

Chapter 2

Ethics in Educational Research

KENNETH R. HOWE AND MICHELE S. MOSES

University of Colorado at Boulder

The ethics of social and educational research has been significantly complicated over the last several decades as a consequence of the “interpretive turn” and the ever-increasing use of qualitative research methods that have accompanied it. In this chapter, we identify what came before and after the interpretive turn with the *traditional* and *contemporary* approaches to research ethics, respectively. The distinction is a heuristic one. We do not mean to suggest that the interpretive turn occurred at any precise point in time or that it has completely won out. In this vein, the traditional approach is no doubt still in currency.

Embedded in the distinction between traditional and contemporary approaches is another between the protection of research participants (“research subjects” in the traditional vocabulary) and research misconduct. This, too, is a heuristic distinction, because it involves significant overlaps. In particular, research misconduct largely subsumes the protection of research participants. Nonetheless, it is a distinction that has the virtue of familiarity, since it parallels the way federal regulations and universities divide the issues in research ethics.

We should observe here at the outset that medical research has been at the forefront of the ethics of research involving humans, both with respect to the development of vocabularies and frameworks and with respect to the formulation of federal policy. Social research in general and educational research in particular have generally followed this lead. We do not make this observation to suggest that social and educational researchers have remained on the sidelines, simply applying the precepts of medical ethics. On the contrary, as we shall see, for at least some theorists an adequate approach to the ethics of social and educational research requires significantly modifying the vocabularies and frameworks that have come down to them through the ethics of medical research. We make this observation instead to apprise readers of why we borrow so heavily from sources outside education and to alert them to an important part of the history of the ethics of educational research.

THE TRADITIONAL APPROACH

The “traditional approach” draws a rather sharp line between the “prescriptive” (moral-political) component of social research and the “descriptive” (scientific-methodological) component (Beauchamp et al., 1982). It divides questions concerning the morals and politics of social scientific studies from questions

concerning their scientific merits and pursues them relatively independently. Indeed, not keeping these domains separated is often considered the mark of biased social research and advocacy.

In our discussion of the traditional view, we follow suit and separate the ethics of social research from broader political and methodological issues. We save raising questions about this maneuver for our discussion of the "contemporary approach."

Protection of Research Participants

Protecting individual autonomy has long been a central principle in Western moral-political thought. That it should also occupy a central place in Western thought about the ethics of research, particularly research involving human participants, should thus come as no surprise. The traditional controversy about autonomy has been cast in terms of Kantian versus utilitarian ethical frameworks. The Kantian (also nonconsequentialist or deontological) framework employs *categorical* ethical principles, the most general of which is the following: "Always treat persons as ends in themselves and never solely as means." In this framework, individual autonomy is fundamental, since respecting autonomy is tantamount to treating individuals as ends in themselves. By contrast, the utilitarian (also consequentialist or teleological) framework employs *hypothetical* ethical principles that are subsidiary to the uniform goal of maximizing the balance of benefits over harms. Thus, "always treat persons as ends" is subject to the condition "*if this maximizes benefits.*" In this framework, autonomy is instrumental; respecting it must serve the overall utilitarian goal.

Utilitarian reasoning is widely criticized for sanctioning unacceptable moral conclusions in both theory and practice. In theory, one can imagine a society in which benefit is defined as what gives people pleasure and in which fights to the death among enslaved combatants serve to maximize the total balance of pleasure over pain—a society in which, by summing the pleasure experienced by the spectators and subtracting the pain experienced by the combatants, the total value would be higher than if the practice were prohibited. In practice, certain biomedical research (e.g., the Tuskegee study of the progression of untreated syphilis in African-American men [Jones, 1993]), as well as social research (e.g., Milgram's [1974] studies of obedience), receives its sanction from utilitarian reasoning when it is defended on the grounds that the harm done to research participants in the short term is outweighed by the long-term benefit of the knowledge produced.

To be sure, these are research practices that many (perhaps all) utilitarian theorists would condemn. Arguably, however, it is only by adopting rule utilitarianism and providing utilitarian reasons for following moral rules independent of the calculation of specific benefit-harm ratios—that is, only by providing utilitarian reasons for eschewing utilitarian reasoning in specific cases—that the unacceptable moral conclusions that follow from a thoroughgoing application of utilitarian reasoning can be blocked.

Venturing deeply enough into moral philosophy to fully develop this point would take us too far afield from the task at hand. We thus adopt the more modest tasks of examining the most outstanding difficulty for utilitarianism in the context of research involving human participants and then showing how, whatever the ultimate theoretical foundations might be, the principles employed to govern the treatment of research participants are *de facto* Kantian.

The most outstanding difficulty for utilitarianism is specifying the benefits and harms that are to go into its calculations. Not only are people likely to disagree about what these are. An important corollary is that all morally relevant considerations must be cast in terms of benefits and harms, in which, for instance, the harms done to slaves who must fight to the death are put on the same scale as the benefits that accrue to those who enjoy watching such a spectacle. Otherwise, utilitarian calculations would not be possible.

MacIntyre contends that confinement to utilitarian benefits-harms calculations eliminates two additional kinds of morally relevant considerations in the context of social research: "wrongs" and "moral harms" (1982). Take the famous (or infamous) Tearoom Trade study. Keeping his identity as a researcher secret, Laud Humphreys assumed the role of a lookout, a "watchqueen," in public restrooms as men engaged in homosexual acts. Arguably, the balance of benefits over harms in this study was positive, if not for the men actually involved in the study, then for gay men overall. (There has been much actual discussion along these lines, and Humphreys saw himself as producing overall beneficial effects by reducing homophobic stereotyping [see, for example, Beauchamp et al., 1982].) But restricting the relevant considerations to benefits and harms circumscribes the analysis in a way that excludes the question of whether deceiving these men did them a moral wrong, independent of the calculation of overall harms and benefits. It may be argued that Humphreys's deception of these men disregarded their dignity and their agency, and, in general, treated them as mere means for achieving other persons' ends. The response that treating persons as mere means is just one kind of harm to be entered into the benefit-harm calculation misses the point of the objection and begs the question in favor of utilitarianism's premise that all morally relevant considerations can be put on the same scale.

The Tearoom Trade example may also be used to illustrate the issue of "moral harms," the other morally relevant consideration eliminated by confinement to utilitarian benefit-harm calculations. According to MacIntyre, "Moral harm is inflicted on someone when some course of action produces in that person a greater propensity to commit wrongs" (1982, p. 178). It is a plausible conjecture that, as a result of Humphreys's study, the men involved in it were made more cynical and distrustful and more inclined to treat others as mere means to pursuing their own ends. (The Tuskegee study provides a more dramatic example and one for which "moral harms" have been documented [Haworth, 1997].)

If inflicting moral harm is something that social research ought to avoid, then the justification for doing so has to be sought beyond utilitarian benefits-harms calculations. Moral harms cannot be routinely plugged into utilitarian benefit-harm calculations; rather, avoiding them places a fundamental constraint on the

use to which such calculations can be put. This is true for moral wrongs as well because they involve the rights to self-determination and privacy, rights that, in Dworkin's (1978) suggestive phraseology, "trump" utilitarian calculations.

As mentioned earlier, there is a version of utilitarianism that putatively avoids the kinds of criticisms just advanced, namely rule utilitarianism. Kelman (1982), a self-described rule utilitarian, provides a good example of such a view applied specifically to the ethics of social research.

The benefit that Kelman ultimately seeks to maximize is the "fulfillment of human potentialities" (1982, p. 41). He concedes, however, the extreme difficulty involved in determining whether this applies in specific circumstances and, for this reason, rejects *act utilitarianism*. He goes on to use "consistency with human dignity" as his criterion for moral evaluation (1982, p. 42), which he subsequently identifies (in language almost straight from Kant) with treating "individuals as ends in themselves, rather than as means to some extraneous ends" (1982, p. 43). In a related vein, under the rubric of "wider social values" (1982, p. 46), Kelman embraces the idea that social research should avoid engendering "diffuse harm," the "reduction of private space," and the "erosion of trust."

The parallel between Kelman's and MacIntyre's views is striking. Corresponding to MacIntyre's admonition to avoid "moral wrongs," we have Kelman's admonition to treat persons as "ends in themselves"; corresponding to MacIntyre's admonition to avoid "moral harms," we have Kelman's to avoid "diffuse harms." In both cases, confinement to utilitarian benefit-harm calculations is viewed as morally inadequate. If moral justification is to be ultimately utilitarian, to ultimately fall under the rule of benefit-harm calculations, then it is not only individually defined benefits and harms that must be taken into account but also benefits or harms to the moral health of the human community overall.

This should explain why we would say that thinking about the ethical treatment of participants in social research is *de facto* Kantian: There is rather widespread agreement that whatever the ultimate justification for moral conclusions regarding the treatment of research participants might be, certain ethical principles should constrain the manner in which researchers may treat research participants in meeting the traditional utilitarian goals of advancing knowledge and otherwise benefitting society.

Informed consent is the most central of such ethical principles, and it is prominent in federal regulations governing social research. The basic idea is that it is up to research participants to weigh the risks and benefits associated with participating in a research project and up to them to then decide whether to take part. And they can do this only if they are informed about and understand what their participation in the research involves. In this way, their autonomy is protected in a way it was not in the Tuskegee, Tearoom Trade, and Milgram studies. Informed consent is *de facto* Kantian because refusal to participate on the part of research participants is binding, even if their refusal results in a failure to maximize presumed benefits.

It should be observed that the doctrine of informed consent, as explicated in the Code of Federal Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR 46, 1991, as amended), is not so permissive as to sanction any research in which humans agree to participate. Special protections are provided to "vulnerable populations" of various kinds (for example, children and prisoners) who are too immature or in too compromised a position to make a truly autonomous decision. Furthermore, researchers must seek a just distribution of the burdens of participating in social research over different populations. Finally, proposed research projects may also be blocked if they are so methodologically flawed as to provide little or no promise of generating credible findings, rendering any potential risks or harms too great.

Privacy is the second central principle in the traditional conception of the ethical treatment of social research participants, in addition to autonomy. The two vehicles for protecting it are anonymity (not gathering identity-specific data) and confidentiality (not revealing identity-specific data). The relationships among autonomy and informed consent, on the one hand, and privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity, on the other, are varied and complex.

In one form of analysis, privacy is a kind of autonomy. For example, in the celebrated *Roe v. Wade* decision (1973) and the precedent on which it depended, *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1964), the right to privacy was invoked as equivalent to protecting the autonomy of individuals regarding abortion and birth control, respectively. In a related way, autonomy has also been advanced as the justification for protecting the privacy of medical records, school records, and social research data, on the grounds that the release of such information can restrict the options available to those about whom it is released. For example, depending on the circumstances, the release of medical records could reduce a person's employment opportunities, the release of school records could label a child and thereby restrict his or her life options, and the release of social science data could cause someone to be deported.

In a second form of analysis, privacy has an intrinsic value tied to human dignity and security and distinct from its relationship to autonomy (e.g., Beauchamp et al., 1982). According to Arthur Caplan, "Privacy is a basic human need. Without privacy, it is not possible to develop or maintain a sense of self or personhood." Thus, the attempt to derive privacy from autonomy puts "the cart before the proverbial horse" (Caplan, 1982, p. 320). Save the limiting case of not choosing to be observed, the value of privacy may have little or no connection to self-determination. It is the value of having "private space" (e.g., Kelman, 1982), of being free from surveillance, from looking over one's shoulder, from humiliation and embarrassment, and the like, that privacy protects. Consider the reason one would not want to be observed by strangers going to the toilet or engaging in sex.

As it turns out, the requirement of informed consent diminishes the importance of determining which analysis of privacy is the correct one, and in which contexts. For part of the informed consent process is describing to participants just what

the risks to their privacy might be and what measures will be taken to ensure anonymity or confidentiality. In this way, how important privacy might be, and why, largely devolves to individuals' exercise of autonomy.

Research Misconduct

While the issue of research misconduct encompasses both the treatment of research participants and fraudulent or deceptive practices of research and reporting, this section focuses primarily on the latter. Even when having no direct effect on research participants, research misconduct nonetheless wrongs others within the research community and damages the research enterprise overall. Thus, in this section, we explore issues of research misconduct among researchers. We begin with a discussion of the general nature of the scholarly endeavor that frames how to think about research misconduct. We then examine plagiarism and data fabrication/misrepresentation. We end with a few observations about how pressures facing contemporary researchers may contribute to research misconduct.

The Scholarly Endeavor

Scientists and researchers have long been regarded as the "seekers of truth" (LaFollette, 1994a, p. 261). Accordingly, the scholarly endeavor focuses on producing new knowledge and understanding. The concepts of trust and accountability are central to the research enterprise, as, ideally, knowledge and truth, rather than wealth and power, are sought (LaFollette, 1994a). Educational researchers, in particular, often hope that the new knowledge they produce will contribute to the improvement of educational practices and policies, as well as better treatment of students.

So, just how widespread is the problem of research misconduct, and how do researchers perceive their responsibility to combat it? A 1988 survey of professional scientists defined research fraud as falsifying data, reporting results incorrectly, and plagiarizing. When asked whether they had *direct* knowledge of research misconduct, 19% said that they did (LaFollette, 1994b). Although by no means comprehensive, these results suggest that research misconduct is more widespread than commonly thought. Yet, *The Academic's Handbook*, a recent publication intended to clarify issues of conduct for those working in academia, spends a scant eight pages on "the responsible conduct of academic research," of which a main section centers on avoiding "bad manners" (Vesilind, 1995, p. 105). This type of cursory treatment of research ethics underscores what Goodstein calls the "myth of the noble scientist" (1991, p. 515).

It is true that in the vast scheme of scholarly research through the years, there have been relatively few documented cases of researchers who knowingly engaged in misconduct. Still, there are a handful of famous cases, mainly from the 1970s and 1980s, that stand out, such as the Alsabti and Soman plagiarism cases and the Darsee data fabrication case (described later). Not only were they the impetus for the much-increased federal and local oversight of scientific and social scientific research processes and practices, but they have stayed on the

minds of today's researchers. In many instances, they are emotional reminders of how researchers can lose their integrity even in the search for knowledge and truth. These incidents of misconduct compromise the integrity not only of the researchers involved but of the entire research community (Chubin, 1985). Misconduct and dishonesty by some researchers reflect poorly on all, especially in the eyes of the government and the public.

What, then, constitutes misconduct within scholarly research? A narrow interpretation defines research misconduct as intentional deceit and falsification of research, plagiarism, and misinterpretation or misrepresentation of results (Steneck, 1994). Broader definitions also include inappropriate collaborations, inappropriate faculty-graduate student relations, denying knowledge of dishonest research practices by another, and conflicting interests with funding agencies.

This much is uncontested: True misconduct must be distinguished from honest mistakes, shoddy work, and real disagreements about results or interpretations (Steneck, 1994). The outstanding problem here, of course, is determining the actual knowledge and intent of the researcher.

Also uncontested (although perhaps less so) is that harms that are intrinsic to research should be distinguished from harms that are extrinsic (Warwick, 1982). For example, using deception as part of the research technique is intrinsic to the research process, and researchers are in control and should therefore be held morally responsible for the harms that are caused by the research. Extrinsic harms, on the other hand, are not part of the research process that is controlled by the researcher. If someone uses research findings for unethical aims that could not have been foreseen by the researcher, the researcher is not morally responsible. Determining the knowledge and intent of the researcher is once again problematic, because it is possible that the researcher could foresee negative and unethical uses for her or his research findings and yet continue the research in spite of—or, worse, because of—those reasons. In that type of case, researchers should not be able to evade moral responsibility for the uses to which their research is put. Certain research on race could fall into this category, such as using IQ data to establish certain races as inferior or superior.

Donald Warwick (1982) proposes a taxonomy of harms attending research misconduct useful for broadening our discussion. He categorizes such harms into three main areas: (a) harms to research participants, (b) harms to society, and (c) harms to researchers and the research professions. We have already discussed ethical issues concerning research participants. Included under possible harms to society are the development of public cynicism and/or mistrust of academic research processes and the perpetuation of stereotypes or adverse images of certain societal groups. Increased public mistrust of scholarly work negatively affects the public perception of researchers and their activities, as well as the possibilities for funding and support of important research endeavors. One current example of the fallout from serious misconduct is that, in the United States after the Tuskegee deception, the federal government now needs to offer strong incentives for people of color to participate in federally sponsored health research

(Haworth, 1997). As for the harms to researchers and the research professions, Warwick cites the development of a deceptive, manipulative attitude toward others; increased restrictions on research activities; and lowered overall quality of research.

Plagiarism

Instances of plagiarism are perhaps the most common of all research misconduct, in any field. Plagiarism can take different forms: copying another researcher's work verbatim, which is the most blatant form; using intellectual property without the express permission of the owner of those ideas; or lifting substantial portions of another's work without any citation of that author. While it often may be obvious when someone actually copies the work of another, what makes plagiarism especially complicated to contend with is that it is often very difficult to locate the exact origins of ideas. Two prominent cases from the biomedical sciences, the Alsabti case and the Soman case, illustrate these issues.

Elias Alsabti came to the United States in 1977 from Jordan to pursue postgraduate medical education. He was hired by a cancer research laboratory within Temple University's medical school, where he supposedly did cancer research. He ended up publishing more than 60 articles within 2 years of his arrival in the United States, some of which appeared in prestigious journals such as the *Journal of Cancer Research and Clinical Oncology* (Broad, 1980a). However, as he moved from one lab to another, his work became suspect, until he finally was accused publicly of severe plagiarism and of making up the names of various listed coauthors. For example, one article by Alsabti published in a European journal was found to have been copied almost word for word from a 2-year-old article in a Japanese journal. As the investigation of Alsabti continued, it was found that he never even had received a medical degree in Jordan (Broad, 1980a). This incident shook the world of medical research and publishing. People wondered how so many fraudulent articles could have slipped by the screening review systems. Apparently, even those who had noticed something fishy with Alsabti's work did not have him investigated. Rather, they just terminated him, which gave him the opportunity to move to other research laboratories and continue his plagiarism (Broad & Wade, 1982).

Another prominent case occurred at around the same time. In 1979, a National Institutes of Health (NIH) medical researcher accused two Yale medical researchers of plagiarizing a manuscript that she had submitted to the *New England Journal of Medicine*. She had been asked to review a paper submitted for publication by Philip Felig, vice-chair of Yale's Department of Medicine, and his junior coauthor, Vijay Soman. The NIH researcher, Helena Rodbard, recognized the data and a portion of the writing as her own (Broad, 1980b). Concerned about priority of publication, she contacted the dean of the Yale University School of Medicine, who responded by asking the researchers whether they had conducted the study on which their paper was based. Felig and Soman said yes, and once he saw their data sheets, he considered the matter closed. His high respect for senior

researcher Felig allowed him to give the benefit of the doubt. Still, Rodbard pushed for further investigation and was eventually satisfied. It turned out that Felig had not been supervising Soman very closely and Soman had actually used Rodbard's study as his own, plagiarized her writing and that of others, and fudged some of his own data (Broad, 1980b).

After these two sensational misconduct cases, it became apparent that the traditional system of self-regulation was not working. In the Soman case, Rodbard had brought up the ethical questions only because of a competitive threat to her work. Moreover, the investigation took an inordinate amount of time because she had no ethics board to which to turn. Instead, she had to appeal to a dean who happened to be a close colleague of one of the alleged plagiarizers (Broad, 1980b). The result of these incidents was not only that the researchers involved were penalized (even Rodbard soured to a career in research); the research community as a whole faced increased scrutiny. Most specifically, the government looked to increase its role in the oversight of research conduct (Broad, 1980c).

Data Fabrication/Misrepresentation

In addition to the research misconduct issues surrounding authorship and plagiarism, issues of the integrity of data are also salient ethical matters. For both quantitative and qualitative research studies, the integrity of the research is determined by the authenticity of data, proper data representation, and political issues surrounding research findings.

When data are fabricated and peer reviewers do not catch on, it is clear that something is amiss in the system of scholarly publication. John Darsee was a Harvard University cardiologist who published more than 100 articles between 1978 and 1982 based on fabricated data (Chubin, 1985). When Harvard officials were first notified of the suspicion of Darsee's misconduct, they did not notify anyone at NIH, his funding agency. Instead, it was seen as an isolated incident, and Darsee was given the benefit of the doubt and allowed to continue his work in the Cardiac Research Laboratory, although an offer of an assistant professorship was rescinded (Chubin, 1985; Greene et al., 1985). The officials did not want to ruin Darsee's life or the reputation of their lab. It was not until NIH itself questioned some of Darsee's submitted data that an investigation occurred. The investigation showed a clear pattern of fabricated data over a 4-year period (Broad & Wade, 1982).

Different from pure fabrication, the misrepresentation of data includes "mas-saging" data to favor a preferred hypothesis or outcome or omitting relevant sources present in the literature. Cyril Burt, a prominent British psychologist, was accused after his death of misrepresenting his data on identical twins who were raised apart as well as completely fabricating some of the data (Chubin, 1985). Whether or not Burt actually engaged in research misconduct remains contested; prominent scholars fall on both sides of the debate (Hattie, 1991). Burt's defenders, such as J. Philippe Rushton (1994) and Robert Joynton (1994), say that the main reason that Burt has been accused of misconduct is racial

politics. According to Rushton, Burt's findings oppose what he terms "genetic equalitarianism" (1994, p. 40). Rushton's own psychological research on cranial size differences by race and sex and their relation to IQ is also quite controversial. Burt's critics claim that he must have fabricated data because he could not have found so many cases of identical twins who were raised apart; he misrepresented the data so that they would fit with his predetermined theories (Joynson, 1994).

So-called advocacy research, which places the researcher in the role of advocate for some view or another, is a frequent target of criticism. The ethical issues here are extremely tricky, and, most recently, Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein, authors of *The Bell Curve* (1994), have been accused of this type of unethical advocacy research (Strosnider, 1997). Some scholars believe that by using race as something more than a socially constructed label, researchers like Murray and Herrnstein play into a culture of racism (Anderson, 1992). Neil Gilbert (1994) has criticized advocacy research on any side of the political spectrum as eroding research standards and abusing statistics, especially in social research.

What is perhaps most difficult to ascertain in many of these cases is the issue of intentionality. When there is clear evidence of data fabrication, as finally with Darsee, unethical conduct is clear. However, data fabrication is difficult to prove, especially when confidentiality issues arise. There are few checks on researchers within the research process. Data misrepresentation is even harder to prove. It is very tricky to distinguish for certain between willful misinterpretation of data and shoddy or incompetent research practice. In addition, the politics of certain types of research and research findings make ethical judgments very complicated indeed.

Pressures on Researchers

What might compel some researchers to engage in unethical research behaviors, particularly when the potential harm to the research community and themselves is severe? Daryl Chubin (1985) identifies seven causes of research misconduct: "psychopathy, unbridled ambition, pressure for publication, competition for federal support, the 'lab-chief' system, failings of the 'peer-review system,' and lack of replication and sheer sloppiness" (p. 177). Excluding psychopathy, these can be reclassified into four more general causes: researcher-researcher competition, funding conflicts, publication pressure, and abuse of power.

First, competition among researchers has stiffened immensely in recent years. This is due to, in part, the dearth of academic positions, especially tenure-track positions at top-notch research institutions. It is interesting to note that the most sensational cases of research misconduct have come from top-level institutions such as Yale University (Soman) and Harvard University (Darsee).

Second, there is also a notable increase in competition for research funding, prompting conflicts of interest associated with increasing funding for higher education from private industry (Burgess, 1989). How much does a funding agency's agenda affect research practice and publication? A 1996 study of top biology and medicine journals found that in approximately one third of the articles

sampled, the lead author(s) had some sort of conflict of interest. The conflict was usually a financial one, for example, holding investments in a company connected to the research in some way (Cho, 1997). Another recent investigation revealed that 98% of research studies that were funded by the pharmaceutical industry found new drug therapies to be more effective than the current drug, whereas 79% of studies that were not funded by the pharmaceutical industry found the new drug to be more effective. All of these studies were published in peer-reviewed biomedical journals (Cho, 1997).

Third, the long-standing pressure to "publish or perish" within academia continues to put strain on young researchers. The top-level research institutions require numerous publications as a condition of tenure. Consider Alsabti, a junior researcher. When asked why he engaged in such misconduct and fraud, he blamed the pressure to move up within academia. He said that his "actions . . . were done in the midst of significant pressure to publish these data as fast as possible so as to obtain priority" (Broad, 1980b, p. 39). According to Alsabti, the cutthroat research atmosphere had compelled him into fraud. For Felig's part, although it was found that he had not been aware of Soman's unethical behavior, he made sure that, as a senior researcher, his name appeared on Soman's papers even when he was not involved in the research project. Certainly, an interest in adding to his list of publications played into Felig's ethical negligence.

Finally, the various pressures just mentioned can also lead to abuse of power. One prominent example from the biomedical research community is the Baltimore case at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). In 1988, David Baltimore, a Nobel-prize-winning biologist and director of a laboratory at MIT, was indirectly accused of data misrepresentation because the evidence presented in an article by Baltimore and five other colleagues did not support the conclusions drawn (Goodstein, 1991). The primary researcher and author of the article was Thereza Imanishi-Kari, the director of another laboratory at MIT. Baltimore's role was as senior scientist; it was Imanishi-Kari's lab team who did the primary work for this particular paper. Baltimore's lab team was collaborating with Imanishi-Kari's on a larger project from which the research in question came. After repeated denials from both Baltimore and Imanishi-Kari, the Office of Research Integrity's Commission on Research Integrity found that Imanishi-Kari had indeed falsified data to help support research findings that were published in the journal *Cell*. Much later, in 1996, Imanishi-Kari won her appeal to the Department of Health and Human Services' Integrity Adjudications Panel, when they decided that the Office of Research Integrity had never adequately proven its charges of intentional data falsification (Kevles, 1998).

What makes this case fall under the abuse of power category is that it was two junior scholars, postdoctoral fellow Margot O'Toole and graduate student Charles Maplethorpe, who first questioned the Imanishi-Kari/Baltimore research. There were two other graduate students in the laboratory who also suspected data falsification, but when O'Toole brought the accusations, they refused to support her because they feared jeopardizing their degrees (LaFollette, 1994a).

It turns out that their fear was justified; O'Toole has accused both Baltimore and Imanishi-Kari, as well as other senior scientists who became involved with the controversy, of damaging her reputation and making it very difficult for her to obtain a position in academe. She insists that it was her position as a junior scientist that made her first hesitate to make official accusations, but when she finally did, she was fired from her post in the MIT lab and later from her position as a research professor at Tufts University (O'Toole, 1991).

Faculty-student relations are very complex. While in some sense they are often collegial, there is always an imbalance of power and often a dependent relationship (Penslar, 1995). In social and educational research, where the "lab-chief" system is less prevalent than in biomedical research, the general problem of the imbalance of power among graduate students and professors nonetheless remains a constant source of ethical worries.

THE CONTEMPORARY APPROACH

The traditional approach to research ethics finds its roots in experimental and quasi-experimental, so-called "quantitative," research methodology, still the gold standard in medical research and the methodology traditionally predominant in the social sciences and education. Thus, the burgeoning of so-called "qualitative" research methodologies over the past several decades poses a potential challenge to the adequacy of the traditional approach. To be sure, the challenge is not new—field researchers have long contended with it—but it is more prominent, pressing, and pervasive than it once was. The advent of federal regulations is one stimulus. New and revitalized perspectives in moral theory that question the centrality of autonomy—communitarianism, care theory, and postmodernism, for instance—are another.

The "interpretive turn" in social research is implicated in both of these developments. Rabinow and Sullivan (1987) coined this phrase to describe the epistemological shift in the mid- and late 20th century away from positivism and toward hermeneutics. Given the interpretivist perspective, beliefs, attitudes, customs, identities—virtually everything that makes humans what they are—are created and exist only within social relationships, relationships in which language use looms large. No neutral scientific language, à la positivism, exists with which to describe social life wholly from the outside, as it were. Instead, social life is "dialogical," as Charles Taylor (1994) puts it, and thus the methodology of social research must be so as well: It must seek out and listen carefully to "voices" embedded in their social context to gain a true understanding of what people are saying and why they do what they do. And dialogue itself has consequences: Beliefs, culture norms, and the like are not just there, waiting to be uncovered, but are negotiated and "constructed" via the interactions among researchers and those they study.

The implications of this methodological-cum-epistemological shift in social research ethics may be divided into two general areas: *fundamental perspectives*

and *operating principles*. The former refers to the broad moral-political frameworks that undergird social and educational research; the latter involves the more specific principles used to govern and evaluate social and educational research vis-à-vis ethics.

Fundamental Perspectives

The interpretive perspective jettisons the positivistic fact-value distinction and, along with it, the idea that social and educational researchers can confine themselves to *neutral descriptions* and effective *means* toward “technical control” (Fay, 1975). Rather, *value-laden descriptions* and *ends* are always pertinent and always intertwined. Because each are part and parcel of social science research, the researcher has no way to avoid moral-political commitments by placing ethics and politics in one compartment and scientific merit in another. As stated by MacIntyre:

The social sciences are moral sciences. That is, not only do social scientists explore a human universe centrally constituted by a variety of obediences to and breaches of, conformities to and rebellions against, a host of rules, taboos, ideals, and beliefs about goods, virtues, and vices . . . *their own explorations of that universe are no different in this respect from any other form of human activity.* (1982, p. 175, italics added)

This general stance is one that a variety of contemporary perspectives converge on: In addition to communitarianism, care theory, and postmodernism, already mentioned, critical theory and contemporary liberalism may be added to the list. Nonetheless, these perspectives can diverge quite dramatically, and, although we will eventually draw them together again around several points of agreement, it is worth briefly describing where their differences lie. (We do not deny there may be other ways of distinguishing perspectives. For instance, feminism is perhaps conspicuous in its absence. But feminism cuts across the five perspectives. Furthermore, Noddings's care theory is one kind of feminist perspective we explicitly address.)

Communitarianism

Communitarianism locates morality within a given community and its shared norms and “practices” (MacIntyre, 1981). Accordingly, what is conceived as the morally good life has to be known from the inside and varies from one community (or culture) to another. Because social and educational research cuts across communities that may differ from the social researcher's own, ensuring the ethical treatment of research participants who are members of such communities is doubly problematic. Not only are the normal problems involved in protecting autonomy potentially complicated by a lack of mutual understanding; a commitment to the fundamental values that undergird social research may not be shared.

For example, certain communities do not place a high value on individual autonomy (the Amish perhaps being the most well-known case). As such, it is not up to individual community members to give their informed consent to have

social researchers peering into the social life of the community, for it is not always *theirs* to give. The community may reject the way of explaining and rendering community life transparent associated with social science and may not want its practices understood and portrayed in these terms. True, an individual community member who agreed to participate in developing such a portrayal might be viewed as a rogue who was wronging the community, but the social researcher could not avoid the charge that it was he or she who was the true instigator of such an "act of aggression" (MacIntyre, 1982, p. 179). The social researcher has no wholly neutral position from which to conduct research. "The danger" in believing otherwise, according to MacIntyre, "is that what is taken to be culturally neutral by the [social researcher] may be merely what his or her own culture takes to be culturally neutral" (1982, pp. 183–184).

The ethical predicament for social and educational researchers raised here is close to the one historically raised under the anthropological concept of "cultural relativism." The difference is that it may now be recognized as a pervasive problem that applies to the broad range of "qualitative" social and educational research conducted across a broad range of cultural contexts and groups, not only exotic ones.

Care Theory

Care theory is a close cousin of communitarianism insofar as both emphasize concrete circumstances and specific demands on individuals ("the view from here") over ideal circumstances and the demands placed on individuals by abstract principles ("the view from nowhere") (Nagel, 1986). On the other hand, care theory embraces, if not a culturally neutral ideal, one that nonetheless is to be applied across cultural encounters; for Noddings (1984), caring is the ethical universal.

Noddings (1986) applies the ethics of care specifically to educational research. Her first thesis is that the relationship between researchers and participants ought to exemplify caring, particularly trust and mutual respect; her second thesis broadens the first so as to apply to the educational research enterprise as a whole. According to Noddings, the choice of research questions and the overall conduct of the research ought to be based on their potential to contribute to caring school communities. Educational research should not be conducted on the basis of mere intellectual curiosity; much less should it be conducted in a way that is likely to be harmful to individual students or groups of students or destructive of school communities. Educational research should be "*for teaching*," Noddings says, not simply "*on teaching*" (1986, p. 506). Ignoring these concerns renders the traditional emphasis on autonomy and privacy incomplete at best.

Postmodernism

Postmodernism shares the premise found in communitarianism and care theory that social and educational research cannot, first, isolate the descriptive component of social research from its moral component and, second, ensure the ethical

treatment of research participants by obtaining their informed consent and protecting their privacy. But the postmodernist critique is more radical. Whereas communitarianism and care theory identify dangers with and lacunas in the traditional conception, postmodernism questions the very existence of the integral selves on which the traditional conception is based.

In the postmodern analysis, individuals are not capable of freely directing their own lives; rather, they are always enmeshed in and shaped by relationships of knowledge/power. These "regimes of truth," as labeled by Foucault, serve to "normalize" individual selves and render them acquiescent and "useful" vis-à-vis the institutions of modern society (Foucault, 1970). Traditional forms of social and educational research foist such regimes of truth on participants, however masked the nature of their activity might be. When practiced unreflectively, these forms of research create a situation in which, far from fostering autonomy or even respecting it, social and educational researchers are accomplices in social domination.

Given a "strong" version of this thesis (Benhabib, 1995), postmodernism, ironically it would seem, can provide little or no guidance about what direction social and educational research should take to avoid domination. If there are no criteria of truth, justice, and reason independent of the perspective of a given regime of truth and the position of power researchers occupy within it, then there are no criteria for distinguishing *abuses* of power from its (unavoidable) *uses* (see also Burbules & Rice's, 1991, characterization of "anti-modernism").

In educational research, postmodernism typically takes a less extreme, or "weak," form. As Stronach and MacLure (1997) put it, a "positive reading" is required. The basic idea is that researchers must be alert to the often subtle asymmetrical relationships of power that threaten to oppress participants. Accordingly, participants must take a much more active role than they have traditionally in shaping the research process and in challenging its methods and findings as it unfolds. In general, educational researchers should be much more suspicious than they typically are of the idea that educational research is per se a progressive force. Not unrelated to this, the validity of the findings of educational research cannot be divorced from how it treats relationships of power (e.g., Lather, 1991, 1994).

Critical Theory

The sine qua non of critical theory is its characterization of and opposition to "technical control" as the primary or only role for social and educational research (e.g., Fay, 1975). Technical control is closely associated with positivist social research; it is the goal educational research adopts when it proceeds by bracketing moral and political ends and investigating only the means of achieving them. The current testing/accountability movement launched by *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) is illustrative. First, the end, economic competitiveness, is bracketed and left to politicians and policymakers (presumably, it is unimpeachable). Second, coming up with effective means in

the form of testing/accountability regimens is left to the expert researchers. Finally, research-sanctioned testing regimens are then put in place with little or no input from those most affected: teachers, students, and parents.

The means-ends bifurcation (a particular instance of the broader fact-value bifurcation) is open to at least three criticisms. First, means are relative to ends. Adopting the end of economic competitiveness ipso facto restricts the range of relevant means to those associated with achieving it. Accordingly, such means are laden with the end (read: value) of promoting economic competitiveness. Furthermore, whether something is a means or an end typically depends on its place in a longer chain of means and ends. For example, achievement in math and science is an end relative to instruction but a means relative to economic competitiveness.

Second, means themselves are subject to value constraints, even relative to some end. If it could be shown that an effective means for improving economic competitiveness is putting all "at-risk" students in forced labor camps, we trust that no one would seriously entertain such a policy. Unfortunately, the general point this example illustrates often gets lost when dealing with less obvious examples of morally suspect means—talent tracking, for instance.

Third, and most fundamentally, positivist technical control is irremediably undemocratic. Presupposing the ends of those with the power to formulate them, and then employing expert researchers to investigate the means to effect such ends, engenders technocracy rather than democracy. Genuine democracy requires that participation be respected as an end in itself. Social and educational research in service of democracy requires that no end or ends be settled on ahead of time, prior to and independent of the investigation of means. Rather, dialogue about both should be free, open, inclusive, and "undistorted," to use Habermasian language, by imbalances of power and by confining social science to the role of controlling social life. From the perspective of critical theory, an additional and fundamental role of social science is (should be) emancipation.

Contemporary Liberal Theory

Liberalism has been one of the primary targets of the four perspectives just described, particularly its utilitarian strand. Utilitarianism generalizes a certain conception of individual rationality (maximize benefits over harms) to the level of ethics and social policy (maximize benefits over harms in the aggregate) (e.g., Rawls, 1971). It is vulnerable at both levels. First, the view of rationality presupposed is not shared across groups and, worse, is not a particularly desirable one in any case. Second, extending the principle of utility maximization to the level of ethics and policy can result in wronging people in the way previously described by MacIntyre (1982). Finally, in the practice of social and educational research, the principle of utility maximization tends to work in tandem with the goal of technical control.

Utilitarianism was the major strand of liberalism until the appearance of John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* in 1971, which has since been the point of departure

for liberal thinking. The kind of "liberal-egalitarian" view (e.g., Kymlicka, 1990) that Rawls formulated constrains the principle of maximizing utility in the name of justice. That is, not only aggregate utility is morally relevant. How utility (benefit) is distributed is paramount: Stated most generally, Rawls's principle of justice is that distributions (or redistributions) should tend toward equality. Although providing an advance over utilitarianism, Rawls's theory has nonetheless been criticized for making several of the same general mistakes, including (a) presupposing a certain Western (and male) conception of rationality (i.e., maximize utility within constraints) and (b) conceiving of policy-making on the model of technical control (merely operating with different principles than utilitarianism).

The most general difficulty is liberal-egalitarianism's commitment to the "distributivist paradigm" (Young, 1990). The basic criticism is that liberalism defines and identifies the disadvantaged and then goes about the task of compensation. Compensation takes the form of various social welfare programs, including educational ones. Insofar as those targeted for compensation have been excluded from participation, what counts as rational and good is foisted upon them, and they are the pawns of technical control. And compensation, so called, can come at a cost. Consider a sexist curriculum in which girls fare poorly relative to boys. It is hardly a benefit to girls to compensate them so that they, too, can become sexist.

Contemporary liberal-egalitarians have taken these difficulties seriously and have proffered remedies aimed at preserving the viability of liberalism. The general strategy is to tilt liberalism's emphasis on equality away from the distribution of predetermined goods and toward participation in determining what those goods should be. As stated by Kymlicka:

It only makes sense to invite people to participate in politics (or for people to accept that invitation) if they are treated as equals. . . . And that is incompatible with defining people in terms of roles they did not shape or endorse. (1991, p. 89)

The "participatory paradigm" (Howe, 1995) exemplified in Kymlicka's admonition is much more attuned to the "interpretive turn" in social and educational research than the "distributivist paradigm." It fits with a model of research in which justice and equality are sought not only in the distribution of predetermined goods but also in the status and voice of research participants.

The five perspectives we have portrayed differ in the ways we have indicated and, no doubt, in further ways we have not developed. We do not wish to deny that these differences can be deep, perhaps even irreconcilable. Still, there are several shared themes across these perspectives regarding the ethics of social and educational research.

First, as we have indicated, there is a strong tendency in what we call the "traditional view" to distinguish the "descriptive" (scientific-methodological) component of social research from the "prescriptive" (moral-political) component. Each of the five alternative perspectives denies that social and educational

research can be (ought to be) divided up in this way. On the contrary, social and educational research is (ought to be) framed by self-consciously chosen moral-political ends, for example, fostering caring communities or fostering equality and justice.

It follows that all social and educational research is *advocacy* research, by its very nature, and it is thus no criticism of a given study that it adopts some moral-political perspective. Criticism arises instead with respect to just what that moral-political perspective is as well as the consequences of framing research in terms of it. This casts a different light on research like Murray and Herrnstein's (1994) *The Bell Curve*. The problem is not that they are engaged in advocacy research in virtue of making policy recommendations. The problem is with the moral-political basis of such recommendations, combined with the consequences of their recommendations and their claim that they are simply following science where it leads.

Second, and related especially to this last point, the research questions deemed worth asking are circumscribed by the moral-political framework in which they are couched. Educational researchers might (and many no doubt do) ostensibly conduct research *on* teaching rather than *for* teaching, to use Noddings's (1986) distinction once again. But rather than getting rid of the question of what research might be *for*, they are merely closing their eyes to it. Any research that is used at all is used *for* something, and the range of uses is limited from the outset by how the research is conceived and designed.

Third, social and educational research ought to have points of contact with the insiders' perspectives, with their "voices." In this way, the moral-political aims of social and educational research affect its methodology. Interpretive, or "qualitative," methods are best suited for getting at what these voices have to say and what they mean.

Finally, and dovetailing with each of the preceding three observations, contemporary perspectives militate against the race, gender, and class biases that have historically plagued social and educational research—forms of bias that grow out of the assumed premise that the attitudes, beliefs, and reasoning of mainstream White males are the norm against which all other social groups must be measured (Stanfield, 1993).

We have seen a shift from social and educational research that asks how diverse groups are either similar to or different from mainstream groups to research concerned with finding out about those diverse groups in their own right. A prominent example of such a contemporary perspective is Carol Gilligan's (1982) landmark study of girls' and young women's psychological development. In it, her findings and discussion challenge the developmental theories of psychological researchers, such as Lawrence Kohlberg, who excluded female voices from their research studies, yet generalized their findings to both males and females. This type of sex bias resulted, in Kohlberg's case, in a tendency to label women as deficient in moral development. In the attempt to fit women into a theory of moral development that came out of research conducted exclusively

on male participants, women were being held unjustly to a male standard of development.

As the contemporary approach to research ethics has evolved in recent years, there have been cases similar to the Kohlberg-Gilligan studies that have involved bias not only against females but against people of color and the poor and working classes as well. In one such case within educational research, anthropologists John Ogbu and María Matute-Bianchi (1986) address the issue of school failure among students of color. By citing various sociocultural factors that contribute to less than optimal school environments for students of color, they confront theories that tend to place all responsibility (and blame) for such failure on the shoulders of the student of color. In doing so, they challenge a dominant view within educational research that, since school “works” for most White students, students of color must deserve the blame for their school disappointments.

One more example is relevant here. Consider ethnographer Paul Willis’s 1977 study of working-class male youth in England. Through his research, Willis attempts to shed light on what goes on in school for these young “lads.” He discovers a culture of resistance against school knowledge and success that had developed among the young working-class lads. Through their rebellion, they were sabotaging their own chances at educational opportunities to get out of the working class. This finding challenged the more accepted theory that poor and working-class students were merely being manipulated by an education system intent on reproducing their social class roles.

Through these examples from current research, we see that the influence of contemporary perspectives has caused researchers to examine things in new ways. This has led researchers to ask different questions and use different methods in finding the answers.

Operating Principles

The distinction between research ethics in the sense of operating principles and in the broader, fundamental sense is not hard and fast. What questions are worth asking and how researchers are to conduct themselves in the process of answering them cannot be divorced from the overarching aims that research seeks to achieve, one of the fundamental premises of the “contemporary approach.” Nonetheless, there exists a “looseness of fit” between operating principles and competing perspectives, such that reasonable agreement on what constitutes ethical conduct is (or should be) possible in the face of broader theoretical disagreements. Bearing in mind, then, that broader ethical obligations associated with broader moral-political perspectives are always lurking in the background, there remain general ethical implications of the interpretive (qualitative) turn in educational research that may be best understood in terms of the methodological nitty-gritty of “techniques and procedures” (a description that owes to Smith & Heshusius, 1986).

Protection of Research Participants

The techniques and procedures of interpretivist research possess two features that experimental and quasi-experimental research lack (at least to a relatively significant degree): intimacy and open-endedness (Howe & Dougherty, 1993; see Wax, 1982, for a similar analysis). The features of intimacy and open-endedness significantly complicate protecting participants' autonomy and privacy and complicate the researcher's moral life as well.

Interpretive (qualitative) research is *intimate* insofar as it reduces the distance between researchers and participants in the conduct of social research. Indeed, the growing preference for the term *participants*—who take an active role in “constructing social meanings”—over *subjects*—who passively receive “treatments”—testifies to the changed conception of relationships among human beings engaged in social research that has attended the interpretive (qualitative) turn. The face-to-face interactions associated with the pervasive techniques of interviewing and participant observation are in stark contrast to the kind of interactions required to prepare “subjects” for a treatment.

Interpretive research is *open-ended* insofar as the questions and persons to which interviewing and participant observation may lead can only be roughly determined at the outset. This, too, is in stark contrast to the relatively circumscribed arena of questions and participants that characterizes experimental and quasi-experimental research.

What intimacy and open-endedness mean for researchers employing qualitative techniques and procedures is that they are (whether they want or intend to or not) likely to discover secrets and lies as well as oppressive relationships. These discoveries may put research participants at risk in ways that they had not consented to and that the researcher had not anticipated. These discoveries may also put researchers in the position of having to decide whether they have an ethical responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of participants or to expose them, as well as having to decide whether to intervene in some way in oppressive relationships (see, e.g., Dennis, 1993; Roman, 1993).

Researchers employing experimental and quasi-experimental techniques and procedures can face the same problems. For instance, information can simply fall into their laps in the process of explaining a protocol and recruiting participants, a treatment may prove so obviously effective (or harmful) that the trial should be stopped, and so forth. Still, the odds of facing unforeseen ethical problems are surely much higher for interpretive researchers. Generally speaking, then, interpretive research is more ethically uncharted, and thus more ethically hazardous, than experimental and quasi-experimental research. Once begun, it requires more vigilant ethical reflection and monitoring for that reason.

Some interpretive researchers have recoiled at this suggestion, on the grounds that the current ways of thinking about and monitoring the ethics of social research are rooted in the experimentalist tradition and are therefore inappropriate for interpretivist research (e.g., Lincoln, 1990; Murphy & Johannsen, 1990; Wax,

1982). Wax, who is exemplary of this view, contends that informed consent "is both too much and too little" to require of interpretivist research ("fieldwork," to be precise):

Informed consent is *too much* . . . in requesting formal and explicit consent to observe that which is intended to be observed and appreciated. Formal and explicit consent also appears overscrupulous and disruptive in the case of many of the casual conversations that are intrinsic to good fieldwork, where respondents (informants) are equal partners to interchange, under no duress to participate, and free either to express themselves or to withdraw into silence. On the other hand, informed consent is *too little* because fieldworkers so often require much more than consent; they need active assistance from their hosts, including a level of research cooperation that frequently amounts to collegueship. (1982, p. 44)

Wax seems to go in two incompatible directions. When he claims that informed consent requires too much, he focuses on how it can be a nuisance and obstruct social research. He goes so far as to defend deceptive (covert) research, research in which the requirement of informed consent is suspended, on explicitly utilitarian grounds: "On a utilitarian basis, we can contend the wrongs incurred by the practice of covert fieldwork may be far outweighed by the social benefit" (p. 41). That it might be more difficult and more of a nuisance to obtain informed consent in interpretive research provides no principled reason for not doing so. It is hard to see Wax's argument as anything other than special pleading on behalf of interpretive research. Experimentalists can offer the same kind of utilitarian arguments for deception.

When Wax claims that informed consent requires too little, he is, in fact, getting at something that distinguishes interpretivist from experimentalist research. The mechanism of informed consent grew out of the kind of imbalance of power associated with the experimentalist tradition in which the researchers versus subjects distinction implies "subjection" on the part of the latter. "Informed consent," says Wax,

is a troublesome misconstrual of . . . field relationships because the field process is progressive and relationships are continually being negotiated, so that, if the research is going well, the fieldworker is admitted to successively deeper levels of responsibility together with being required to share communal intimacies. (1982, p. 45)

According to Wax, the relationship between researchers and participants should exemplify "parity" and "reciprocity," and "where there is parity and reciprocity, the ethical quality of the relationship has progressed far beyond the requirements of 'informed consent'" (1982, p. 46).

This analysis is correct as far as it goes: Certain features of interpretivist research—"intimacy" and "open-endedness," to use our vocabulary—distinguish it from experimentalist research and render informed consent more problematic. But it does not follow from this that the requirement of informed consent ought to be jettisoned in the case of interpretivist research. In this vein, the way Wax pooh-poohs the notion that research participants might feel under pressure

to cooperate gives one pause, particularly in light of the close relationships he thinks should be established.

Wax construes informed consent as a one-shot, all-or-none event, the model that fits biomedical and experimentalist social research. But this is not the only form it might take. The underlying rationale for informed consent, after all, is the protection of autonomy and, in the way described previously, privacy. The one-shot approach to informed consent fails to provide these protections in light of the special features of interpretivist research, namely, its intimacy and open-endedness. But informed consent may be reconceived so that it better takes these features into account. In this vein, interpretivist researchers themselves have proposed construing informed consent on the model of an ongoing "dialogue" (e.g., Smith, 1990) and have suggested periodic reaffirmations of consent (e.g., Cornett & Chase, 1989) as the procedural embodiment of this notion.

Yvonna Lincoln (1990) provides a more radical and far-reaching critique of the traditional emphasis on the protection of autonomy and privacy than the kind provided by Wax. Central to Lincoln's view is the fundamental gap she perceives between the logical- and post-positivistic "epistemologies" that allegedly undergird the traditional regulations and the phenomenological/constructivist "philosophies" appropriate for interpretivist ("qualitative") research. One of the more dubious of Lincoln's conclusions is that informed consent is less, not more, problematic in the case of interpretivist research. Because its aim is to portray the "multiple social constructions that individuals hold," anything short of complete openness on the part of researchers does not make sense for well-executed interpretivist ("phenomenological and constructivist") research. As Lincoln sees things, it makes sense only for positivist-oriented researchers, who seek to converge on a "'real' reality 'out there'" independent of individuals' constructions (1990, p. 280).

Lincoln takes a similarly dismissive stance toward the principle of privacy. The following summary points capture the substance as well as the tone of her position:

First, privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity regulations were written under assumptions ["logical positivism and postpositivism"] that are ill suited to qualitative and/or phenomenological, constructivist philosophies; second, from some small preliminary studies, we now understand that respondents may be willing to give up strict privacy and anonymity rights for the larger right to act with agency in participating in the research efforts as full, cooperating agents in their own destinies; third, we . . . must trade the role of detached observer for that of professional participant. But, clearly, the issue is far more complex than simply fretting about privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality. (1990, p. 280)

The general view Lincoln advances is that the traditional emphasis on autonomy and privacy is grounded in positivism. But positivism is "*inadequate and, indeed, misleading for human inquiry*" (1990, p. 279), according to her. Because interpretive researchers have repudiated positivism's quest for reality in favor of a quest for the meanings individuals construct, they seek to grant "coequal power" (1990, p. 279) to participants and have no reason to ever be anything but fully forthcoming with them.

Lincoln's analysis is more than a little problematic. Consider her second summary point: "Respondents may be willing to give up strict privacy and anonymity rights for the larger right to act with agency in participating in the research efforts." Well, they *may* be, but apparently it is they who decide. And they decide, give their informed consent, under the conditions of uncertainty associated with the open-ended nature of interpretivist research. Nothing Lincoln says removes this uncertainty or the ethical hazard it creates.

More generally, Lincoln's view is remarkably oblivious to the kinds of ethical quandaries in which interpretivist researchers can find themselves. Take the issue of researchers being less than forthcoming, or even deceptive, with participants. In fact, many objects of social research, including schools, do not exemplify equality among actors. Being open can serve to reinforce such inequality where those in power move to protect their positions. As we observed before, interpretivist researchers can discover oppressive relationships they had not anticipated at the outset (e.g., an abusive teacher, a racially based tracking scheme, a sexist curriculum). What to do about these discoveries is often arguable, and often depends on the particulars. But this much is clear: Researchers cannot automatically get off the hook by distancing themselves from positivism and pushing on with the construction of meanings. As Dennis remarks regarding his use of participant observation to study race, it is sometimes necessary to "choose sides":

Fieldwork is often fraught with informational and emotional land mines between which and around which the researcher must maneuver . . . when issues involve racial justice, for instance, there is no question but that the researcher should be on the side of the excluded and oppressed. (1993, pp. 68–69)

It should be observed here that one need not fall back on utilitarian reasoning to defend being less than open or deceptive where asymmetrical and oppressive power relationships characterize institutions and practices, the kind of defense Wax offers in regard to deceptive ("covert") field research in the following:

If we regard the focus of inquiry as an entire social situation, and if we take the elite (or the gatekeepers) on whom much of the research is focused to be but one element of the situation, then, on a utilitarian basis, we can contend the wrongs incurred by the practice of covert fieldwork may be far outweighed by the social benefit of exposure and analysis. (1982, p. 41)

We saw earlier the sort of abuse utilitarian reasoning is liable to (e.g., justifying the infamous Tuskegee research). But instead of arguing this way, one may argue in a nonutilitarian way by ranking the wrongs in question. In particular, one may argue that oppression is a wrong that should be eliminated and is a greater wrong, especially when children are its victims, than the wrong done to the oppressors (the "gatekeepers") by deceiving them.

Short of having to "choose sides," interpretivist researchers are constantly faced with less dramatic reasons for refraining from being fully forthcoming with research participants. For example, in order to gain access to the voices of older Chicana women, Elisa Facio explains how she had to initially play up her role as a volunteer in the seniors' center that was the site of her research. That she

was a student and, furthermore, was doing research were revealed later in the course of her research. Facio believed that the culture and social histories of these women required this kind of procedure, and citing Punch (1986), she observed that participant observation "always involves impression management," including "alleviating suspicion." Nonetheless, she confessed to feeling "uncomfortable with the deceit and dissembling," as she put it, that "are part of the research role" (1993, p. 85).

Was Facio's incremental approach to consent ethically defensible? We think it was. But saying this does not provide social and educational research with any rule that will apply in all cases. What to do in specific cases is very often not going to be an easy call, and misgivings like Facio's often cannot be eliminated. To further complicate matters, in addition to differing concrete circumstances, differences in fundamental frameworks can also contribute to ethical complexity. Contra Lincoln, whatever benefits the interpretive (qualitative) turn has brought, an ethically simpler life for researchers is quite clearly not among them.

Research Misconduct

This leads to a further kind of ethical complexity engendered by the interpretive (qualitative) turn in social and educational research: how to report results. We include this issue under the heading of research misconduct because it involves the possible misrepresentation of data and possible researcher incompetence and because, for the most part, it is one step removed from the face-to-face interactions with participants that are central to issues falling under the rubric of the protection of research participants. Of course, the line between research misconduct and the protection of research participants vis-à-vis reporting results is a fuzzy one, all the more so for the "contemporary approach," which generally blurs the traditional dividing lines.

As before, experimentalist (quantitative) researchers can face some of the same difficulties as interpretivist (qualitative) researchers in writing their reports. But also as before, they are more numerous and more acute for the latter. The general source of the difficulties is the "thick description" that characterizes interpretive research. Because such descriptions are judged for accuracy, at least in part, by how well they square with the insider's or "emic" perspective, researchers must negotiate or "construct" these descriptions in collaboration with research participants. (Compare negotiating statistical analyses with participants.) This raises the questions of who owns the data (e.g., Noddings, 1986) and how the data may be used subsequently (e.g., Johnson, 1982), as well as the question of how much power participants should have to challenge, edit, and change written reports. Except by adopting the extreme of providing participants either absolute power or none, crafting a defensible report is a thorny ethical problem.

Thick description in reporting also complicates the protection of privacy. In contrast to survey researchers, for instance, interpretive researchers can rarely (never?) provide anonymity to research participants. Instead, they must rely on maintaining confidentiality as the means to protect privacy. The possibility

sometimes exists, however remotely, that researchers could be required by a court to reveal their sources. This is a possibility to which research participants, especially "vulnerable populations" (e.g., undocumented immigrants), should be alerted.

A more pervasive threat to privacy posed by reports is that the real sites and individuals described in such reports might be identified. Various techniques to protect confidentiality, for example, the use of pseudonyms, are typically employed to mask identities, but these techniques can fail (e.g., Johnson, 1982). And it is doubtful whether a more rigorous application of techniques to protect confidentiality can eliminate this problem. Population, physical geography, economic base, class stratification, and so forth all go into understanding a community; habits, attitudes, language, physical bearing, and so forth all go into understanding social life within it. These are the very kinds of things that, when reported, lead to breaches of confidentiality (see, e.g., Johnson, 1982). Unfortunately, suppressing them can only come at the cost of forgoing the value of thick description.

Breaches of confidentiality are not generally a problem unless a negative picture is painted by a report of a community or some of its members. Part of the remedy is thus engaging participants in dialogue about the contents of reports in the way described previously. But this is only a partial remedy and will work only sometimes. A negative picture might be called for. For instance, suppose a community (or school) and its leaders can be characterized as profoundly racist and sexist. Shouldn't such findings be reported in the interests of those who are being oppressed, at the site in question and elsewhere?

Of course, researchers must be extremely careful and deliberate about rendering such judgments, but this much is clear: The problem cannot be eliminated by casting reports in wholly *objective* (read: sterile and value-neutral) language (one reading of Johnson, 1982, and a common proposal). As description moves toward being more objective in this sense, it simultaneously moves toward "thin" description. Compare "Girls alternate between being bored and intimidated in the typical classroom discussion" with "Girls participate less than boys in the typical classroom discussion." The first description is thicker than the second and is less objective only in the sense that it requires different (and admittedly more) evidence to substantiate. On the other hand, it is also at least one step closer to understanding what is going on and one step closer to informing what actions might be taken to improve girls' school experience. Description and evaluation are generally related in this way in social and educational research (e.g., House & Howe, 1999; Rorty, 1982, chap. 11; Scriven, 1969). The key is thus not to eliminate the evaluative component from descriptions in social and educational research, since this just dilutes them and compromises their usefulness. The key is to get the descriptions right.

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS

In this section, we focus on the federal regulations that formally apply to educational research, references to which have been sprinkled among our previ-

ous, more philosophical analyses. We also expand the discussion, raising some issues for the first time (e.g., the special ethical problems associated with student researchers). Once again, we entertain the issues under the two general categories of the protection of research participants and research misconduct.

Protection of Research Participants

Educational research has historically enjoyed a special status with respect to formal ethical oversight because a significant portion of it is singled out for "exempt" status in the Code of Federal Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR 46). Determining precisely which educational research projects should qualify as exempt has always been a source of conflict, potential as well as real, between educational researchers and the university institutional review boards (IRBs) responsible for interpreting and applying the federal regulations. However, this source of conflict has become more pronounced over the last several decades, as the face of educational research has been changed by the "interpretive turn" and the ever-increasing use of qualitative methods. Because of the intimate and open-ended features of qualitative methods (discussed earlier), their increased prominence within educational research raises difficult ethical issues with which educational researchers must grapple. These features also provide the impetus for taking a closer look at the general rationale and criteria for affording educational research a special status vis-à-vis IRB review.

Preliminary to our analysis, however, we first make a few remarks about IRB oversight of educational research. The idea that such oversight is warranted is by no means universally shared among educational researchers and is itself a source of controversy.

Many educational researchers challenge IRB oversight on the grounds that it is researchers, not members of IRBs, who possess the specialized knowledge and experience needed to appreciate the ethical nuances associated with different research methods and different research contexts. They charge IRBs of, among other things, obstructing academic freedom, obstructing the free pursuit of knowledge, and being especially hostile toward qualitative research (e.g., Murphy & Johannsen, 1990). Accordingly, these researchers question the legitimacy of IRBs looking over their shoulders and demanding they fill out the designated forms.

This is an overreaction. In the first place, the portrait of researchers assumed is a bit unrealistic. Although moral abominations in social research are rare, other pressures—for instance, pressures to "publish or perish"—are real and ubiquitous, and one need not be a bad person to be tempted to cut ethical corners in response to them, especially if cutting corners is the norm. Furthermore, one need not be a bad person to be unaware of ethical worries that others are able to detect, particularly others who have a good deal of experience with the pertinent issues.

This portrait also misconstrues the nature of ethics, inasmuch as it involves what ethicist Robert Veatch (1977) labels the "fallacy of generalized expertise." For example, just as physicians qua physicians have no special expertise regarding

whether a woman should accept a slightly greater risk of death from breast cancer by opting for radiation therapy over a mutilating and debilitating mastectomy, educational researchers qua educational researchers have no special expertise regarding whether parents should be given the opportunity to refuse to have their children involved in a given educational research project. Indeed, given their aims and interests, physicians and educational researchers are probably in the *worst* position to make these judgments. It is for this reason that 45 CFR 46 requires IRBs to be staffed by persons who represent a range of perspectives and interests, including at least one member of the community who is not affiliated with the university and at least one member whose chief interests are nonscientific (e.g., clergy, lawyer, or ethicist).

In the second place, although IRBs are often overly bureaucratic and discharge their duties in a rather perfunctory manner that takes too lightly the ethical complexities involved (Christakis, 1988; Dougherty & Howe, 1990), they are the only formal mechanism in the United States for overseeing social research (McCarthy, 1983). The shortcomings in the practices exemplified by IRBs are insufficient to abandon or radically change this oversight tool. The alternative of no policing or self-policing has proven to have worse consequences, on balance, than those associated with the institution of IRBs. Furthermore, remedies for these shortcomings are not altogether lacking (for example, Silva and Sorrell, 1988, suggest ways for IRBs to enhance informed consent by focusing on the process of consent rather than the wording of the consent form). Finally, IRBs can serve an important educational function. In our experience (which we suspect reflects what is generally true), the IRB is the chief, and often only, locus of reflection and debate about the ethics of social research.

Interpretation of Special Exemptions for Educational Research

Paragraph 46.101(b)(1) of 45 CFR 46 singles out the following kinds of educational research as "exempt" from its requirements:

Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings involving *normal educational practices* such as (i) research on regular and special educational instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula or classroom management methods. (italics added)

This provision potentially includes a large part of educational research but is so vaguely worded as to leave much room for competing interpretations among educational researchers and local IRBs. In view of the inherent vagueness of this provision, it is useful to begin with a brief examination of its history and rationale.

The first policies set up for the protection of research participants were done with a primary focus on biomedical research, which had already shown itself to be potentially harmful to the participants involved. At that time, in the early 1960s, research in the social sciences was not believed to be hazardous to those involved because it did not include any "invasive" procedures. However, as the National Institutes of Health and then the Department of Health and Human Services became involved, the initial guidelines were seen as more and more

problematic. Thus, in the 1970s a national commission was set up for the protection of human participants that thoroughly reviewed policies for the social sciences, including education. With essentially the same model as that addressing medical research, the idea of an independent review board and the emphasis on the need for informed consent prevailed in the new policies on social research.

The commission made provisions in its final recommendations to allow some discretion on the part of IRBs to reduce the burden placed on them. Specifically, a series of thresholds were developed that defined three levels of review: exempt (no IRB review), expedited (review by a representative of the IRB), and full IRB review. The commission also reduced the burden placed on IRBs by giving prospective research participants, through the vehicle of informed consent, a significant role in determining the worth and moral acceptability of research projects for which they are recruited. (Partly because of this, the issue of informed consent has become of paramount concern for research in the social sciences.)

The commission believed that educational research, in particular, required less stringent oversight than other varieties of social research, both because the risks were perceived as slight and because district- and school-based procedures were believed to already exist to screen and guide research. Thus, the commission believed that the area of educational research was one place where the IRB's role could be minimized, especially since it believed that mechanisms of accountability for educational research were already in place at the local level. Accordingly, it crafted 45 CFR 46 so as to provide explicit exemptions for educational research.

The commission, nonetheless, mandated in 45 CFR 46 that some sort of administrative review (e.g., by department or college) would take place in every case of research involving human participants. As a consequence, the apparent wide latitude afforded educational research was significantly narrowed by many universities as they went about the task of articulating the purview and responsibilities of their IRBs. In particular, IRBs typically do not permit educational researchers to decide for themselves whether their research is exempt from the 45 CFR 46 regulations. In many universities, "exempt" has come to mean exempt from certain requirements and full committee review, not exempt from IRB oversight altogether.

That IRBs, not educational researchers, are responsible for determining when educational research qualifies as exempt from the normal requirements of 45 CFR 46 engenders potential conflicts between educational researchers and IRBs. Taking the responsibility for determining what educational research satisfies the exemptions in 45 CFR 46 out of the hands of educational researchers and placing it in the hands of IRBs makes the latter the arbiter of key questions such as what constitutes "normal educational practice." This is problematic for educational researchers because IRBs are composed mostly of university faculty who have little knowledge of the workings of public schools.

We share the concern of other educational researchers about whether the typical IRB is composed of individuals who are in a good position to determine when

educational research should qualify as exempt (i.e., qualify as "normal educational practice"). In our view, there is an answer to the question of how to make such a determination that stops short of the extremes of permitting educational researchers to decide for themselves, on the one hand, or of placing the decision exclusively in the hands of IRBs, on the other. Our suggestion is the simple and straightforward one to formally include school people in the review process, particularly regarding the judgment of what is to count as "normal educational practice" (Dougherty & Howe, 1990).

Accommodation of Qualitative Research Methods

It should be borne in mind that the special exemptions for educational research were formulated prior to the advent of qualitative methods in educational research and were justified on the grounds that educational research is extremely low risk and does not substantially deviate from practices routinely conducted by schools themselves for the purposes of evaluating and improving curricula, testing, and teaching methods. When educational research departs from this model to take a close look at social structure and to establish an intimate relationship with participants, there is no justification for providing it with greater latitude than other social research merely because it has to do with education, is conducted in schools, or is conducted by educational researchers.

Viewed in another way, the advent of more intimate and open-ended methods in educational research creates a distinction between educational research as conceived in 45 CFR 46 and what might be termed *social research on education*. The latter variety includes much of qualitative research and is educational research only by virtue of its topics and settings, not its aims and methods. This kind of educational research is thus indistinguishable from the aims and methods that might be employed by other researchers, particularly fieldwork sociologists and anthropologists, working in other contexts. Accordingly, it should receive no especially liberal treatment with respect to the protection of research participants.

To be sure, the issue of informed consent is especially tangled and contested where qualitative methods are involved. But, consistent with our previous arguments, we reject the suggestion (e.g., by Lincoln, 1990; Murphy & Johannsen, 1990) that because they were initially designed primarily for biomedical and experimental research, the informed consent requirements of 45 CFR 46 are inappropriate for qualitative research. Informed consent is central to research ethics per se, not to any particular kind of research method: It is the principle that seeks to ensure that human beings retain control over their lives and that they are enabled to judge for themselves what risks are worth taking for the purpose of furthering scientific knowledge.

Oversight of Student Research Practicums

As qualitative methods in educational research have proliferated, so have undergraduate and graduate courses that teach their use. Such courses often take the form of practicums, in which students try out and practice the qualitative

techniques. Just as the advent of qualitative methods in educational research prompts closer scrutiny of the question of what kinds of educational research should qualify as exempt, their introduction into courses prompts closer scrutiny of the question of whether such student research should fall within the purview of IRBs.

The 45 CFR 46 regulations do not explicitly refer to research practicums. Instead, they apply to university "research," which they define as "a systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge." Given that most research that is required as part of a course is variously perceived as no more than a "trial run," a "pilot study," or "getting one's hands a little dirty" (Dougherty & Howe, 1990)—and, in particular, not as an attempt to contribute to generalizable knowledge—it would seem that it should not fall within the scope of the regulations.

Although the appeal to the criterion of whether an activity "contributes to generalizable knowledge" is certainly germane to its ethical dimensions—for example, it is related to the intent of an activity and to whether information about individuals might become public—it is quite insensitive to the ethical dimensions of the interactions between persons, particularly the intimate ones associated with qualitative methods. Furthermore, given the nature of such interactions, one can reasonably ask whether neophytes, just learning to interact with research participants, might require more oversight, rather than less, than experienced researchers.

In this connection, our preceding observations about the potential for increased ethical difficulties associated with qualitative research—particularly its intimacy and open-endedness—apply a fortiori to student research in courses. There simply is no defense for the kind of policy common among university IRBs (Dougherty & Howe, 1990) in which the ethical standards and procedures governing studies done by the most inexperienced members of a research community are lax (or nonexistent) in comparison with those governing its more experienced members. (Compare medical students' interactions with patients.)

On the other hand, it does not necessarily follow that student research in courses should be subject to the very same review procedures as faculty research, in which each and every student activity must be submitted to the IRB. Instead, a sensible policy is one that is not overly cumbersome in regard to the protections it provides for human participants. In our view, a workable alternative places responsibility on course instructors to judge when a student activity is exempt and when it should be submitted to the IRB. Such a policy provides some oversight but avoids the absurdity that research that would be reviewed by the full IRB if conducted by a faculty member escapes such review if conducted by a student. On the other hand, it also avoids burdening students and instructors with preparing, and IRBs with reviewing, numerous virtually risk-free exercises (e.g., passive observation of public behavior) whose function is merely to provide students with practice in applying data collection techniques.

In addition to being ethically sound, this kind of policy also has a desirable educational spin-off. In the process of complying with its requirements, instructors

and students alike must familiarize themselves with the ethical requirements of research involving human participants, particularly regarding the different levels of review associated with different kinds of research activities. Such issues typically receive too little attention, and too late. (Students often don't give ethics a thought until they learn they must have their dissertation proposals approved by the IRB.)

Insofar as more sophisticated and ethically complex research requires normal IRB review, this policy will no doubt inhibit instructors from encouraging and students from conducting such research. But this is not a bad thing, for students just learning to conduct research involving human participants are the least prepared to successfully grapple with ethically complex situations that arise in the course of planning and carrying it out.

Research Misconduct

Until quite recently, the general consensus between research communities within higher education and the federal government was that scientific and social scientific researchers, including educational researchers, did not need regulations to ensure ethical conduct. Rather, there was an implicit ethical code that called for professional self-regulation and honesty in one's research conduct and data reporting. Misconduct was thought to be a rare event (Steneck, 1984). Research communities enjoyed considerable autonomy in directing the conduct of research (LaFollette, 1994a). As Deborah Cameron and her colleagues put it, "All social researchers are expected to take seriously the ethical questions their activities raise" (Cameron, Frazer, Harvey, Rampton, & Richardson, 1993, p. 82). In the cases in which research turned out to be fraudulent in some way, it was presumed that members of the community would sanction their own.

This presumption was not borne out. As research institutions grew, competition between scholars stiffened, and the pressure to produce new scholarship and procure funding intensified. With the increased competition came more frequent and visible cases of research misconduct. Official regulations on the conduct of scientific and social scientific research soon followed (Price, 1994; Steneck, 1994). While ethical conduct concerning research participants had been monitored more closely (especially in the wake of the Tuskegee debacle), scrutiny of research misconduct concerning data collection and representation and the originality of research ideas and writing has been more recent. Most documented cases of research fraud and misconduct have come from the biomedical research community. Of the 26 cases of serious misconduct reported between 1980 and 1987, 21 were biomedical research cases (Goodstein, 1991). Sensational cases of misconduct in social research have arisen more often around the issue of deceptive research practices, such as Milgram's obedience experiments in the 1960s and Humphreys's *Tearoom Trade* study in the 1970s. Thus, the medical and scientific communities were the first to prompt worries about research misconduct and to take the lead in formulating specific regulations. Social and educational research communities have been catching up.

As a result of the aforementioned prominent cases of research misconduct, both the federal government and institutions of higher education were prompted to begin overseeing more closely the conduct of research. These cases challenged the system of self-regulation that had been in place and remained largely unquestioned until the 1970s. Thus began the present era of government oversight of research and the proliferation of ethical codes and institutional review boards—an era, according to David Goodstein, marked by confusion “because, except in the most extreme cases, no general agreement exists on what constitutes fraud or serious misconduct in science” (1991, p. 505).

In 1981, the United States House of Representatives’ Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight of the Committee on Science and Technology, chaired by Albert Gore, conducted hearings on fraud in biomedical research. The hearings were a direct reaction to the previously discussed Alsabti and Soman fraud cases (Steneck, 1984). Interestingly, the Darsee case (also previously discussed) surfaced a few weeks after the hearings. In testimony to the subcommittee, Philip Handler, then president of the National Academy of Sciences, said that the members of the subcommittee had no business meddling in issues of scientific research because they could not possibly understand the issues (Goodstein, 1991). Congress, of course, thought that their oversight was indeed proper, since much research was supported by agencies of the federal government and the public. And Congress had precedence on their side. For example, in 1966, the United States surgeon general established regulations covering federally funded scientific and social scientific research with human participants (Pattullo, 1982). It was other types of unethical research practices that had not received formal attention. While the 1981 congressional hearings did not result in any formal legislation, they did find that research institutions of higher education generally did not have policies in place concerning research misconduct and how to handle it and that researchers seemed reluctant to investigate charges of possible misconduct (Greene et al., 1985). The message came through loud and clear that allegations of research fraud and misconduct needed to be dealt with quickly, through formal institutional mechanisms (LaFollette, 1994a).

Not long thereafter, major professional associations such as the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and the Association of American Universities (AAU) began to develop ethical regulations to explicitly govern the conduct of their members. The AAMC was the first to issue a report on ethics, “The Maintenance of High Ethical Standards in the Conduct of Research,” and in 1983, AAU’s Committee on the Integrity of Research came out with recommendations encouraging intellectual honesty and discouraging a success-obsessed mentality (Steneck, 1984). Soon, too, there were detailed federal ethical regulations in place that governed all types of research misconduct, including plagiarism and fraud, as well as the treatment of research participants. Congress had passed a statute—the Health Research Extension Act of 1985—requiring any institutions seeking federal funding for research to have formal policies in place against scientific fraud (Price, 1994). The University of Michigan, Harvard, Stanford,

Yale, and Emory were among the first institutions of higher education to begin the process of formalizing ethical codes and procedures (Steneck, 1984). In fact, by the middle of 1983, 80% of all medical schools had begun establishing rules for investigating research misconduct (Chubin, 1985).

Major organizations such as NIH (in 1988) and the National Science Foundation (in 1989) published their own formal regulations on scientific research misconduct in the *Federal Register*. NIH had established the Office of Scientific Integrity and stipulated that research proposals from institutions without formal regulations on scientific misconduct would not be accepted (Goodstein, 1991).

Although the movement toward increased ethical regulation of research stemmed from the biomedical sciences, it strongly affected those in the social science and educational research communities as well. The federal government, via the Health Research Extension Act of 1985, imposed regulations stipulating that all applications for research funding and sponsorship from both the biomedical and behavioral sciences had to include a plan for examining allegations of research misconduct. In addition, institutions of higher education became responsible for promptly reporting any research misconduct to the federal government (LaFollette, 1994a; Steneck, 1994). These federal regulations, in combination with institutional policies on research misconduct, affect educational research in the same way they affect social research in general. Unlike the federal regulations that protect human research participants, the government outlines no provisions that specifically concern educational research.

In addition to the federal regulations, the social science research community as a whole and the educational research community in particular have established their own ethical codes to govern the research conduct of their members. We move now to a discussion of the major educational research professional organization, the American Educational Research Association (AERA), and its code of research ethics.

The AERA Code of Research Ethics

Professional ethical codes have existed at least since the Hippocratic oath of ancient Greece. In general, such codes express the creed of a given group of professionals and, unlike governmental regulations, do not have the force of law.

Nowadays, professional groups typically include a great diversity of individuals with varying viewpoints on controversial issues. In order to win broad acceptance, professional ethical codes must be exceedingly general. Thus, they provide little specific guidance regarding what to do in concrete cases of ethical perplexity. Nonetheless, professional ethical codes have considerable value, since they highlight the special duties and dangers associated with different kinds of professional activities. For example, physicians worry about unnecessary medical procedures; nurses, about protecting patients' interests without usurping physicians' legitimate authority; and journalists, about purveying false and damaging stories. The value to a profession of the initial process of clarifying and codifying ethical principles is that it explicates and clarifies ethical fundamentals; the ongoing value of an

ethical code is that it serves as a reminder for veteran members of a profession and as a starting point for its initiates.

Codes of ethical conduct for social and educational researchers are a relatively recent development. Among social research organizations, the American Psychological Association was the first, in the late 1940s, to establish an ethical code for its members. The major anthropological and sociological associations followed suit in the years to come (Hamnett et al., 1984). Just as Alsabti and Soman were watershed cases in biomedical research misconduct, the Milgram and Humphreys cases were critical for social research. The most visible ethical concern has been with the treatment of research participants (issues of harm, respect for persons, and confidentiality) rather than with issues of plagiarism or data fabrication and misrepresentation. However, the increasing amount of qualitative research more recently has highlighted the issue of data misrepresentation.

Protection of Human Research Participants

Within educational research in particular, the main objective of the current American Educational Research Association (AERA) ethical standards is "to remind us, as educational researchers, that we should strive to protect these [children and other vulnerable] populations, and to maintain the integrity of our research, or our research community, and of all those with whom we have professional relations" (AERA, 1992, p. 1). The standards follow the federal code of regulations. It is important, within educational research, to highlight the protection of vulnerable populations, as the AERA standards do. Six guiding ethical standards were adopted by AERA; the second, "Research Populations, Educational Institutions, and the Public," deals mainly with the protection of research participants. The emphasis is on respecting the rights and dignity of research populations.

According to this second guiding standard, educational researchers are to take special care to properly inform their research participants—and, when appropriate, the participants' parents or guardians—of the possible risks and consequences of the research. Here, the standards emphasize the need for informed consent. Recently, educational research has been affected by federal regulations regarding the protection of students' rights. This has underscored the need for parental consent regarding research in schools (Hecht, 1996).

The standards openly discourage the use of deception in research. While deception is not strictly prohibited, its use should be avoided or, at the very least, minimized. Researchers are also warned to be careful not to exploit research participants for personal gain in any way. Both honesty and communication are highlighted as essential to the research process. In addition, the standards stress the importance of privacy and confidentiality. Educational researchers are expected to protect the privacy of research participants and data as much as is possible.

Research Misconduct

The AERA code has clear standards regarding researchers' responsibilities to the field of education. Two of the guiding standards directly involve how

the proper conduct and improper conduct of research affect the field of education. These standards are "Responsibilities to the Field" and "Intellectual Ownership."

The standards regarding researchers' responsibilities to the field focus on researcher behavior and how inappropriate conduct could negatively affect the public standing of the field and its future research endeavors. Most important, these responsibilities stipulate that "educational researchers must not fabricate, falsify, or misrepresent authorship, evidence, data, findings, or conclusions" (AERA, 1992, p. 2). They should also monitor the uses of their research to avoid its use for any fraudulent purposes.

Regarding issues of authorship, the section on intellectual ownership centers on making sure that credit for research contributions goes where it is properly due. Both plagiarism and assuming credit for research to which one did not contribute in a significant creative way are prohibited. In a related vein, researchers are to be wary of any undue influence from government or other sponsoring agencies regarding the conduct of the research, its findings, or the reporting of it.

Traditional and Contemporary Aspects of the AERA Standards

The AERA standards are broad enough to include various research methods. They address concerns from both the traditional and contemporary approaches, with perhaps a slight slant toward the contemporary approach.

First, the standards emphasize traditional issues of informed consent, privacy, and protection of the autonomy of individual research participants. In addition, a theme throughout the standards is communication, especially between the (powerful) researcher and the research participants. This seems to fit in well with the contemporary approach to research ethics because it deemphasizes the researcher's technical control and seeks to empower research participants. Similarly, researchers are encouraged to make their research reports and their practical implications as accessible to the general public as possible.

The foreword to the standards highlights the nature of educational research as involving the improvement of people's lives and contributions to the educational process. Under the "Responsibilities to the Field" standard, researchers are called on to be well informed about many different forms and methods of research. Although it is not mentioned directly here, it seems that this is a nod to the increasing prevalence of research methods other than the experimental and quasi-experimental types. Overall, the AERA standards call on educational researchers to be sensitive to power issues involving their co-researchers, research participants, and research sites and to be aware of the social consequences of their research.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have endeavored to cover quite a bit of ground regarding the traditional and contemporary approaches to research ethics, paying special attention to issues important for educational research. With recent increases in

the use of so-called "qualitative" research methods in addition to experimental and quasi-experimental "quantitative" methods, some different ethical issues have arisen for researchers. As such, educational researchers need to stay abreast of the current ethical imperatives associated with various research methods.

That is not to say that only qualitative studies now deserve stringent ethical scrutiny or that current quantitative studies are all ethically problem free. Instead, both quantitative and qualitative research warrant strict scrutiny, and researchers need to be aware that particular research methods bring certain ethical issues to the fore.

Educational research is always *advocacy* research inasmuch as it unavoidably advances some moral-political perspective. This is especially important for educational researchers to bear in mind because educational research so often deals with vulnerable student populations, and research results often have a direct impact on students' schooling experiences and educational opportunities. In addition to abiding by federal, institutional, and AERA codes of ethics, to be truly ethical, educational researchers must be prepared to defend what their research is *for*.

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