Moralism and research ethics: a Machiavellian perspective

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This article notes the increasing attention given to research ethics in recent years and focuses on two of the reasons for this: the growth in ethical regulation and the emergence of some kinds of qualitative research that foreground ethical ideals. It is argued that both involve forms of moralism or ethicism, in other words ‘the vice of overdoing morality’: they treat values that are external to the task of research as if they were central to it; and/or they require that researchers observe ‘the highest ethical standards’. The misconceptions and dangers involved in each of these sorts of moralism are discussed.

Keywords: research ethics; ethical regulation; moralism; professionalism; ethic of responsibility

Research ethics has long been a topic for methodological reflection, and occasionally for intense discussion, among social scientists.\textsuperscript{2} However, in recent years it has come to be given even greater attention. There are several reasons for this. One is technical, relating to the development of new methods, notably the growing use of visual and online data. This has introduced some distinctive problems, or at least it has given old problems a new form (Bakardjieva & Feenberg, 2001; Buchanan, 2003; Gross, Katz, & Ruby, 2003; Markham, 2005; Prosser, 2000). However, two other factors, of rather different character, have caused increased discussion of research ethics, and these are our focus here.

First, there is the growth of ethical regulation. In the UK, this is largely a result of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC’s) Research Ethics Framework (2005) and Framework for Research Ethics (2010), which demand that most, if not all, research proposals be subject to vetting procedures before they can be funded. Ethical regulation of this kind – extending beyond the codes of professional associations to the exercise of control by institutional committees over what research can be carried out – began in the field of health but has spread out into other areas of inquiry. This is a development that has particularly sharp consequences for qualitative research, because the model of inquiry on which regulatory guidelines and arrangements are based is often at odds with its character. Moreover, when this mismatch is recognized by regulatory bodies, the result is often even greater regulation. For example, point 1.11.2 of the Framework for Research Ethics states that: ‘Where a study design is emergent, the REC [Research Ethics Committee]

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should agree procedures for *continuing* ethics review (for example through a Project Advisory Group) [...] as a condition of approval’ (ESRC, 2010, p. 17, emphasis added). In other words, those engaged in qualitative studies are required not simply to submit proposals to an ethics committee prior to starting the investigation, *in addition the whole research process must be continually monitored by the committee* (Hammersley, 2010b; Reed, 2010, p. 2.5).³

Another cause of increased attention given to ethics is the fragmentation of qualitative research into a diverse array, indeed a disarray, of paradigms that has taken place over the past 30 years. This exacerbated differences in attitude about what counts as ethical research practice, sometimes turning these into fundamental philosophical and political divisions, with some approaches treating the realization of some particular ethical values as the primary consideration in qualitative enquiry. For example, feminists and others have criticized mainstream social research for its commitment to abstract ethical principles, proposing instead an ethics of care that *gives central concern to the interdependence of human beings and* their responsibilities to each other. They have also challenged the adoption of western conceptions of the subject and the very distinction between researchers and researched, arguing that this involves power differences and exploitation, and perhaps also undermines the production of ‘authentic’ data (see Mauthner, Birch, Jessop, & Miller, 2002). In this way, research becomes *essentially* an ethical matter.

While research ethics is certainly an important topic, we want to suggest that much recent discussion of it amounts to what can be called moralism: ‘the vice of overdoing morality’ (Coady, 2005, p. 101).⁴ Moralism can take two rather different forms:

1. The belief that ethical values are integral to the goal of research; so that, for example, making the world a better place – through serving policy or practice, stimulating social reform, engendering political revolution, promoting justice, or exemplifying virtue – is seen as part of the very task of enquiry.
2. The requirement that researchers adhere to ‘high’, perhaps even to ‘the highest’, ethical standards, these being specified in terms of abstract principles whose implications for particular cases are regarded as quite determinate in character – in effect, they amount to injunctions.

In both cases, the assumption is that we cannot be ‘too ethical’. It is believed that social research involves a high risk of severe ethical dangers for the people studied, and so rigorous precautions must be taken to avoid these. Or it may be argued that the research process is shot through with decisions that carry major ethical implications and that much conventional social enquiry is fundamentally unethical in orientation. We will look at each of these forms of moralism in turn.

**Ethical values as integral to the goal of research**

In recent decades, it has become common for researchers, and others, to claim that the goal of social inquiry, or of particular projects, is, or should be, to bring about some sort of improvement of, or radical change in, the world. This is often taken to require not just that what researchers do to be directed towards this kind of goal but also that the values concerned, such as social justice, be realized *within* the research process, notably through the ways in which participants are treated. In these terms, it is argued that research is ‘an inherently ethical enterprise’ (Clegg & Slife, 2009, p. 36) or that
‘ethics is foundational to the *telos* of the research enterprise’ (Mertens & Ginsberg, 2009, p. 2, emphasis in original).

Thus, many qualitative researchers insist that inquiry should be geared to radical goals and values – feminist, anti-racist, etc. – and this involves the requirement that *in carrying out their work* researchers must seek to realize relevant political or ethical ideals (see, e.g., Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In other cases, it is demanded that the research process be integrated into the work of some other institutional role, for example that of teacher, social worker, policy advisor, or political activist, rather than being carried out by ‘outsiders’. One version of this argument has been the insistence that educational research be educative, in other words directly geared to bringing about educational improvement and therefore governed by educational values. For instance, Elliott argues that ‘the overriding purpose of educational research is to bring about worthwhile educational change’ and that ‘research is only educational when it is directed towards realizing educational values in practice’ (1990, p. 4; see Hammersley, 2003). Along similar lines, advocates of participatory enquiry argue that the people being studied must be included as participants in making methodological decisions, so that the research is carried out *with* rather than *on* them (see, e.g., McTaggart, 1991; Reason & Bradbury, 2001). Often, this is viewed as a matter of respecting rights, but sometimes the idea is also that mutual participation will raise the consciousness of those involved.

At the same time, there are arguments and initiatives coming from a rather different political direction that also seek to build practical or political values into the goal of research. For example, the UK ESRC requires that the projects it funds should meet ‘the needs of users and beneficiaries, thereby contributing to the economic competitiveness of the United Kingdom, the effectiveness of public services and policy, and the quality of life’ (see http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/about/what_to_do/Mission/index.aspx). What is required here, then, albeit in broad terms, is that funded research must serve the UK’s national interests, as defined by the ESRC, now apparently operating as a Government agency.

In effect, these various arguments are an attack on the traditional view that academic research is a specialized activity in its own right whose only immediate goal should be to produce knowledge; albeit knowledge that is of some human value, either contributing to a discipline, or providing information of relevance to public policy or that serves the needs of some specific lay audience.

Today, this traditional view is often rejected on two sorts of ground. The first is that, in itself, the production of knowledge is insufficient as a justification for research – that the knowledge produced must have an ‘impact’, which is generally taken to mean that it must directly improve the world or be usable for this purpose. The assumption here, implicit or explicit, is that research without impact, or without the right sort of impact, is worthless. For instance, Gewirtz and Cribb require that researchers generate practical evaluations and recommendations from their investigations, disseminate these effectively to policymakers and practitioners, *and work with the latter in using the knowledge* (2006; see Hammersley, 2008). This recommendation is designed to counter not just the danger that research findings will be ignored or not noticed, but also the possibility that they will inadvertently serve interests deemed undesirable, for example, by reinforcing social inequalities. From this point of view, researchers are responsible for the uses to which any knowledge they produce is put.

The other type of criticism made of the traditional view is that research is incapable of producing objective knowledge about the world, or at least knowledge that is of
greater likely validity than that produced in other ways. On these grounds it is sometimes argued that any ‘knowledge’ claims necessarily reflect particular value assumptions about the world which should be made explicit, and/or it is proposed that the role of research should be to amplify the voices of people on the sociopolitical margins, thereby revaluing subordinated forms of knowledge, and perhaps doing this in ways that maximize ‘impact’ via the use of literary or artistic forms of presentation (see, e.g., Denzin, 2010). Alternatively, or as a complement, the task is also sometimes defined as to challenge claims to expert knowledge, including those made by other social scientists.

There are cogent arguments against both of these challenges to the traditional task of research and associated attempts to ‘redefine’ it (Hammersley, 1995, 2000, 2005). Furthermore, it should be noted that what is proposed eliminates the only claim that research has to distinctiveness as an activity, which means that in practice these arguments reduce it to something else: to some other form of occupational practice, to advising policymakers, to political activism, or to aesthetic portrayal. In effect, such reductionism abandons research, as specialized inquiry, in favour of inquiry-subordinated-to-another-activity (Hammersley, 2002, chap. 6). While this kind of subordinated inquiry is quite legitimate, it is different from research.6

In this article, therefore, we will treat the production of knowledge as the only immediate goal of research. It is important to recognize that while this goal has commonly been formulated in terms of a commitment to value-neutrality – in other words, as involving the attempt to remain neutral in relation to practical values during the course of research – it does nevertheless imply a strong commitment to epistemic values, in other words to truth. In practical terms, this means that the primary ethical obligation of the researcher is to pursue the production of value-relevant knowledge as effectively as possible, or at least up to some acceptable standard. Yet, curiously, this obligation is rarely given attention in discussions of research ethics (for exceptions, see Dockrell, 1990; MacFarlane, 2009; Reynolds, 1979). Instead, the primary focus is almost always on how the people being studied should be treated, for example in terms of respecting their rights; indeed, the scope of research ethics is frequently defined in these terms. While these concerns are certainly important, it is necessary to recognize that the values taken to underpin them, for example, the need to minimize the risk of serious harm, to respect autonomy, etc., are extrinsic to the task of research; they are not constitutive of its goal. As such they operate as external constraints on, rather than as inner directives for, the research process.

Another way of phrasing this is to point out that research ethics is a form of occupational or professional ethics. Of course, the idea that research is a profession is a contentious one; indeed, the whole idea of the professions was subjected to sustained and consequential criticism from both Right and Left in the second half of the twentieth century. At one time, the occupations falling into this category, notably medicine and the law, were accorded high status on the grounds that their practitioners were obliged to try to protect and promote health or justice, and that they employ specialized expertise in doing this. Other occupations were judged in terms of how far they approximated to this model, with many of these (such as school teaching) being designated ‘semi-professions’ or ‘quasi-professions’ (Etzioni, 1969). However, in the second half of the twentieth century professionalism increasingly came to be regarded as an ideology that is designed to increase the control that particular occupations exert over their clients, and over other occupations, in order to serve their own interests,
thereby restricting market competition and blocking democratic accountability. New forms of public management, managerialist in character, demanded that these occupations, along with others, be subjected to ‘transparent’ accountability regimes, which require members continually to demonstrate that what they do is effective and efficient (Pollitt, 1993; Power, 1997).

Within sociology, an important part of this criticism of professionalism arose from changes in the mode of analysis applied to the professions. There was a move from the trait model, which identified the essential features of a profession and examined how occupations became professionalized, to control models, where the focus is on the strategies that occupations use in order to increase their power (Freidson, 1983; Larson, 1977). The effect of this was to switch from an illegitimate valorization of the professions to an equally illegitimate debunking of them (Hammersley, 2010a). In normative terms, we can see professionalism as having both advantages and disadvantages, as judged from several points of view. And it seems to us that there are some key respects in which research should aspire to be a professional occupation, rather than one that is bureaucratic, technical, or commercial in orientation.

There are at least two components to a professional orientation, as we will formulate it here: dedication and autonomy. Dedication is a usefully ambiguous word in this context. We speak of ‘dedicated computers’ when we are referring to machines that are devoted to only one task. What we are suggesting, then, is that researchers, in acting as researchers, should be dedicated to the task of producing knowledge; they should not pursue other goals simultaneously, or as alternatives, under the auspices of research. This ‘narrowness’ of focus has often been identified as a vice of professionalism, and it can be undesirable on some occasions from some points of view. However, what is involved is a trade-off: it is hoped and assumed that dedication to a single task, in other words specialization, will bring benefits that outweigh any costs, at least in general and in the longer term.

The word ‘dedication’ also implies a ‘high degree of commitment’, and it seems to us that research demands this because, like many other occupational tasks where a professional form of organization is appropriate, it is very difficult to do well. This has important implications not only for relations between researchers and the people they study, but also for the private lives of researchers too. To redirect a concept invented by Coser (1974), like all vocations research is a ‘greedy’ occupation: it makes potentially unlimited demands on its practitioners. It requires researchers to find answers to questions that make a significant contribution to current, collective knowledge within research communities, and to do so in ways that meet a threshold of likely validity that is higher, as a general standard, than that which is employed by other people in other contexts (Hammersley, 2011, chap. 5).

Autonomy, the other key feature of a professional activity we will discuss here, refers to the fact that, if this demanding occupational task is to be done well, practitioners must have considerable discretion in deciding what the task entails in any particular case, and how it should be carried out. There are various potential sources of external constraint that may need to be resisted here. Some of these come, for example, from funders and gatekeepers, but others may stem from university managements and even from ethics committees. Attempts by these agencies to promote or block particular topics of investigation, to specify what methods should be used or to rule out others, or to shape or block publication of the findings need to be resisted – where they are at odds with the professional judgement of the researchers concerned. This is the core of academic freedom (see Dworkin, 1998; Haskell, 1998).
Like ‘dedication’, ‘autonomy’ is an ambiguous word. Besides referring to the freedom or discretion that is objectively available to an occupational practitioner, which has to be fought for against the exercise of power by others, it also implies a certain mode of orientation on the part of the agent in which even the influence of others is resisted unless it is in line with her or his professional judgement. In the case of research, there must be a commitment not only to defend academic freedom from encroachment, but also to exercise it in a fashion that is well suited to the goal being pursued. This links to the second kind of moralism that we will discuss.

The tyranny of ‘high standards’

Even where other goals are not incorporated into the task of research – in addition to, or instead of, the pursuit of knowledge – moralism (the tendency to over-do morality) can still be present in discussions of research ethics, and in how researchers orient to ethical considerations in the course of their work. Here it relates to the constraints on research deriving from those extrinsic values to which a researcher is committed, or to which other stakeholders are committed: moralism gives these too much weight, potentially making impossible or intractable the pursuit of knowledge in general, or the investigation of particular research questions.

We can formulate our argument here through a contrast between this kind of moralism, adherence to excessively high extrinsic standards, and Machiavellianism. Contrary to what is sometimes assumed, Machiavelli did not argue that rulers, or political agents more generally, should pursue evil ends. Rather, he argued that, because of the imperfect nature of the world, they will often have to use means that would generally be regarded as bad, for example war, in order to pursue ends that are good. In effect, he argued that politics is or should be a professional activity, in the sense that it must focus on pursuing narrowly specified sorts of aim, rather than being directed towards realizing the best of all possible worlds in terms of means as well as ends.

The concept of Machiavellianism can be applied in some important respects to other professions besides politics. For example, the task of the doctor is to try to secure or preserve the health of her or his patients, not to save their souls, or to serve the interests of a kin group or nation-state, and so on. Moreover, in pursuing this narrowly specified task it may be necessary to use means that, from the point of view of some extrinsic values, are undesirable. For example, doctors and other medical personnel may find it necessary to breach ordinary etiquette among relative strangers (‘have you opened your bowels today?’ and ‘how frequently do you have sexual intercourse?’), to cause pain, to turn a blind eye to legal offences (illegal drug use, for instance), and so on. In rather different ways, lawyers are obliged to be partisan on the part of their clients, downplaying some aspects of a case in favour of others that show the client in better light, challenging the honesty of witnesses in order to undermine the persuasiveness of their evidence, and so on. One way of thinking about this is to say that professions often claim, and are granted, some moral license; though this will often be contested and subject to negotiation. In other words, in pursuit of their particular purposes, professions are allowed to breach some moral rules that would normally apply. If it is insisted that these rules always be fully enforced, that ‘high standards’ are adhered to in terms of applying these moral rules, then the scope for exercising the discretion needed to pursue professional activity, and thereby achieving the benefits it offers, will be reduced or even eliminated.
So what sorts of license can and should social researchers claim? We will mention a few examples here just to make the point. In collecting data, it may be necessary to tolerate, and risk being seen as condoning, behaviour that one believes (and that others would believe) is wrong – up to and including acts that are illegal.\(^9\) If the researcher is not able to be tolerant in this way, then access to much data in some spheres may be blocked, or made relatively inaccessible. Another example is that it may sometimes be necessary to deceive people, actively or passively (for instance, through not correcting misapprehensions), if data are to be obtained. This is most obviously required in the case of groups and organizations that seek to exercise considerable power over their members and over their external environment: from elite groups, through state and commercial agencies of various kinds, to exclusive religious or political groups. A further example is that it may be necessary to ask questions whose implications could be taken to be, say, sexist or racist (contra Troyna & Carrington, 1989). Similarly, researchers may need to consider lines of argument some whose potential implications could be viewed as objectionable, distressing, or repulsive by some lay audiences, and perhaps even by the researcher herself or himself. Any insistence that researchers be ‘authentic’ in the sense of fully living up to their own personal values, or to those of others, in other words, applying these fully wherever they are appropriate, would put very serious obstacles in the way of pursuing research, often ones that simply make it impossible to do well.\(^{10}\)

A significant implication of our argument is that there can be a fundamental conflict between research as a professional activity and some sorts of religious, political, or ethical worldview: those that insist on certain values or rules being applied at all times and across all contexts, allowing no waiving or relaxing of these in light of the requirements of any particular task being pursued, or situation faced.\(^{11}\) In Max Weber’s terms, commitment to an ‘ethics of ultimate ends’ is incompatible with research (and indeed with other specialized activities), what is required instead is an ‘ethic of responsibility’ (see Bruun, 2007, pp. 250–259).\(^{12}\)

It is important to underline that we are not arguing that the pursuit of research should be unconstrained by extrinsic values. Some restraint of this kind is essential: researchers should not feel free to pursue their research goals irrespective of all other considerations or costs. Our argument is about the degree to which, and ways in which, extrinsic values should constrain the actions of the researcher, and also about who should make decisions about this. There is no general answer to the question of how much weight should be given to particular extrinsic values; this must be decided on a case-by-case basis. Moreover, doing this is an important aspect of researcher autonomy. As this makes clear, it is individual researchers or research teams who must decide in particular cases what it is and is not acceptable to do, in light of both intrinsic and extrinsic values. Such decisions should not be made by funding bodies, gatekeepers, ethics committees, governments, or anyone else.\(^{13}\) Of course, this does not deny that others can express views about the decisions that researchers make, or apply sanctions against them on this basis.

What extrinsic values are of importance in relation to social research? There is no straightforward means of identifying these, in the way that there is for intrinsic values. This is because researchers may quite reasonably be committed to a wide range of values, varying across sociocultural contexts. At the same time, we do not believe that cultures differ completely in the values to which they give importance; indeed, there is a great deal of overlap in this respect, despite considerable variation in emphasis. Given this overlap, it is possible to identify a number of such values, and these are
often given priority by social scientists, and are at the centre of most accounts of research ethics. The main ones are: minimization of harm, respect for autonomy, and the protection of privacy.

It is important to recognize that each of these values is open to some variation in interpretation, in general and in particular, and each involves a *scale* of offence. This means that judgement has to be made, for example, about what degree and types of harm would be acceptable in pursuing a particular piece of research, what degree and kinds of autonomy should be respected, as well as what ‘respect’ means in any particular context, and so on. Moreover, these judgements are not made in abstract but in relation to particular actions or incidents, where much also depends upon judgements about the facts of the matter, the implications of other extrinsic values as well as of intrinsic ones, and so on. Assessments have to be made, then, about what was, is, or would be legitimate in particular cases in light of a complex of values, and a particular understanding of the nature of the situation, and there is much scope on each value dimension for discretion about what is demanded.

Our key point here is that if it is insisted that researchers adhere to very high standards in terms of one or more extrinsic values, this will not only make it difficult to meet occupational requirements as defined by intrinsic values, but may also generate intractable dilemmas because there is much scope for conflict among extrinsic values, even the small number usually included in discussions of research ethics.

**A note on ethics and prudence**

It is important to emphasize that when we talk about extrinsic values constraining the work of researchers we mean value judgements to which the researchers concerned are themselves committed, not, for example, value judgements that are promoted or emphasized by others within the contexts in which researchers carry out their work, whether their home institutions or the fields they investigate. The phrase ‘research ethics’ is sometimes used in a loose way to cover all of the ways in which value principles may become relevant in the course of research, not just those that stem from commitment on the part of the researcher. Others’ value judgements will often need to be taken into account by a researcher in making her or his decisions about how to pursue the research, but this is not necessarily a matter of ethics.

There are two ways in which others’ value judgements can enter into researchers’ deliberations. First, since these shape people’s behaviour, including their responses to particular research methods and strategies, they will need to be taken into account by the researcher in deciding how to pursue enquiry effectively. This is a prudential (not an ethical) matter, concerned with what would and would not be successful ways of pursuing the research goal.

There is, however, another way in which others’ value judgements, not shared by the researcher, may still need to be taken into account, this time for ethical reasons. As we have noted, one of the extrinsic values to which many social scientists are committed is respect for the autonomy of the people they study. And respecting someone’s autonomy will sometimes mean respecting their value preferences, even those with which one does not agree. We believe that respecting autonomy is an important extrinsic value that ought to operate in the pursuit of research. However, as with other extrinsic values, the weight it should be given in any particular set of circumstances will need to be judged, being balanced against the obligation to pursue the research as effectively as possible, and against other extrinsic values. This means that there may
well be occasions when a researcher acts, and should act, in ways that are at odds with the value preferences of the people he or she studies, or with those of research colleagues. What this shows us is that there may be ethical dilemmas even in relation to a single value, involving conflicts between the autonomy of the researcher and that of others.

**Conclusion**

In this article we have argued against two kinds of moralism that, we claim, are currently very influential. The first involves incorporating other values than the pursuit of knowledge into the goal of research, treating these as intrinsic to it when they are not; the second gives excessive weight to values that are extrinsic to research, in such a way as to make its pursuit less likely to be successful, or to render some kinds of research (those addressing particular questions or using particular methods) impossible or very difficult. It is worth adding that our objection to moralism is itself an ethical one, in the sense that it rests on our commitment to the values that are intrinsic to enquiry. While much of the literature on research ethics treats this field as referring primarily to how researchers ought to treat the people they study, in terms of general moral principles or in light of the demands of personal relationships, we have shown that a wider perspective is required that incorporates values that are intrinsic to the profession of research as well as relevant extrinsic ones. Any concern with what researchers ought and ought not to do must begin from the distinctive task to which they are committed, by virtue of their membership of the occupation, and the values that are intrinsic to this. It is precisely in terms of these values that we judge moralism, of both the kinds we have discussed, unethical for researchers.

**Notes**

1. A previous version of this article was given at the British Educational Research Association annual conference, University of Warwick, September 2010. We thank those present for their comments.
2. For references and further discussion (see Traianou & Hammersley, 2007, 2011).
4. This could also be referred to as ethicism (Hammersley, 2009). There is a parallel between moralism/ethicism and the religious enthusiasm that Locke and others challenged in the seventeenth century, as part of their defence of political liberalism (Locke, 1975, chap. 19).
5. The issue of whether there is a distinction between ethical and political values is a difficult one, as is the question of where any such distinction should be drawn.
6. See Fish (2009) for a parallel argument applying to the work of universities more generally.
7. These are among the features often ascribed to a professional orientation, and included in the ‘trait model’ of professions (see Macdonald, 1995, pp. 2–3). There is also a close correspondence with Merton’s (1973, chaps. 12–13) account of the norms characteristic of a scientific orientation.
8. However, it should be noted that the ends he typically had in mind were not universalistic ones but those specific to a particular political community. In this sense he was a communitarian rather than a liberal universalist. For two very different, but stimulating, accounts of Machiavelli’s thought (see Skinner, 2000; Strauss, 1987). In his major work, *The Prince*, Machiavelli provided an educational guide for rulers, in the tradition of humanist scholarship, condensing the lessons to be learned both from this scholarship and from his own close observations of various rulers as part of his diplomatic work (see Hale, 1961). This resulted in a distinctive feature of his writings: that it addressed the practical realities of politics, in
a way that was not true of most other political theorists, making public what had previously been private and secret. For a brief account of the development of his devilish reputation (see Bull, 1981, pp. 9–10). In line with that reputation, we are ignoring any distinction between political and personal ethics, a distinction that he may have insisted upon.

9. Note that the argument here is not that all immoral or illegal acts must be tolerated, only that researchers must have the leeway to tolerate some such acts where they judge this to be necessary and defensible in doing their work.

10. Note that the costs of moralism are often obscured because the task of establishing the likely validity of research conclusions is underestimated. In some areas, this is possible because most, if not all, researchers operating there are committed to the same extrinsic values and are conditioned to believe conclusions that they take to be in line with those values.

11. In other words, with other ‘greedy’ (Coser, 1974) groups and institutions.

12. Moreover, we would add that the most instructive parallel – in the case of qualitative research, at least – is not with medical ethics but rather with journalism and nonfiction writing (see, e.g., Malcolm, 1990).

13. On this argument in relation to ethics committees, see Hammersley (2009).

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