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0521415640 - Privacy and Social Freedom - Ferdinand David Schoeman

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This book attacks the assumption found in much moral philosophy that social control, as such, is an intellectually and morally destructive force. It replaces this view with a richer and deeper perspective on the nature of social character, aimed at showing how social freedom cannot mean immunity from social pressure.

The author demonstrates how our competence as rational and social agents depends on a constructive adaption of social control mechanisms. Our facility at achieving our goals is enhanced, rather than undermined, by social control. The author then articulates sources and degrees of legitimate social control in different social and historical settings.

Drawing on a wide range of literature in moral and political philosophy, law, cognitive and social psychology, and anthropology (not to mention some very perceptive readings of novels by Henry James), Professor Schoeman shows how the aim of moral philosophy ought to be to understand our social character, not to establish fortifications against it in the name of rationality and autonomy.

Privacy and social freedom

Cambridge Studies in Philosophy and Public Policy

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA



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For Sara Ann Schechter-Schoeman

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Acknowledgments

My first extended opportunity to focus on privacy was afforded me in 1982 by Jerry Skolnick with an invitation to teach a course on privacy in the Jurisprudence and Social Policy Program at the University of California at Berkeley. This was a wonderful occasion for me, one that still reverberates in so many ways. I am indebted to the faculty of that program for providing such an enriching environment.

I was fortunate enough to receive a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship to work on my privacy project. Under the terms of this fellowship, I spent an academic year (1984–5) at the Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy at the University of Maryland. Not only did the fellowship free me completely from any responsibilities that might compete with research, but the academic and personal support provided by the permanent staff and another visiting fellow (Amy Guttman) of that institute was ideal. My associations with people who were at the institute continue to provide support for me, for which I am very grateful. At a time when, because of serious illness, it was unclear whether I would be able to guide this book through necessary and helpful revisions, Claudia Mills offered to work with readers' comments in revising the text. Douglas MacLean, editor of the series in which this book appears, provided me with both the encouragement and incisive criticisms that helped make the book better than it otherwise would have been.

When I was in Maryland, Stanley Benn was visiting at Johns Hopkins University. Stanley, a profound and creative

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During the spring of 1989, the University of South Carolina Law School appointed me a visiting scholar while I was still an NEH fellow. I was provided with all the accommodations a researcher could wish, including opportunities to try out ideas at faculty colloquiums.

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