations between the academic discipline of geography and the U.S. military and intelligence organizations. Evidence suggests that since around 2005, U.S. military and intelligence agencies have taken a keen interest in the discipline. Military and intelligence organizations have sought closer ties with geographers by funding or otherwise encouraging research and education that furthers their interests. Geographers are engaged in an ongoing, capacious debate about the causes, effects, and ethics of these engagements (e.g., limiting ourselves to this journal, see Cowen 2010; Bowd and Clayton 2013; Belcher 2014; Inwood and Bonds 2016; Koopman 2016;

Sheppard and Tyner 2016; Wainwright 2016). Piqued by the American Geographical Society (AGS) Bowman Expeditions to Mexico (Wainwright 2013a; Bryan and Wood 2015; Wainwright 2019), some geographers engaged in activism to compel the American Association of Geographers (AAG) to confront the military issue.

Consequently, at the April 2013 AAG meetings in Los Angeles, AAG President Eric Sheppard and some Council members proposed that the AAG should form a body to study interactions between geographers and the military. A heated discussion ensued in the Executive Council. The minutes record:

Geography and the Military. [The AAG] Council discussed whether the AAG should form a commission to examine the engagements of geographers employed by or contracting with the U.S. military and intelligence communities, and to evaluate the potential implications of U.S. Department of Defense and intelligence agency work by geographers upon the discipline. [Audrey] Kobayashi moved to form a commission, led by two members of Council, to study and make recommendations on the relationship between geography and the military. [Karen] Till seconded the motion. (AAG Council 2013, 11)

The vote was a tie; the motion failed. Defeated, AAG President Eric Sheppard (2013) used his final AAG President's statement to put out an appeal for

a “geography of peace.”

Matters might have ended there, but a group of geographers—the Network of Concerned Geographers—conducted a campaign to compel the AAG to confront the military’s involvement in our discipline. The tipping point came with the election of Donald Trump in November 2016, causing many geographers to reconsider our discipline’s ties to the U.S. government and its military. Hence, at the April 2017 meeting in Boston, the AAG Council took up a new proposal to create a group that would study the extent of engagement between the military and intelligence agencies and the discipline and weigh proposals about the scholarly merits and ethics of these engagements. This time, it passed.

The AAG Geography and Military Study Committee (hereafter, the Committee) was subsequently established in the autumn of 2017 and began its work in January 2018. That month, the group gathered in Washington, D.C., where they established their scope of work, methods, and responsibilities. After conducting research throughout 2018, the Committee completed its report and submitted it to the AAG Council on 27 February 2019 (Cutter et al. 2019).¹ The Committee thus delivered the Report to the AAG Council in advance of the April 2019 annual meeting of the AAG in Washington, D.C., where the Report was placed on the Council meeting agenda. However, Council tabled their discussion of the Report until the following meeting (November 2019). The AAG Council meeting minutes state:

12.1. Geography and Military Study Committee report: [AAG Executive Director Gary] Langham summarized the findings and questions that were addressed by the Committee’s report. [AAG Council member Loraine] Dowler developed a set of comments and suggestions on the task force’s recommendations and circulated them to the Council for review. She suggested providing the task force feedback on their recommendations and asking them to reply to the AAG Council questions and suggestions by its Spring 2020 meeting. (AAG Council 2019a)

We have been unable to acquire any information about the spring 2020 Council meeting.

Curiously, a full fifteen months after its completion, the Report still has not been publicly released. Copies circulated among AAG Council and AAG staff (as well as the Committee), and the text is not marked “private” or “draft,” so it probably circulated more widely. Yet the AAG Council has not notified

AAG members of the Report’s existence, nor made it available on the AAG Web site.² As far as we can tell, the Report has generated no substantive public discussion.

This is a pity. The Report should be welcomed. Notwithstanding limitations, the Committee produced a text of substance, with numerous strengths and merits, which provides a basis for building broader conversations. Among other things, we think that the Report successfully does the following:

- Documents the interest of the U.S. military and intelligence community in geography (1–2).
- Draws attention to the Bowman Expeditions as a specific cause for concern (2, 11).
- Credits the Network of Concerned Geographers campaign with the formation of the Committee (2–3).
- Discusses the experiences of cognate disciplines in confronting similar issues (5–6).
- Provides data on U.S. military funding in academia (13–16).
- Examines reference and citation data to interpret patterns of military engagement (15–18).
- Documents the “marked increase in programmatic funding and pedagogical engagement by the U.S. military and national security” (19) with geography programs, including a rise in formal affiliations between geography departments and the US Geospatial Intelligence Foundation (USGIF) and the National Geospatial Intelligence Association (NGA) (21).
- Effectively uses quotations of AAG members who participated in focus group discussions with the Committee at the 2018 AAG meeting in New Orleans to express concerns by geographers with military engagement in the discipline (8, 24–27).
- Proposes some helpful recommendations—particularly the following three, which, if adopted,³ would go some way to addressing the concerns raised by many geographers:
 2. Revise the AAG code of ethics statement and policy as it relates to the ethical issues that may arise from military-funded research. This should include comparing the AAG statement (current and proposed) with the codes of ethics related to research developed by other disciplines such as the American Anthropological Association (AAA) and the American Psychological Association (APA) ... ;
 4. Establish best practices and explicit guidelines for transparency in the disclosure of funding source reporting throughout the research process from the time that informed consent is requested from research participants to the dissemination of research results in publications and presentations in geography journals ... ;

8. Establish an implementation committee to assist with executing the above recommendations and foster continued dialogue on the ethical implications of engagements between geographers and the military. (28–29)

For these reasons, we commend the Report, and we acknowledge our debt to the labor of those who wrote it.

Criticism

These strengths notwithstanding, there are grounds for criticism. In what follows, we criticize the Report in one respect. The Report seems to rule out the possibility that any substantial actions could or should be taken by the AAG with respect to geographers' engagements with the military or intelligence agencies. We find many of the Committee's recommendations to be tepid, and, taken as a whole, the recommendations are unlikely to address the conditions described in the Report. In short, although the Report admirably summarizes the state of engagements of the U.S. military and intelligence agencies with geography and makes important strides toward analyzing the consequences, it stops well short of proposing an effective strategy to address them. That is what is needed, though.

Rather than develop this argument in all of its dimensions, in what follows we focus our attention on one key element of the Report that, on our reading, undergirds its failure. At a key hinge point in the Report, where the text begins to move from its description of present conditions to recommendations for addressing them, the Report states:

The AAG cannot prescribe the appropriateness of research for its membership beyond instances where it violates its code of ethics. Geography has a diverse membership of both academics and professionals. This diversity not only enriches the discipline, but also necessitates leaving it up to individuals to determine whether they choose to engage with the military or intelligence agencies in their teaching or scholarship under the principles of academic freedom. (Cutter et al. 2019, 24)

We have five objections to this argument.

Our first three objections ([1], [2], and [3] below) concern the statement, "The AAG cannot prescribe the appropriateness of research for its membership beyond instances where it violates its code of ethics."

[1] In general terms, the AAG Council's mandate is to protect the autonomy and promote the well-

being of geographers in general and its members in particular. To fulfill this mandate, the AAG Council routinely stakes out deliberate positions on matters of ethical and moral concern on behalf of its members in ways that exhibit and imply institutional agency. Hence, we think that it is fair to characterize the AAG as an institutional actor that occupies a position of moral and intellectual leadership in the discipline of geography. Because the scope and nature of geography is unusually broad, this means that the AAG has staked positions and advocated for a wide variety of views.

Consider the following. In recent years, the AAG Council has staked out public positions on climate change, zero tolerance of sexual harassment, and the status of labor unions at hotels where we meet.⁴ The AAG regularly carries out initiatives to diversify the membership of the organization and the discipline. The AAG has openly advocated for non-U.S. citizens who wish to participate in meetings in the United States. Moreover, the AAG Council has made a series of interventions into the U.S. political process; for example, by monitoring activities in Washington, D.C., lobbying the U.S. Congress, and publicly advocating for and against specific bills and policies. On occasion, the organization has even raised concerns about the treatment of individual geographers. Recently, for instance, the organization organized a petition to lobby the Government of China "to show support for Dr. Tashpolat Tiyp, ... former president of Xinjiang University and geography professor, ... at risk of execution in China as time runs out on the two-year reprieve of his death sentence."⁵

These policies—which we endorse—show that as a membership-based and membership-directed organization, the AAG has a specific responsibility to further the interests of its members and the community of geographers writ large. Moreover, these policies plainly reveal that the AAG routinely and openly engages in moral, social, and political affairs—engagements that signal (if not prescribe) the appropriateness of certain ethical norms for its members and for the discipline. Therefore, it is difficult for us to see how the AAG Committee could conclude that "the AAG cannot prescribe the appropriateness of research for its membership beyond instances where it violates its code of ethics" (Cutter et al. 2019, 24). The Report provides no explanation for this about-face. Moreover, the claim is dubious.

[2] Two of the AAG's sister organizations, the American Anthropological Association (AAA) and the American Psychological Association (APA), confronted similar issues and came to different conclusions. As the Report briefly notes (Cutter et al. 2019, 5–6), each of these organizations established committees analogous to the AAG Committee to consider involvement of the U.S. military in their disciplines. Let us consider each briefly (for clarity, we call them the AAA Committee and the APA Committee).

[2a]⁶ In 2007, the AAA Executive issued a visceral criticism of the Human Terrain System (HTS) program (AAA 2007) and formed a Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the U.S. Security and Intelligence Communities (CEAUSSIC) to advise the AAA Executive on the discipline's engagement with the U.S. intelligence community and national security issues.

[I]nformation provided by HTS anthropologists could be used to make decisions about identifying and selecting specific populations as targets of US military operations either in the short or long term. Any such use of fieldwork-derived information would violate the stipulations in the AAA Code of Ethics that those studied not be harmed. (CEAUSSIC 2009, 70)

First, the AAA Committee found that, through involvement of the military in the discipline, collection and analysis of data about research subjects by the U.S. military could occur without any awareness by those scholars who initially produced the data. Therefore, it follows that anthropologists whose data could be used by the U.S. military cannot guarantee to their subjects that their research will not do harm. This undermines a fundamental point for the legitimization of anthropological fieldwork. Hence, it threatens the discipline and must be confronted.

Second, the AAA Committee found that the very existence of the HTS program threatens to reshape the identity of the discipline, with potentially violent consequences for anthropologists (even those unaffiliated with the U.S. military):

Because HTS identifies anthropology and anthropologists with US military operations, this identification [...] may create serious difficulties for, including grave risks to the personal safety of, many non-HTS anthropologists and the people they study. (CEAUSSIC 2009, 70)

It concludes, "Where data collection occurs in the context of war, integrated into the goals of

counterinsurgency, and in a potentially coercive environment ... *it can no longer be considered a legitimate professional exercise of anthropology*" (CEAUSSIC 2009, 4, italics added). In effect, the AAA Commission found that wartime data collection for potential military use is an unprofessional activity, inconsistent with disciplinary and scholarly norms.

[2b] The AAG Committee (2019) report includes one paragraph on the APA's independent review of U.S. military and intelligence agencies' involvement in psychology:

In November 2014, the American Psychological Association's (APA) Board of Directors engaged attorney David Hoffman to conduct an independent review "to consider and answer whether APA officials colluded with the DoD, CIA, or other governmental officials 'to support torture'" (Hoffman, 2015:1). In response to the 542-page Hoffman report, the APA Council of Representatives voted unanimously to prohibit psychologists from participating in national security interrogations or working in detention centers that violate the U.S. Constitution or international law (APA, 2015). In 2016, the APA amended its code of ethics to include a direct prohibition against participating in torture. (Cutter et al. 2019, 6)

This is well said, as far as it goes. Two points of clarification might be useful.

First, it should be noted that the decision by the APA to hire an independent counsel to conduct an investigation into the potential involvement of APA officials in torture followed a decade of sustained, public debate within and around the organization. Although this is not the place to review this history,⁷ we note that the debate began in earnest in 2005–2006; that is, in the wake of the U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and at roughly the same time that the question of military collaboration was taken up by the AAA and the Bowman Expeditions were launched by the AGS.

Second, the Committee's statement on the APA 2016 Code of Ethics statement (Cutter et al. 2019, 6) could be taken to mean that the APA Council adopted a limited slate of recommendations directly related to torture. In fact, the APA Council modified their Code of Ethics to address military engagement and also passed broad resolutions to clarify disciplinary norms. Although the former alone can be used as a basis for disciplinary action—Council resolutions are merely "aspirational"—like the AAA,

by 2016 the APA Council had delivered a series of messages circumscribing collaboration with the military. It will be helpful to quote some of the recommendations made by the APA Board in the wake of the Hoffman report.⁸

Board of Directors Actions and Recommendations

- The actions below were approved by the Board or recommended for consideration by the APA Council of Representatives in response to the Report of the Independent Review Relating to APA Ethics Guidelines, National Security Interrogations and Torture.

Actions Related to Ethics Office

- Recommend that Council approves the establishment of a Commission comprised of psychologist members and non-members, as well as experts from other fields, to evaluate and recommend changes to APA Ethics processes (including, for example, the establishment of a Chief Ethics Officer), based on an assessment of current practices and procedures, as well as benchmarking with ethics processes of other professional organizations.
- The Board will establish a mechanism for immediate oversight in the processing of filed ethics complaints including review of current adjudication and investigative procedures, and for ensuring transparency and accuracy in the disclosure of current ethics office practices.

Actions Related to Past Actions

- Recommend that Council adopts a policy to prohibit psychologists from participating in the interrogation of persons held in custody by military and intelligence authorities, whether in the U.S. or elsewhere, but allowing them to provide training to military or civilian investigative or law enforcement personnel on recognizing and responding to persons with mental illnesses, on the possible psychological effects of particular techniques and conditions of interrogation, and on other areas within their expertise. ...

Actions Related to Organizational Procedures

- Council and the Board will collaborate to create governance constraints that address boundaries and appropriate oversight of elected and appointed officials, including Council, the Board of Directors, and boards and committees.

- Council and the Board will collaborate to establish civility principles and procedures that promote respectful space for all voices and perspectives and define professionalism, including through the establishment of a moderator role for listservs.
- The Board will evaluate conflict of interest policies regarding financial, policy, or relationship-based conflicts, and other associated processes to ensure that the policy is understood and followed.
- The Board will create clear procedures for appointing the members of Task Forces, Commissions, etc., by including a standard conflict of interest assessment and procedure for assuring needed content expertise.
- The Board will create specific criteria and procedures for emergency action by the Board in keeping with the authority established in the Bylaws. ...

Actions Related to Checks and Balances

- Recommend that Council adopts formal guidelines to ensure that all relevant policies are anchored in APA core values, including promoting human rights, human health and welfare, and ethics.
- Recommend that Council charge the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee with considering ethics, organizational restructuring, and human rights. This will assist in re-setting the organization's ethical compass, and re-asserting our commitment to "do no harm" as a core value.
- The Board will increase APA's engagement around human rights activities and its collaboration with other organizations regarding these issues.

These actions were subsequently adopted by the APA Council.⁹ Moreover, APA leadership has continued to publicly lobby officials of the U.S. government regarding military issues and questions concerning interrogation (e.g., see the 23 August 2017 letter by APA President Puente and CEO Evans to U.S. President Trump and other federal officials; Puente and Evans 2017).

Before proceeding, two asides are in order. First, the AAA and APA have both created Web sites devoted to making copies of relevant documents easily available. By contrast, the AAG has made no documents related to the debate surrounding military engagement available on its Web site. Second, we should acknowledge that these policy changes in the AAA and APA were—and remain—hotly contested. For instance, the Society for Military Psychology, which constitutes Division 19 of the APA, formed a special committee to prepare a report

scrutinizing the Hoffman report, which they accused of developing its findings on “misconception[s] of military culture ... and a deep bias against military psychology” (Society for Military Psychology (APA Division 19) Presidential Task Force 2015, i). The relationships between these disciplines and U.S. military and intelligence agencies remain dynamic and could be reversed. Our impression is that neither organization has undone these policy changes because their encounters with the U.S. military in the mid-2000s generated disciplinary “politicization,” which was successfully channeled into meaningful reforms. Significant policy changes would require the active consent of most members.

In short, faced with comparable circumstances to the AAG’s Committee, committees appointed previously by two cognate disciplines, anthropology and psychology, went on to “prescribe the appropriateness of research for its membership” in ways that go well beyond what the AAG Committee has recommended.

The AAG Committee Report provides no explanation for this discrepancy. In all fairness, there are differences between these disciplines and the circumstances under which U.S. military and intelligence agencies have engaged them. Yet the Report provides no meaningful discussion of these differences. In other words, we find no justification in disciplinary difference for a weaker response by geography or the AAG.

[3] The term *ethics* can mean different things. When it is used by an institution to refer to a code of ethics, this implies that it has some legitimate authority to govern the actions of its members; that is, to evaluate violations of a code of ethics the legitimacy of which has been established by the procedure that originally created that code. This is our understanding of the reason the Report qualifies its claim that “the AAG cannot prescribe the appropriateness of research for its membership” with the exception of “instances where it violates its code of ethics.”¹⁰ This exception, however, presupposes that the AAG has some means or mechanism in place with which to determine and evaluate violations of its code of ethics. As far as we are aware, there is no such mechanism. Perhaps one exists, but it has been inactive for so long that the AAG effectively has no such mechanism.

[4] The Report correctly observes that “geography has a diverse membership,” which “enriches the

discipline.” However, their claim that this diversity “necessitates leaving it up to individuals to determine whether they choose to engage with the military or intelligence agencies in their teaching or scholarship,” is false. Simply put, the latter (ethical) claim does not follow from the former (demographic) claim.

It is reasonable to assume that by “necessitates” the Committee means “ethically or morally obligates or requires.”¹¹ If so, this claim is demonstrably false. It reads like an assertion that ethical relativism follows from cultural relativism, which it famously does not.¹² For it might well be the case that some practices or expressions of that diversity—that is, some of the activities that members of the professional association freely chose to engage in—are ethically or morally impermissible. It does not follow from the mere demographic fact that the AAG is a diverse organization that its members do not act unethically if they freely choose to engage in or are complicit in harmful, disrespectful, or otherwise morally unjustifiable behavior.

In all fairness, this particular mistake (i.e., ethical relativism) is common in popular moral reasoning. The mistake lies in thinking that respect for diversity requires tolerating anything anyone might freely choose to do just because they believe that they have some interest in doing it. As Kant ([1788] 1996, [1797] 1996) suggested, respect can require not tolerating, both in ourselves and in others, actions that are ethically or morally wrong. When we tolerate wrongdoing in ourselves and others, we treat both ourselves and others as if we are not autonomous. However, the reason for respecting diversity is to respect autonomy, and respecting autonomy requires holding ourselves and others accountable, both when we act in ways that are deserving of praise and when we act in ways that are deserving of blame. If we only hold ourselves and others accountable when we are deserving of praise, then we are signaling that we are only autonomous when we believe that it is in our self-interest to be. Simply put, not only does diversity not justify ethical relativism but respect for diversity militates against ethical relativism. Rather than respecting autonomy, and thus respecting diversity, appeals to ethical relativism threaten to undermine respect for autonomy, and thus threaten to undermine respect for diversity.¹³

To be frank, it seems to us that the AAG Committee is arbitrarily picking which of its ethical and moral prescriptions are objectively true and

which are relativistically true.¹⁴ If so, such arbitrariness threatens to undermine the legitimacy of the authority of the association because its prescriptions are then based on fiat, not reason.

[5] Finally, the statement concludes with reference to a new principle: academic freedom (“under the principles of academic freedom”). As we understand it, academic freedom is not an absolute moral obligation; rather, it is an important and defeasible legal and ethical principle, albeit one that can and should be overridden in some situations. A principle of academic freedom exists to protect scholars in the event that they or their research challenges powerful actors, such as the state or the military. It does not make sense to appeal to this principle to defend scholars who violate professional and ethical norms to conform to power (i.e., the state or military).

As odd as it might sound, there might well be legal protection for professionals to engage in activities that are otherwise ethically or morally impermissible. Indeed, a professional code of ethics might well build that legal protection into its principles. However, that still leaves it an open question whether or not that legal protection and professional permission are otherwise ethically or morally permissible. As a matter of objective ethical or moral fact, they might not be. Admittedly, situations like this can be difficult to adjudicate. However, that difficulty remains whether or not the AAG chooses to acknowledge it. The responsible thing to do is to meet it head on and attempt to resolve it in a manner that all geographers (and those who have a stake in the work of geographers) can recognize as acceptable.

Conclusion

The formation of the AAG Geography and Military Study Committee by the AAG Council in April 2017 was an important and historic event for the discipline. Similarly, the completion of the Report in February 2019 should have been celebrated as a significant achievement. It is regrettable that, as of this writing (August 2020), the Report has received little to no attention.

We think that the description of the status quo in the Report is superior to the recommended policy changes. Notwithstanding its limitations, the Report provides a valuable basis for a clear public discussion of the role of the AAG during a period of focused

involvement and investments by the U.S. military and intelligence agencies in the discipline of geography. We hope that our arguments spur further discussion, particularly toward an improved understanding of the moral and ethical issues geographers face today.

The AAG can and should improve the Code of Ethics (called the “Statement of Ethics”). It is possible to do so and take other positive steps at the same time. One of these is for the AAG leadership (including the AAG Council) to make strong (albeit aspirational) statements that articulate the norms and set the tone for the discipline at the same time that they implement an enforceable Code of Ethics. On our reading, this is Sheppard’s (2013) point.

Like all professionals, geographers are faced with conflicts of interest between, on the one hand, funding, promotion, and prestige and, on the other hand, acting ethically. The moral distance between academic research and the effects of that research when it is implemented by others can make those effects and their risks seem less problematic than they really are. When so much is at stake personally, ideology weighs heavily; cognitive biases cause us not to respond as rationally or as ethically as we are capable of doing. We know this, though, and if we know it, then we have no excuse not to do our best to live up to our obligations.

As Cutter et al. (2019) and others have amply shown, the U.S. military has taken a keen and abiding interest in our discipline; yet the silence that has greeted the Report suggests that many geographers do not know that it exists or would prefer not to think about it. This state of affairs is unacceptable. Indeed, it seems to us that the discipline is sailing into a perfect ethical storm. In a way, we should be grateful for this storm, because the more we know about it, the better positioned we will be to navigate the coming years. To do so, however, we have to be willing to take our bearings honestly and face the challenges ahead together.

Notes

1. The full title is “AAG Geography and Military Study Committee Final Report on Geography and Engagement with the Military: Issues, Status, Findings” (hereafter, the Report).
2. We obtained our copy from the President of the AAG, David Kaplan, via Candida Mannozi. We thank them both. After submitting this article to the *Annals* (January 2020), we were told that it would not be reviewed because the Report was not

yet public. We objected, noting that our copy of the Report had been given to us by the AAG with no mention of restrictions on use. In any event, we could see no reason the Report should not be discussed publicly. We were subsequently informed that our article would be reviewed and provided the following explanation of the status of the Report:

AAG Executive Director Gary Langham brought the matter of the release of the AAG Geography and Military Study Committee Report before the AAG Executive Committee for their consideration. The consensus was that we need to wait until the April [2020] Council meeting before releasing the report any further. That said, the Executive Committee pledged to make it a topic of the first day of the meeting to ensure that they can complete the process. The summation from the Executive Committee is as follows: (1) the AAG office erred in releasing the report to you prematurely, (2) a release of the report before Council finalizes to additional people compounds the original error, (3) release of the report is anticipated shortly after the April meeting. (E-mail, 6 February, 2020)

3. As of this writing (24 August 2020), we do not know whether the AAG Council will endorse these recommendations, nor whether they will be realized.
4. For instance, the AAG Council recently made a statement calling for the U.S. government to “embrace energy conservation and substitution of sustainable energy sources in place of fossil fuels.” Accessed October 8, 2019, at http://www.aag.org/galleries/default-file/AAG_Climate_Change_Resolutions_2006_and_2019.pdf. (AAG Council, 2019b) On sexual harassment, see <https://www2.aag.org/AAGAnnualMeeting/AAGAnnualMeeting/EventConductPolicy.asp>.
5. AAG Petition, accessed October 8, 2019, at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfOzk1eRayVUKoCHx8FbZt9sWdCWd2xxGe_4cJG7ypfw7doYg/viewform. (Langham and Kaplan, 2019).
6. This subsection draws on Wainwright (2013a).
7. The APA published a useful timeline of events at <https://www.apa.org/news/press/statements/interrogations>. (APA, 2018)
8. Trimmed lightly. The full suite of documents is available at <https://www.apa.org/independent-review/index>. (APA, 2015a)
9. For a list of action items as adopted, see <https://www.apa.org/independent-review/recommended-actions>. (APA, 2015b)
10. The statement is also vague concerning this “code of ethics.” We take it that the Committee is referencing the AAG Statement on Professional Ethics (which is not described as a “code,” only a “statement,” which is something different). See http://www.aag.org/cs/about_aag/governance/statement_of_professional_ethics. (AAG, 2009) There is another meaning of the expression *code of ethics*. It could refer to a universal code of conduct; that is, a code of conduct that

applies to all rational agents (not just professional members of a given association). In such a framework, the ethical code of conduct is fundamental, and the professional code of conduct is derivative. In Kant’s (1788, 1797) terms, this implies that the universal code of conduct provides a regulative ideal for the professional code of conduct: The former can be used to critique and improve the latter. Thus, it is entirely possible that an action deemed ethically or morally permissible by the professional code of conduct is in fact not ethically or morally permissible because the professional code is inchoate or mistaken in some way.

11. The obligation–permission distinction is a deontic application of the necessity–possibility distinction (see Weaver and Scharp 2019, 18).
12. As written, the statement we quote from the Report reads like a straightforward violation of Hume’s ([1739–1740] 2007, 302) famous principle that you cannot derive an “ought” from an “is.” Admittedly, Hume’s principle is not absolute; there are some exceptions to it. However, this quote is not an instance of any of the exceptions to Hume’s principle that we know of.
13. Kant scholars disagree about whether or not respect for the moral law and respect for persons are necessarily coextensive. For the present purposes, we do not weigh in on this disagreement.
14. Relativistic claims like that quoted from the Report are subject to self-defeatingness objections. The quote seems to assume that the apparently ethical claim that “the AAG cannot prescribe the appropriateness of research” is objectively—not relativistically—true.

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