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Ethics: The Failure of Positivist Science

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Despite the widespread proliferation of professional ethical standards such as those of the American Psychological Association (Ad Hoc 1973, 1982), ethical concerns continue to plague social research. The maturing of social science over the past fifty years has not been accompanied by a concomitant maturing of ethical standards. Rather, increasing social complexity has provoked new questions and suggested new issues not covered even by the more recently developed standards. As Bulmer has noted,

> the moral implications for society of natural, medical, and social science research have become sharper. Ethical and related concerns about nuclear physics, genetic engineering, organ transplants, and real-world social experiments have become major public issues. The public scrutiny of scientific work, including social science, is correspondingly keener. . . . Regulation of research is increasing, and social scientists are increasingly likely to find their research activities circumscribed in various ways. Apart from the intrinsic importance of such issues, they are a test of the social relevance, responsibility, usefulness, and moral stature of social science, as well as a challenge to us to explain and justify our activities to the wider society. (1980, 124)

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We feel that a major cause of the ethical dilemmas that continue to plague social science inquiry is the set of metaphysical assumptions that undergirds conventional methodologies. These assumptions provide a warrant for near-unethical decisions, raising highly justified concerns on moral grounds. We shall review the present status of ethical guidelines for inquiry and show how the ontological and epistemological belief system on which conventional inquiry rests abets their circumvention. However, these difficulties may be resolved by a shift from a realist ontology and toward an interactive epistemology, as found, for example, in our earlier work in naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and also shared to a greater or lesser degree by constructivist, hermeneutic, and phenomenological alternatives to positivism (including post-positivism). But of course the shift to another metaphysical system does not remove all ethical dilemmas and, while relieving some, may introduce others of which positivism is relatively free. We shall review the disadvantages as well as the advantages of the proposed shift.

CONVENTIONAL RESPONSES TO ETHICAL DILEMMAS

Social scientists concerned with ethical problems have tried to deal in different ways with the question of what constitutes ethical behavior and how it can be achieved. Some unethical behavior is directed by individual scientists against members of their peer group—for example, concocted data or plagiarism. However, most discussions of ethical behavior focus on the inequities and insults that can be inflicted on hapless research participants, conventionally termed *subjects*, a word reflecting the concept that research participants have things done to them. We prefer "respondent." Needless to say, participants are relatively powerless compared to the inquirers themselves, especially when the inquirers have the warrant of a university, government, or foundation sponsor. This power disparity led professional groups like the American Psychological Association to devise "rules of the game" since, without the influence of some external controlling mechanism, subjects may be exploited by unprincipled inquirers. Typically, such discussions focus on one of three different concerns: *ethical levels*, the means for taking *moral responsibility*, and *legal definitions*.

Ethical Levels

Edward Diener and Rick Crandall suggest three levels of ethical guidelines: *wisdom ethics*, which are expressions of "ideal practice" as found, for example, in the *APA Standards* (Ad Hoc 1973, 1980) and which may be thought of as guidelines for anticipating and avoiding ethical problems; *content ethics*, which "state which acts are right and which are wrong" (1978, 4) and which represent a more operational definition of ethical behavior; and *ethical decisions*, which "emphasize the process by which decisions are made as well as the final choice" (1978, 4). Wisdom and content ethics can at best be markers along a treacherous road, they aver. Ultimately the inquirer must make individual judgments reflecting his or her value structure, the internalized ethical codes of mentors and trainers, and the situation in which the inquiry is conducted. Thus, ethical decisions are basically left to the individual inquirer. Since as Webb et al. (1966) have noted, the "individual moral boiling points" of inquirers differ, so will the ethical decisions they reach, even under similar circumstances.

Moral Responsibility

Moral philosopher Sisella Bok, who has written extensively on the moral dilemmas of lying, concealment, and revelation (1978, 1982), suggests three criteria for judging the ethicality of some inquirer decision or proposed decision. First is the criterion of *publicity*. That is, the dilemma must be "capable of public statement and defense" (1978, 97). Further, this public scrutiny must be carried out with a public of *reasonable persons*, preferably "those who share the perspective of those affected by our choices" (1978, 98). Finally, much depends on the criterion of *discretion*, that is, "the intuitive ability to discern what is and what is not intrusive and injurious" (1982, 41). But the prudent and cautious reserve implied by the criterion of discretion is, like Diener and Crandall's concept of ethical decisions, an individual matter. Again, the problem of nonequivalent "boiling points" must be faced.

Legal Responsibilities

It seems apparent from the long, sorry, and well-documented history of ethical abuses that leaving ethical matters to the virtue and/or discretion of individual inquirers is not sufficient. Nothing intrinsic in the conventional processes of inquiry either mandates or rewards the ethical behavior. That fact is well recognized in the many legal restraints imposed upon social science inquiry. Here are the most commonly used:

1. *No harm.* Generally accepted principles dictate that respondents not be harmed or placed at risk, including the "lawful" harm that may result when

subjects lose, or are cajoled or deceived into giving up, their rights. Of course, harm can also be inflicted if respondents are denied what might have been an auspicious or gainful intervention of "treatment," or when the values of inquirers (or of their sponsors or funders) are served to the detriment of or at the expense of the values of the subjects themselves. These last two conditions are frequently overlooked in defining what constitutes physical or psychic harm.

2. *Fully informed consent.* Federal guidelines and regulations now specify what may constitute legitimate informed consent for participating in an inquiry project, including a series of prescriptions and proscriptions that govern inquirer/subject interactions. But the inquirer's definition of "full information" may be far different from the subject's. Inquirers frequently argue that subjects are too unsophisticated about either the content or the process of a given inquiry to make full information possible. We consider this argument mere rationalization, insufficient to override this requirement. Subjects cannot make informed decisions about participation if they are misled about the purposes or procedures of the inquiry.

3. *Protection of privacy and confidentiality.* As in the case of informed consent, federal guidelines and regulations stabilize boundaries around some of the more glaring violations. As a general rule, individuals are entitled by law to privacy for their persons and confidentiality of information about themselves. Such records as medical claims, school grades, test scores, and financial statements, by law, must be treated as privileged documents, released only with the person's specific permission. Nevertheless, computer access to networked data banks across the country had made this requirement difficult or impossible to enforce. The temptation to access data that are available even though "protected" may be too great to resist.

4. *No deception.* The issue of deception is the most difficult to cope with. Bok (1978) identifies several arguments inquirers use who do feel it necessary to deceive subjects. Sometimes they deceive to "avoid" greater harm, as when physicians lie to a patient with a terminal illness to spare him or her mental anguish and suffering. Others argue that deception is justified in the interest of fairness: to redress a wrong, to right an injustice, or to protect someone's privacy. It is difficult to imagine how a lie might ultimately redress a wrong or right an injustice, but it is easy to see how some lies might protect the privacy of individuals. The minor alteration of names, place descriptions, and the like is virtually de rigueur in social science research. Some inquirers urge that deception is justified in the larger end of maintaining or protecting the truth, although once again, it is hard to see how a lie can protect the truth.

But Bok's fourth justification for deception is simultaneously the most perverse and the most frequently cited, implicitly or explicitly, in the interest of defending what might otherwise be deemed morally reprehensible: the lie allows some larger benefit or social good. This argument is often phrased as "serving the interests of science," "the search for truth," or the "public's right to know."

It is precisely in the putative interests of science that deceptions such as those proscribed under the "no harm," "fully informed consent," and "protection of privacy and confidentiality" provisions are so often perpetrated, as eloquently documented by such researchers as Diener and Crandall (1978). Treatments *are* withheld to meet scientific criteria of controlled experimentation. Respondents' values *are* systematically disregarded as mere opinions with no basis in scientific knowledge. Purposes of research *are* systematically withheld from subjects on the ground that were they to know them, the "technical adequacy" of the study would be compromised, as for example, through reactivity. Protected personal information is accessed when the researcher deems it useful to his or her larger search for truth. Finally, the public's right to know is at best an Ockham's Razor, seemingly justifying the abuse of respondents' rights to gain some putative good for the population as a whole.

What can we learn from this brief look at the status of inquiry ethics? First, it seems clear that much depends on the "moral boiling point" of the individual inquirer; different inquirers will make different decisions even when confronted with similar circumstances. Second, it seems clear that nothing inherent in conventional modes of social science research either mandates or rewards ethical behavior. Third, inquirers have managed to find many apparently sound reasons for avoiding "wisdom ethics"—the ideal ethical practices—in conducting their research. How can we account for this state-of-affairs? And is there no way to resolve this problem?

THE TILT OF THE CONVENTIONAL PARADIGM

The difficulty, as we see it, stems from the metaphysics undergirding conventional (positivist) inquiry, viz., a realist ontology and an objectivist epistemology (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Positivism's fundamental ontological premise

is that there exists an *actual reality*, a "way things really are," that can be discovered (converged on) by the methods of science. This actual reality operates according to a series of natural laws, the "way things really work," which it is also the business of science to determine. If that reality can be discovered and its governing laws determined, then it is possible for science to predict and control future events, to exploit nature for the putative advantage of personkind. Given this ontological position, it follows that scientists, in their work of discovery and determination, must be *objective*, that is, assume a detached stance so that they will not influence the outcome of the inquiry nor allow their values (or those of the client or sponsor) to affect the results. To find out "how things really are" and "how things really work," the inquirer must be in a position to put questions directly to nature and get nature's answers directly back.

With such a metaphysical warrant for the search for truth in hand, the social scientist is free to argue convincingly that his or her research requires and justifies deception. A scientist needs a higher order of "truth"—a "reality" that is described as precisely as possible with its rules and laws plainly understood, so that, ultimately, prediction and control are possible. So long as prediction and control are seen as contributing to some "higher order social good," the warrant becomes complete. Thus, to use the terminology of Diener and Crandall (1978), *wisdom ethics* (ideals) operate to undermine *ethical process decisions* in the conduct of research.

Presumptions about the nature of reality reinforce—and indeed require—treating human research subjects as though they were objects. Objectifying human beings in the process of searching for "truth" has led, as feminist Evelyn Fox Keller (1983) has argued, to the depersonalization and devaluing of human life. The posture on reality assumed by conventional scientific inquirers rests, as Diane Baumrind puts it, on "the logical positivist presupposition that laboratory observations *could* provide unassailable knowledge if only we were able to produce a uniform psychological reality and do away with error variance . . . in the hope that the experimenter can . . . infer unambiguously the existence and direction of causal relations by ruling out alternative causal explanations" (1985, 170). Of course, the flaw in such reasoning lies in assuming the possibility that such "unassailable knowledge" can be obtained or even approximated. Baumrind points out that "the claim that observations can provide value-free, objective knowledge has been challenged by philosophers and scientists at least since Heisenberg's [indeterminacy] principle was enunciated" (1985, 170).

Even if such unassailable knowledge *could* be obtained (an assertion we flatly deny), the costs of obtaining it might be too high. For one thing, conducting research in a way that fully meets the ontological and epistemological requirements of the conventional paradigm may lead to false findings—at least false in the sense of not representing the "way things really are" or the "way things really work." Carefully controlled studies lead to findings generalizable in conventional terms only to other similar carefully controlled settings (e.g., laboratories). Furthermore, even traditional inquirers like Baumrind are now admitting that the price of deceptive research practices is not worth the game. H. W. Reese and W. J. Fremouw posit that "the ethics of *science* deal with the integrity of data; unethical practices undermine science as a body of knowledge. . . . The ethics of *research* deal with the protection of human rights; unethical practices do not undermine science as a body of knowledge, but they undermine society at large through the implications of the research findings or society as embodied in human research participants through the methods used" (1984, 963). Society attempts to bring normal ethics and normative ethics into conformity by the institution of peer review boards, institutional committees to oversee the protection of human subjects, and federal and state regulation of the human research process; but they challenge "the assumption that ethical conduct has been adequately legislated through peer review or federal regulation" (Reese and Fremouw 1984, 863), since "legislated review boards are more concerned with legalistic due-process compliance that with ethical behavior; they confuse accounting with responsibility, and religion with faith. They are concerned with form rather than substance, and by legislation they are barely qualified to determine whether proposed research is good science" (p. 871). Thus normative societal ethics rarely get translated into the normal ethics of science.

The implications of this disjunction are serious. When researchers deceive in the name of science, respondents' "rights to autonomy, dignity and privacy are necessarily violated" (Baumrind 1985, 71). In this violation, Baumrind argues, there are three types of costs, each of which is onerous, dangerous, and too high to be borne: costs to the respondents themselves, costs to the profession, and costs to the society as a whole.

Costs to the respondents include an undermining of their trust in their own judgment; a loss of trust in fiduciaries; and the psychological stresses of

having been duped, including admitting to having been duped and engaging in destructive obedience. Costs to respondents also include the loss of self-determination and the loss of individual locus of control.

Costs to the profession include: "(a) exhausting the pool of naive subjects, (b) jeopardizing community support for the research enterprise, and (c) undermining the commitment to truth of the researchers themselves" (Baumrind 1985, 169).

Costs to society include a loss of "trust in expert authorities . . . , increased self-consciousness in public places, broadening the aura of mistrust and suspicion that pervades daily life, inconveniencing and irritating persons by contrived situations, and desensitizing individuals to the needs of others" (Baumrind 1985, 169–70). Taken together, these costs not only destroy the credibility of social science but also subvert the social principles upon which societies rest and which permit international and civil public action.

In sum, the mandate imposed on social scientists to search for a putative truth allows the traditional or conventional scientist to objectify research participants and to deceive respondents in the pursuit of that truth. But social scientists themselves are slowly rejecting the costs of such public deceit as too high and ultimately counterproductive to the research enterprise itself. As a consequence of the criticism, social scientists are asking whether those costs might not be avoided. Such a critique from within the confines of the conventional paradigm itself signals a fundamental reappraisal of how science ought to proceed in the future.

A POSSIBLE SOLUTION: THE NATURALISTIC PARADIGM

Given legal boundaries, moral principles, and the social costs of engaging in traditional science, how can we avoid unethical behavior and confront or sidestep the problems engendered by positivist social science? The simplest answer to this question is to move to an alternative paradigm, one based on fundamentally different ontological and epistemological assumptions and hence not subject to the critique leveled against positivism. Rather than using a realist ontology and an objective, dualistic epistemology, we propose using a naturalistic paradigm founded on a relativist (constructivist) ontology and a subjective, monistic epistemology. The ontological shift precludes citing a "higher order" or "ultimate" truth as a warrant for unethical behavior, while

the latter shift mandates an openness with respondents that precludes deceiving and objectifying them.

Recall the hidden promises of positivism: deception is justified if it leads to greater knowledge, at least so long as it "protects" human subjects, who may, within these parameters, be treated in whole or in part as "objects" of the scientist's investigation. Naturalistic inquiry avoids both of these pitfalls and, in the process, responds to criticism from both the social science community itself and from social scientists who wish to work within another paradigm of inquiry (for example, see Reason and Rowan, 1981, among others).

Naturalistic inquirers respond to the twin problems of positivism in two ways. First, naturalism has no underlying premise that there is a "way things really are" or a "way things really work." Instead, social realities are social constructions, selected, built, and embellished by social actors (individuals) from among the situations, stimuli, and events of their experience. As a result, the naturalist is not interested in pursuing some single "truth," but rather in uncovering the various constructions held by individuals and often shared among the members of socially, culturally, familiarly, or professionally similar groups in some social context. These constructions represent (we would argue, they are) the meanings that human beings attach to events, situations, and persons in their effort to impose order on social interaction. In that sense, constructions are intensely personal and idiosyncratic and, consequently, as plentiful and diverse as the people who hold them.

In confronting the proposition that there is not a single, ultimate truth but rather multiple, divergent, and whole-cloth constructions, the naturalist is ill-served by engaging in deception; indeed, deception is absolutely counterproductive to his or her research purpose. Deception merely confuses the participants, who are at a loss to know what kinds of responses the naturalist wants and needs. (Of course it may not be counterproductive for the participant to engage in deception, for example, in the interest of putting his or her best foot forward. But that is not the matter at issue here, and is, in any event, a problem in all paradigms.) Since it is the constructions themselves which are of interest to the naturalistic inquirer and since deception serves only to obfuscate the naturalist's search, the naturalist is reinforced, even rewarded, for avoiding deception. Suddenly, deception ceases to eliminate bias and contribute to validity, as it presumably does in conventional inquiry, but actually frustrates the very search which it was intended to aid. If the inquirer is interested in constructions, then

it is pointless to lie to or deceive respondents. A researcher cannot uncover individual and group [emic] constructions by deliberately misleading individuals and groups about the purpose of the research.

The second way in which naturalistic inquiry guards against deception is through the special relationship implied by the interaction between researcher and respondent. Naturalists reject the idea that the researcher-researched relationship ought to be objective and distanced. It is, furthermore, a relationship between equals, built on mutual respect, dignity, and trust. Reinharz (1978) characterizes it as a "lover model" (mutual exchange and respect) rather than a "rape model" (researcher takes what's wanted and leaves).

If scientists have no license to treat others as "objects," then they must build a wholly new relationship on the basis of mutual exchange, the preservation of human dignity, privacy, and confidentiality, and the joint negotiation of research purposes, strategies, and interpretations. This means nothing less than a form of inquiry which is increasingly collaborative or joint (Reason and Rowan 1981), with the researched being equal partners with an equal voice in collecting and interpreting the data and in distributing the "results." The power of agency and the locus of control never leave the province of the respondents, and their decisions regarding information about them—including evaluating the possible harm they may suffer—remain theirs to negotiate in the present and in the future.

Because of the shifts in the metaphysical assumptions—that reality is a multiple entity socially constructed and that respondents cannot be treated as objects but must be accepted as viable partners at every step in the inquiry—naturalistic inquiry demands that *no deception ever be employed in the service of social science research.*

THE ETHICAL PROBLEMS OF THE NATURALISTIC PARADIGM

Of course the naturalistic paradigm, while it may redress certain failings of positivism, has problems of its own. The relativism of naturalism suggests that it is impossible (and always will be) to specify any ultimately true methodology for coming to know. The best we can hope for is for a more sophisticated and informed paradigm than that which guided the giants on whose shoulders we stand. Further, because new paradigms are often constructed, at least initially, to address weaknesses or incompleteness in earlier forms, we need be alert to the strong possibility that the new paradigm has problems. Such is, in

fact, the case with naturalistic inquiry, although we prefer its dilemmas to those posed by conventional inquiry.

Among the dilemmas peculiar to naturalistic inquiry (and we do not pretend that our list is complete) are the special nature of intense, face-to-face contacts with participants; the difficulties with maintaining or preserving confidentiality and anonymity; the relationships of trust required which must be constructed in very short periods; the powerful pressure for completely open negotiations in light of the need to honor respondents' emic constructions; and the framing of the resulting case studies (which we believe are the appropriate "product" of any naturalistic inquiry) themselves—what should be included and what excluded, and how should the "self" of the researcher be finally represented? Each of these deserves mention, although our treatment here must necessarily be brief.

Face-to-Face Contacts

Since naturalistic inquiry depends on re-creating respondents' realities, gathering and testing those realities necessitates person-to-person data collection with a human being, the inquirer, as instrument (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). Dobbert believes that "humans are polyphasic learners who absorb information both coded and uncoded, implicit and explicit, intended and unintended, through simultaneous multiple modalities—the olfactory, auditory, visual, kinesthetic, tactile, positional, cognitive, and emotional ones; and with the ethologist . . . that humans are primates who learn through (I believe) exploration, manipulation, *activity*, and *interaction* (1982, 14–15, italics added). This activity and interaction, however, place both researcher and respondent in jeopardy. That jeopardy revolves about the highly personal relationships which are built as each gives, takes, shares, and teaches the other. Such highly personal interactions create vulnerability as knower and known exchange roles, barter trust, and reconstruct identities.

The inquirer faced with conventional questionnaires never confronts the frightening risk of knowing and being known, nor do his or her research participants need to provide slices of their lives. The instrument buffers the conventional inquirer from research participants, but there is little protection when the instrument is the inquirer. The unarmed and inaccessible human in touch with the unarmed and inaccessible participant is an encounter fraught with every possibility that can emerge from human interaction.

Anonymity, Confidentiality, and Privacy

Although the naturalist operates under the same legal rules and regulations as the conventional scientist, he or she may find particular difficulties in maintaining research participants' anonymity or privacy. Tom Skrtic, Egon Guba, and Earle Knowlton found this to be exactly the case:

> It is the nature of naturalistic research and the case study reporting method that both are more susceptible to breaches of confidentiality and anonymity than conventional inquiry. Most naturalists are therefore very sensitive to the ethics involved and may go to extraordinary lengths to protect respondents and sites from discovery. . . . It seems to be well established that respondents have a right to privacy, and, if they give up that right in the spirit of cooperation with the researcher, they at least deserve as much protection as the researcher can provide. *As we have seen, such protection may be difficult to extend and impossible to guarantee.* Even if all the names and places and dates are changed "to protect the innocent," it is quite likely that other locals will be able to pinpoint the agencies and parties involved. And *that* breach of confidence may have the most serious consequences of all, for it is these other locals who may be in positions of authority or influence with respect to the research participants, and *thus may have the most powerful sanctions to apply.* (1985, 111; italics added)

As we have made clear earlier (Lincoln and Guba 1985), one of the procedures for establishing trustworthiness is the member check. Research personnel continuously test data and interpretations with members of the groups from which data are solicited. While researchers can be scrupulous in not revealing actual data sources (those data may have been collected from other members of the same audience), nevertheless, expressions or particular views may be recognizable as those of only one or two possible sources. Confidentiality and anonymity obviously cannot be guaranteed. Consequently, the trust relationships which are built must necessarily be negotiated with full disclosure of the risks which respondents are taking.

Trust

Trust between mature adults is built over time, a process complicated by the very human need to present the self at its best. Achieving trust demands forthrightness, clear and fair explication of the purposes of the research, and authentic presentation of the researcher's self—conditions which require time

to fulfill. Some projects, however, operate on short time schedules, producing intra- and interpsychic stresses in researcher and researched alike. It is not impossible to establish good rapport in a short time; it is, however, costly (in psychological terms) to both parties. Researchers cannot, in short time frames, afford the repeated casual contacts which permit trust to build; and participants cannot afford to be misled about the intents and purposes of the research. The normal constraints on fieldwork that relies on the human instrument intensify as the time available shortens—hence the need for powerful self-awareness before entering the field.

Negotiation

Negotiation is a characteristic of naturalist inquiry which expresses itself most strongly in the relations between respondents and researchers. The presumption of agency on the part of respondents and the assumption that respondents' constructions are the stuff of which research is made require the researcher to engage in participative modes of inquiry which may seem unfamiliar and initially uncomfortable. The researcher may feel an irresistible desire to "take control," legitimated by the argument that it is necessary to protect the "technical adequacy" of the study. But negotiation—for data, for constructions, for interpretations, for respondents' cooperation—is the best and only way to proceed in an inquiry marked by face-to-face contact, by relationships which must be re-formed at every stage of the inquiry process, and by the intense need to have respondents be the ultimate arbiters of credibility and plausibility.

FRAMING CASE STUDIES

Two ethical problems emerge in framing a case study, particularly in deciding what to include and to exclude. First, how much of the researcher's "self" should be introduced into the case report? To what extent does the researcher speak with an "authorial voice," taking the role of the "professional stranger"? To what extent may the researcher be "informed and transformed" in the process? If we abandon the conventional requirement of objectivity, permitting research findings to emerge from the subjective interaction of researcher and researched, must not the self become an intimate part of the process?

The ethical dilemma here is not an unwillingness to give up the objective perspective, but the possibility that the self will be allowed greater weight in

determining the outcome than it ought to be. The traditional power relationship between researcher and researched is tipped in favor of the researcher, who has both institutional sanctions and superior substantive background to support his or her personal conclusions. How can we protect the joint participants against disenfranchisement?

The second problem has to do with choices about what material to include and exclude from the case report. These choices are not solely the investigator's. The case report in its final form represents the joint construction to which all concerned parties have come as a result of negotiation. That process sets a context for the report and legitimizes the interpretations made in it. When interpretations are negotiated and settled, then data and incidents supporting those interpretations are chosen. Features of the context which call forth behaviors, activities, and value will need to be presented to ground them in that particular context. Of course, items of information cannot be left out of the report willy-nilly; the negotiation process ought to require confrontation of all data items and to make some reasonable disposition of them. If they are not to be included in the construction that emerges, there ought to be good reasons for their exclusion. The choices, whether of the researcher or the respondents, cannot be arbitrary.

WHOSE AGENDA?

This list of problems by no means exhausts the ethical dilemmas arising from the naturalistic paradigm. The notion of "cooperative" or "participative" inquiry embraces other problems, one of the most acute of which is, "Whose agenda?"

Both Diener and Crandall (1978) and Dobbert (1982) make clear that all social research has some agenda. The former caution, as part of their general guidelines, that "when a study is supported by a funding agency, the scientist must determine whether the research will be used for beneficial purposes. He [or she] should examine the possible applications of social scientific findings and endeavor to make these uses constructive. Before conducting a study the researcher must consider how the information will affect the people being studied" (p. 217).

If the researcher does not undertake the study alone, then he or she has some obligation to discover why the funder wants the study done at all and to what ends the results will (may be) turned. Dobbert is quite clear that this

process of sorting out different stakeholders' agendas is part and parcel of the ethical responsibility of any social scientist (1982, 76–85). She describes two situations but says that there are "just as bad or worse" to be had for the listening at any professional meeting:

> A field worker hired by an agency of any sort to do research and provide recommendations for future policy and actions to the agency has, automatically, two clients—the agency utilizing the research and the study's subjects, for whom the policy or actions are intended. Often the situation is even more complex and five-party situations are not at all rare. A government may, for example, hire a research company to study schools in a certain problem area and make recommendations for their improvement. The agency in turn hires a fieldworker who goes out to study the local situation, only to discover that there are two very strongly opposed factions attempting to control the schools in question and that each has a different philosophy, which leads to incompatible plans for their schools. Ethically, the fieldworker in this situation is responsible to both hiring agencies . . . ; to himself or herself personally; and to both of the studied groups, who have given time and effort to provide data, with the hopes of having their side of the issue heard. (1982, 82–83)

Our own experience verifies that such a situation is not unusual.

The ethical concern is exacerbated when the agendas to be served are compared to the maze of reality constructions. Whose reality gets presented? The respondents'? Which of the respondent subgroups? The investigators'? The funder's? The contracting agency's? The complexity of the problem can be appreciated from Figure 10.1.

We raised the issue earlier of the appropriateness of moving toward a more cooperative paradigm of research, one in which both investigators and participants negotiated interpretations of the data gathered (Lincoln and Guba 1985). We are now prepared to state unequivocally that, as an ethical concern, cooperation and negotiation between researcher and respondents/participants are essential both to maintain research authenticity and to fulfill the criterion of safeguarding human dignity. When participants do not "own" the data they have furnished about themselves, they have been robbed of some essential element of dignity, in addition to having been abandoned in harm's way. If they are accorded the dignity of ownership, they have the right to shape that information's use and to assist in formulating the purposes to which they will lend

FIGURE 10.1
Agenda Conflicts in Applied Fieldwork

Whose Reality?	Whose Agenda?*						
	Funder	Investigator	Respondent Groups				Some Combination**
			1	2	. . .	N	
Insider (Emic construction; subjective)							
Outsider (Etic construction; intersubjective)							

*Agenda implies values, design, control, and uses of knowledge.
**Combination implies a negotiated, participative, or cooperative research paradigm, in which respondents become participants and maintain some or all control over all agenda items.

their names and information. To do less is to violate, to intrude, and to condemn to indignity.

CONCLUSION

We have argued that a central failure of conventional or positivistic inquiry is its inability to acknowledge and correct the socially and morally repugnant fact of deception in research and its violation of such societal ethics as dignity, self-determination, and individual human agency. Deception and the warrant to deceive that investigators inherit in the conventional paradigm have personal, social, and professional costs so high that even conventional inquirers reject them, as do those using a different paradigm (Lincoln and Guba 1985) and those debating the intersection of feminism and science (Keller 1983) or Marxism and science (Reynolds 1980–81).

The ethical concerns embodied in this failure may be seen as moral, legal, or social, although these three dimensions are not exclusive. Moral dimensions include tests for whether reasonable persons would approve the research, whether it would pass the test of publicity, and whether it would afford discretion in restraining intrusiveness and injuriousness. Legal tests revolve about whether the research sufficiently protects individuals from harm, from lapses in informed consent, from deception, and finally, from violations of privacy and confidentiality. Social tests include determining the costs of a cynical public disenchanted with the arrogance of a deceptive social science community.

Conventional inquiry acquires the warrant to engage in deceptive and even injurious research by virtue of its focus on a supposed single "reality." Convergence upon this reality as the single most important focus of research has justified deception as a way of preventing ambiguity of research results. This dubious means, of course, has failed to prevent ambiguity; furthermore, the costs of deception are added to the research, and the research results might not be deemed sufficient compensation.

The costs to research enterprises resulting from real or possible deception can be avoided if the research is conducted with the emergent paradigm of naturalistic inquiry. This paradigm's focus on the multiple realities of divergent social constructions eliminates the search for a single "reality." The emphasis on using rather than compensating for the interactivity of researcher and respondents allows participants to retain their individual loci of control,

to make informed decisions about their participation, and to have substantial agency in shaping the processes and results of the inquiry into their lives.

Avoiding the necessity to deceive and the reliance on dominant-subordinate relationships in the research process does not, unfortunately, eliminate all problems associated with ethical social research. The naturalistic paradigm brings a new set of problems—fostering intense, face-to-face contact with participants, maintaining privacy and confidentiality, building and maintaining trust, negotiating joint responsibility and control, and constructing a case report that controls the intrusiveness of the researcher's self and makes decisions about inclusion and exclusion on the basis of the jointly devised construction.

Nevertheless, although each paradigm resolves one set of problems while raising another, we believe that the warrant to deceive in positivist inquiry raises serious ethical difficulties in social research; the rescinding of that warrant is another powerful reason for seriously considering a paradigm shift.

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