CHAPTER

3 Ethics in Applied Research and Practice

The practice of anthropology requires scrupulous attention to ethics. Much is at stake—the research, recommendations, advocacy, and policy implementations directly affect real people. So it is essential that applied anthropologists be aware of all the fine points of acceptable behavior for their work. In framing a discussion for anthropologists, I focus on some very specific and widely held principles of ethics within formal codes. I will also outline some special problems and guidelines that have been identified as particular to practice in nonacademic settings. It is useful to begin by considering the potential publics or interests to which anthropologists have obligations. These publics come into varying degrees of prominence as anthropologists have to make decisions of an ethical nature.

The Host Community

Many assume that the most crucial party is the *host community* or *society*. Certain groups or categories of people are the intended beneficiaries of new policies or existing services. The applied anthropologist has to develop some type of liaison with those groups. The "host" might be a small-scale community in the classical sense—people who live in an identifiable location, are relatively homogeneous, and have a sense of solidarity.

Yet even small-scale communities or societies will have some degree of heterogeneity. There will always be differences in power relations and expectations for policies. For instance, during the mid-1970s in Subarctic Canada, communities were researched and public hearings were held about the desirability of building oil and gas pipelines. There were some marked divisions based on ethnicity, socioeconomic status, occupation, and other variables. These all influenced opinions on the prospect of pipelines being built near their communities. Some, mainly white businessmen and Métis (mixed white and Native), supported the notion because it would bring jobs and profits. Dene (northern Native people) opposed the proposals because pipelines would interfere with trapping and traditional land rights that had yet to be legally clarified.

When it comes to large-scale, urban communities, there are obviously even more publics with divergent interests. For instance, impoverished Native migrants to cities may have some features in common with recently arrived immigrants or refugees living in the same poor neighborhoods. Ostensibly they have similar needs for social services or health facilities, but usually there are also some important cultural differences. Anglo policy makers

may make erroneous assumptions because notions of "multiculturalism" or shared "cultures" of poverty imply that they can design umbrella programs that aim to cover the needs of many minority and marginalized peoples at the same time. Yet attempts to implement a homogeneous policy could lead to more damage than benefits. Practicing anthropologists have to be mindful of such potential mistakes.

Other challenges may face practitioners when the people in question do not actually form a community at all. Chronically ill children at risk of death, single parents, or battered women are not actual subcommunities. Organized communities have more effective ways of responding to what they consider inappropriate behavior by researchers or practicing anthropologists. Isolated individuals represented in categories do not. So anthropologists should view them *as if* they were communities, to exercise a set of checks and balances on their own behavior.

Most anthropologists would agree that the host community (and by implication its individual members) should come first in any ethical considerations. Sorting out this responsibility is complex but essential.

The Client

The next major interest to consider is the *client*, the person, agency, or organization that has commissioned and is paying for the work. It is very convenient and much simpler if the client is also the host community. Then, at least at the beginning and perhaps at some later stages of the work, anthropologists can hope that they are doing "good works"—providing insight, testimony, and recommendations that the host community can use to its advantage. But, as already suggested, the "host" community may be highly fragmented and factionalized. What is more, elected officials of the community or the boards of a self-help organization might not always represent the best interests of their constituents.

More frequently the client is a third party providing services to a host community population. A familiar scenario is that of a government agency seeking information through research. Or the client may be a nongovernment organization such as a charitable foundation or a nonprofit social or health service agency such as a family service bureau. It could be a union seeking to expand its membership and anticipate the needs of some yet-to-be-organized category of workers. Corporations may wish to have marketing research done, set up a branch plant in some new region, or improve productivity among their workers.

There is always a possibility that the relationships between the supposed beneficiaries and the client are not very good. In fact, there may be a history of perceived abuses or misunderstandings. Although the proposed research may be earnestly intended to improve a bad situation, it may sometimes be better that the practitioner/researcher *does not* participate in the project because he lacks the means to bring about a solution or an understanding. Often though, the situation is not that extreme and there may be an equally good reason to get involved. The practitioner might have the mediation skills needed or be able to develop an effective research design to the satisfaction and benefit of all parties.

The practitioner must realize that he will have a contractual relationship with the client. That contract may even legally supersede any strongly felt obligations to the researched host community. Conflicts between the anthropologists' responsibilities to hosts

and clients may be the most common ethical dilemma in applied anthropology. For that reason, an effective, ethically informed contract is crucial to whatever unfolds during the rest of the work. Anthropologists have a strong obligation to inform the clients about essential ingredients of anthropological ethics, such as informed consent and confidentiality, the nature of anthropological research, and changing ethical climates.

The client is not always a homogeneous unit either. There may be differing points of view among individuals or subagencies of the same institution. More delicacy and care is required when a number of clients are in partnership for the same research. This can happen, say, when a state or federal government may be engaged in partnership with a nongovernment organization, a tribal government, and a specific community in an applied project for which the anthropologist is hired.

The Profession of Anthropology

The third general party toward which the applied anthropologist should feel some responsibility is the *discipline and profession of anthropology.* This responsibility is complex and layered. First, there is the subject of anthropology itself—its reputable name should be upheld. More controversially for applied anthropology, there is an expectation that all findings should ultimately be shared through books, articles, and conference publications, but that may breach obligations to host communities or clients who consider themselves owners of confidential information. The applied anthropologist, with the permission of his or her hosts/clients, might instead publish articles that describe methodology and sketch very broad dimensions of the domain under question but leave many important and interesting details out of the equation. Many of the most important and significant applied studies may never reach a general anthropological audience. There is another aspect to this—the applied or practicing anthropologist may be too busy doing the actual work to find the time to publish it. Lamentably, the most significant proportion of the applied anthropological literature may remain buried in technical or classified reports.

We also have responsibilities to each other as colleagues. Applied and practicing anthropology tends to be collaborative, rarely employing the solitary approach of academic ethnographic fieldwork. Practicing anthropologists share research tasks with each other as well as practitioners from other fields; they jointly analyze and write up the data and frequently have partnerships within consulting firms. These responsibilities also extend to other colleagues who may not be anthropologists. These could be consultants from other applied social, health, and educational sciences, as well as members of the more technical professions such as engineering, biology, and agronomy. Then there are the research assistants who may be undergraduate or graduate students of anthropology. Practitioners have obligations to act responsibly to them—effectively mentoring them, protecting them from dangers and health hazards, not exploiting them in their work, giving them proper credit, and seeing that they are properly remunerated.

Finally, there are situations in which research colleagues are members of the host community or client organization. This generates a whole new set of responsibilities, including proper training, proper credit, and protection of such colleagues from potential negative repercussions from their community or organization. When the anthropologist is in charge,

he or she is obliged to ensure ethical practice among such local colleagues with respect to their own community.

The General Public

Another highly significant party is the *public.* It should be kept informed of strategic and useful information about important issues. A host of opportunities and obligations come to mind, attached to issues like poverty, race and ethnic relations, the negative dimensions of development, and historical injustices. The anthropologist may write op-ed pieces, allow him- or herself to be interviewed by the media, appear at public hearings, give talks, and volunteer time to citizens' groups. Advocacy is a part of this expectation. Surprisingly, this general expectation is still underdeveloped in anthropology. Perhaps this comes from the academic antipathy for "popularizing."

Professional Codes of Ethics for Research and Practice

To give substance to this discussion of ethical principles I will draw from three ethical codes established by professional associations. They have been formulated by the Society for Applied Anthropology (1983), the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology (1988), and the Society of Applied Anthropology in Canada (1983). There is a certain amount of overlap among them, which means that there has been consistency of experience and opinion from several generations of anthropologists. They can be seen as governed by notions of fairness and the need to protect vulnerable people.

Informed Consent

Informed consent is probably the most significant, although sometimes the most controversial, dimension of ethical expectations for both academic and applied work (see Fluehr-Lobban 1994, 1996; Herrera 1996; Wax 1995, 1996). When research is being done, the subjects should be fully aware of it; anthropological work should not be clandestine. Permission to proceed must be sought. What topics are they planning to investigate? Who will receive the results? All of the major questions that will be asked should be revealed at the beginning. The explicit purposes of the research should be disclosed in any applied project. Finally, the people involved should know all of the potential benefits and risks of participation.

On some occasions, the process of permission seeking is straightforward. When dealing with Indian reservations or small Arctic villages, informed consent must be received through tribal or village councils. Research within formal organizations such as corporations, unions, government agencies, or nonprofit organizations requires formal permission through official channels. Within an organization, the enquiry may pertain to clients, employees, or all conceivable participants, including management, board, and other decision makers. Such communities or organizations tend to carefully scrutinize the risks and bene-

fits of participation. Gatekeepers in formal organizations can be suspicious of outsiders' intentions, especially those framed through research designs. They want to know the full details and the consequences of their participation. They tend to be more inclined to refuse permission than to consent, taking the approach "that it is better to be safe than sorry." They may act this way because they cannot truly assess the long-term consequences on their funding and reputation if they participate.

The "Clinical" Model of Informed Consent

Beyond community or organizational research, certain aspects of informed consent from individuals have proven problematic for anthropologists in recent years. Universities, research foundations, governments, and other sponsors of research have required that social scientists, including anthropologists, provide assurance of the ethical foundations of their research. But in designing these safeguards, the standards have most frequently been derived from those of clinical and experimental sciences. In such controlled settings, researchers might, for instance, seek volunteers to test new drugs and therapeutic procedures or to participate in experiments that might attempt to measure their resistance or reactions to pain; their attitudes toward sensitive subjects such as sexuality, drug use, or self-esteem; or their mental or physical performance.

Such research may reveal knowledge construed as valuable for humanity as a whole. In the case of drug trials or of new psychological therapies, there might be some direct benefits to subjects. Yet there may also be huge possibilities for abuse or damage. What would be the effect of exposing people (especially children) to pictures of acts of sexuality or of mutilated bodies? What unknown side effects might be the result of participating in trials for a new drug? How might the participants feel about participating in drug trials if they learn that there is a 50 percent chance that they might be taking placebos? What are the effects on the dignity and feelings of the self-worth of individuals who are being manipulated for research purposes? Surely, volunteers have a right to know everything that is going on: what is to be asked of them and what is going to be done to them. They need to know, in as much detail as possible, about the known risks and benefits of participation. The researcher also has to clearly explain unexpected risks to the participants, so that they know they are taking chances.

To satisfy an ethics review committee, there are two particular requirements. One is a succinct document that, in laymen's language, explains the research purposes, methods, and design; details what exactly is expected of the participants; and clearly notes risks and benefits. The second document is a very short form letter with blank spaces for names and dates to be signed by the participants in the experiment, indicating that they are aware of what is going to happen to them and that they have been made aware of the risks and benefits of participation. It should contain wording to the effect that the subject is willing to allow the information to be used, analyzed, and written about in books, reports, articles, and conference presentations. This is a legal contract between the researcher and the research participant or subject. If there is a breach of this agreement, the researcher and the sponsoring institute can be sued.

This procedure is necessary for the protection of all concerned in risky experimental and clinical research. Furthermore, the balance of power is not equal between the

experimenter/clinician and the research participant in those situations. The former has completely defined and controlled the whole setting and activities, which are not natural ones that the participants would normally engage in or feel comfortable doing. The rest of what transpires is by definition "controlled." The only real power that the subject or respondent has is to quit.

We may ask if these circumstances apply to the anthropologist and his or her informants in the field. There are differences between these clinical contracts and ethnographic work. In ethnography the settings are natural—communities, neighborhoods—and the anthropologists are strangers or outsiders. *They* have to make adjustments, often as barely tolerated intruders, sometimes as welcome guests. If the anthropologist is mistrusted or viewed as a source of irritation, he or she may be asked to leave. Or peoples' body language or other evidence of their disdain may make the anthropologist so uncomfortable she will leave as soon as she can.

There are subtle complexities to fitting into the community. Many anthropologists may become persistent and "thick-skinned," and, exercising perseverance, they may remain in spite of discomfort. There is also the possibility, although much rarer these days, that the members of the community will tolerate and comply with the anthropologist's research out of a generalized fear, because the anthropologist is seen as a representative or agent of a more powerful and potentially threatening cosmopolitan society. Much more positively and more frequently, the anthropologist is welcomed as an equal co-investigator/consultant in a village or community that is researching its own conditions for practical reasons, especially when the project has been designed with maximum consultation. But what all of this tells us is that anthropologists rarely have any power over their subjects in the sense that clinicians do.

Other problems have to do with the open-ended nature of most anthropological research. Ethnography is highly inductive and not very sequential or linear, and there are constant shifts in research topics. Anthropologists often have to drop an activity or a methodological approach when a new unexpected lead or event occurs. They often find that their initial set of research topics, let alone all the specific questions to be asked of people, is meaningless and has to be reformulated. Even when they have a good idea of what the general research or policy questions are, it is most often not until they have been on the site for a while that they can ascertain what is important to the topics. If they have initially gone through the standardized exercise of informed consent, it could turn out to be a form of inadvertent deception, because the whole research design has to change. Anthropologists need the latitude to readjust their vision of what they are doing.

Also, consider how the anthropologist typically gains information during fieldwork. Although formal interviews, questionnaires, and systematic observations of specified events are possible, most of the work consists of unexpected and seemingly random encounters, observations, and conversations. The researcher observes a social encounter here, attends a ceremony there, and has frequent casual conversations, in which a normal range of pleasantries and small talk is embedded. Within these situations, the ethnographer extracts a sprinkling of observations and opinions pertaining to the main research questions. How can the anthropologist administer informed consent within the ebb and flow of such encounters?

There is another subtle dimension to this, especially when anthropologists are working in cross-cultural settings where there is already some degree of tension. Approaching a potential informant with a long list of risks and benefits as well as a legal release consent

form is like "Mirandaizing" the person. I take the analogy from the *Miranda* decision of the U.S. Supreme Court, which was meant to protect recently arrested people from being manipulated into making statements that could be construed as confessions without the presence of a lawyer and full knowledge of their legal rights. Consider the typical cop show on TV; it frequently shows the detectives arresting a suspect, handcuffing him, and reading him his rights, "You have a right to remain silent. . . . Anything you say may be used against you in a court of law. . . ." Forewarned, the prisoner usually remains silent for his own good. Presenting the documents pertaining to informed consent to potential participants in our type of research can result in the same kind of response of "better safe than sorry." Approaching someone in the field with these documents is a very awkward social encounter. It creates enormous problems for the anthropologist.

However, we still need to consider this dilemma from the point of view of our potential collaborators and informants. Here, I give several examples from my own fieldwork in Alaska and Northern Canada.

Years ago when I did my first fieldwork, I was one evening the guest of an Inuit couple. Unexpectedly, they got into an argument over some very personal matters. Yet within their angry dialogue were some very interesting opinions and facts directly relevant to my research. All of a sudden there was a lull, and both of them turned to me. The wife said, "Sandy, you are not going to write notes on this, are you?" They knew I was doing research but had let their guard down and were treating me like a trusted friend. I did not write field notes on this encounter because they explicitly asked me not to, but I would certainly otherwise have done so.

Another much more serious example occurred when I was doing field research on the process of Native urbanization in Fairbanks, Alaska. A Native friend, in a state of distress, told me a tale of transgression that had led the members of his community to ostracize him for the rest of his life. It was a fascinating tale of the still-existing operation of traditional Alaskan Native justice systems, but I did not record this conversation because of the vulnerable position it put both of us in.

A chilling reality for anthropologists in the United States is that, like journalists, anthropologists can have their notes and testimony subpoenaed by a court of law, even across borders. About five years ago, a Canadian anthropologist was doing research, using a life-history approach, about a religion that was rapidly growing among black inmates in both Canadian and American prisons. She had gained the trust and informed consent of prisoners in a northern state. In a fishing expedition, state prosecutors looking for evidence about some unsolved crimes had requested the extradition of her field notes and potentially the anthropologist herself to testify. As far as I know, she and her lawyers had successfully resisted the extradition, but this was a close call—one that could affect us all.

From these anecdotes, it should be clear that informed consent is no simple, straightforward matter. How do we accomplish this, given all the problems that I have indicated as emerging from the clinical/experimental approach taken by ethical review committees? My basic answer is that, for the time being, we should learn to live with the sometimes draconian regulations of ethical review boards because we have no choice. These requirements are often legal ones, and they do ultimately protect both the anthropologist and the research subjects. They force us to carefully scrutinize the consequences of our proposed research. They compel us to be proactive and anticipate possibilities, and that, in itself, is good.

Furthermore, these days anthropologists are making more direct use of questionnaires, relatively structured questioning in key-informant interviews, and group-interviewing techniques. It is easier to anticipate how such methodologies will be conducted and what the risks and benefits will be. In applied or practicing situations, it is rare for people to go into a fieldwork situation simply to do open-ended participant observation. Applied anthropologists, especially when they are operating with specific policy objectives, need to know what they are looking for. In most cases, they also have to have a relatively thorough understanding of the society and phenomena in question. Accordingly, it should be possible to anticipate many more eventualities in research design than was once the case.

At the same time, as he or she complies with standards based on clinical research, each anthropologist should try to educate ethical review committees about the special circumstances facing anthropologists in field research to persuade them to consider more flexible but effective ways of dealing with informed consent in real-world settings. In the meantime, we should continue to search for alternative models to provide complete assurance of meaningful informed consent. Most of our other ethical expectations hinge on this very real issue.

Confidentiality and Personal Rights to Privacy

The researcher or practitioner should ensure that the actual names of the participants or informants will not be used in any reports or publications. When informants' comments or behaviors are described in reports, they should be disguised so that the identities of individuals cannot be guessed. Potential informants should not feel the need to give in to overly persistent researchers. The usual approach also requires that anthropologists not divulge information about them and their opinions to other members of their own community, officials, or those who might have commissioned the study. Informants are frequently given pseudonyms in reports or monographs. Sometimes, to illustrate circumstances and opinions, composite semifictional informants or participants may be created using real situations to illustrate appropriate points. This is unusual in social science in general but considered perfectly acceptable in anthropology if used sparingly and carefully.

It is a frequent practice not to directly identify the community or organization in which the research is located. Again the standard approach is to use a pseudonym to protect the community from any negative consequences. This device is never completely foolproof because many people, especially policy makers, who are interested in the local issues might be able to identify the community anyway from clues in the report or simply because they knew that the research was being done there. There is also a drawback to this practice. When the community's name has been disguised, the knowledge contained in the report cannot be used by other researchers as part of an accumulating body of data about that community or region. It may be a crucial impediment in the growth of an effective policy science if that information about ongoing events and long-term trends is valuable.

Yet what is most important in maintaining confidentiality is the protection of individuals and potentially vulnerable subgroups. The most serious ethical difficulties and potential negative consequences could come from the breaches of the twin concerns of confidentiality and informed consent.

Dissemination of Knowledge

In the academic world, anthropologists have an ethical obligation to make their knowledge widely known. In many instances in the applied realm, the knowledge is potentially significant for policy that could have positive or negative consequences for many people. It is assumed that there should be no secrecy. It is also assumed that the community or segment of society that was researched should have full access to any reports written about it. The report should be framed in accessible language. In the North American context, that usually means standard grade ten English, but it might also require that a report or a significant abstract of it be written in the local language. Several colleagues have done applied research in the Northwest Territories of Canada, which have a very strict ordinance governing research done in communities with large proportions of speakers of Native languages. Researchers are required to have reports, or substantial summaries, translated into Inuktituk or Dene languages. They are also expected to return to the community and attend a town meeting at which findings and recommendations are discussed before they are sent on to the next level of decision-making.

Although most anthropologists would agree that the public "has a right to know" and that there are many benefits to promoting the practical aspects of anthropology, there are several significant exceptions to this rule, some of which are legal requirements. In Chapter 10, we will describe John Peterson Jr.'s (1974) work for the Choctaw Tribal Council. He was not allowed to share his research findings with the public nor even with the discipline of anthropology. Yet most of us can understand that this was essential for his ongoing relations with the Choctaw and, by extension, for anthropology's reputation with Native or Indian communities in North America. Frequently, Native people have felt exploited by research that brings them no benefits or that does not accurately reflect their realities. They may feel publication to be an unwelcome exposure of themselves or an invasion of their privacy.

There are other issues in disseminating applied work. One is that, although research materials should be part of longstanding attempts to resolve particular policy problems—settling land or resource disputes, lobbying for a more effective health care or educational delivery system, and so forth—the data may be tentative or have to remain classified until the issue is settled. Applied work may also be highly sensitive and subject to misinterpretation. For instance, information related to poverty or the family has sometimes been used in inappropriate and ideological ways to suggest associations about drug use or crime that cannot really be proved. In the past, such ideologies have sometimes promoted a "blame the victim" set of explanations.

Serious ethical problems are raised when anthropologists collect ethnographic knowledge about people for clandestine or intelligence purposes. During the 1960s, there was frequent discussion among anthropologists about the large-scale studies commissioned by various branches of the Pentagon on tribal and peasant peoples in Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Africa. These reports remain classified. Ethnographers, because of their particular visions of social responsibilities (and perhaps patriotism), may have felt that they were doing the right thing in doing this work. Others might think differently about the lack of informed consent in them.

A relatively minor breach of ethics can be attributed to this secret research: the researchers failed to contribute to our basic ethnographic knowledge of peoples and culture

areas, a basic mandate of anthropology. The information could have stimulated the cumulative advancement of anthropological theory surrounding particular issues. Still, the most serious problem here was that the peoples themselves had no opportunity to assess how they were portrayed. Were there inaccuracies or superficialities leading to inappropriate policies? Was the information placed in the hands of foreign governments that might have had hostile or oppressive intentions toward minority groups?

Related to the presumed desirability of publishing materials in academic or policy journals to benefit the discipline of anthropology, another factor arises. Beyond any restrictions placed by employers, most practicing anthropologists simply do not have the time to publish because they are too busy doing research, consulting and advising, writing new proposals and technical reports, supervising others' work, and managing and planning work that can be used for policy purposes. There is no particular advantage, beyond personal satisfaction, for practicing anthropologists to submit their work to academic journals. Unlike academically based anthropologists, publication does not contribute to gaining tenure, promotion, or merit increments. For academics, these are very meaningful incentives, but for practitioners, the time spent on such articles may actually be costly because of the heavy and constant workload expected by clients or employers or the burdens of consulting work.

Special Concerns and Dilemmas for Practicing Anthropologists

Clearly, the realities of nonacademic practice place very different requirements and pressures upon practitioners. Yet until recently, the significant codes of ethics in the discipline were designed by those with a tenured base of employment in universities and with attitudes shaped by academic agendas even if they have had applied experience. In a volume (Fluehr-Lobban 1991) on ethics in anthropology, Barbara Frankel and M. G. Trend (1991), in an aptly titled article "Principles, Pressures and Paychecks . . . ," explore some of these unresolved issues.

They point out four major differences between pressures placed on practitioners and those placed on academics. The first relates to security. Academic anthropologists usually experience enormous insecurity at the very beginning of their careers. They have to do fieldwork, write their dissertations, and then write articles and books to satisfy stringent peer reviews. After undergoing all of this anxiety

> . . . (if they have published, not perished) they win a lifetime of saying and doing pretty much as they please. It is a career line that trades a life of voluntary poverty for the joys of intellectual freedom and job security. (Frankel and Trend, 185)

For practitioners, job security depends upon pleasing a current employer. The saying "you're only as good as your last project" creates a pressure to produce quickly and to please bosses or clients. Considerable vulnerability is present, because, for instance, many government contractors have built clauses into their contracts whereby the projects can be suddenly terminated merely by giving notice.

The second pressure on practitioners is the realization that knowledge is seen as a means to an end, or a commodity, rather than an important end in itself. Therefore, practical research tends to be directed toward the client's short-term perspective of what he needs to know, not problems or issues that the anthropologists might see as important to investigate from a larger perspective.

Other more serious threats to intellectual integrity are dangers "that short-run goals and a need to maximize profit, minimize costs, or to produce a research product that will satisfy the client" will result in research that could be superficial or even erroneous (Frankel and Trend, 186). This can be even more unsettling when decisions have been made to go ahead with dubious programs and policies, and there are subtle pressures to conform findings to preconceived biases. It creates enormous pressure on practitioners when they are expected to be loyal to the employer and his standards rather than to the standards of truth and scientific integrity as defined by the academic discipline in which the practitioners trained.

A third area relates to sources of self-esteem. Academics receive their rewards and accolades because of products that indicate their skills and successes to other academics and students. They accomplish this through conference papers, lectures, books, and articles. They are rewarded through status, tenure, promotion, and merit increments. The opposite can occur—they might not receive any of these rewards and not have a good reputation. But as Frankel and Trend (187) remind us, after tenure, most of these pressures would be psychological rather than direct threats to security.

The nonacademic practitioners have such pressures in reverse. "Publish or perish" does not hold for them. In fact they may be sanctioned by employers if they publish materials owned by the client. Practitioners have to find substitutes. These may include getting bonuses for acquiring large contracts, hiring more staff, obtaining higher ranks in their organizations, gaining access to power and insider knowledge, and feeling "pride in exhibiting competence in solving a problem for whomever wants it solved and will pay someone to solve it" (Frankel and Trend, 187). There is a danger of taking on research problems for the personal challenge of using one's abilities to solve a problem even when the whole enterprise might be ethically suspect.

The final pressure noted by Frankel and Trend relates to the frequent possibility of losing control over one's work and what is done with it. A report can be written and recommendations made, but there may be no control over what the sponsoring agency or employer does with the work. It may be quite perilous to criticize those in power—what a tenured academic, at least in theory, has a right to do. The loss of control could also come about because the employee has to turn to another project and cannot continue to monitor the results of recommendations from the first project.

The authors leave us with many more questions than answers, but the gist of their article is that we have to rethink, and with a charitable attitude, the ethical requirements and pressures placed on nonacademic practitioners. Our formal ethical codes are sometimes inappropriate to the realities of practice. Yet the nagging question remains—should there be a segregation of academic from practicing anthropologists with each group going its own ethical way?

In the same book, Gilbert, Tashima, and Fishman (1991) further address the concerns of practitioners as opposed to academics. They report on a set of guidelines for ethical

practice produced by the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology (1988). The guidelines deal with several issues and place a very large emphasis on accountability.

One issue relates to a recognition that the work of practicing anthropologists can have immediate impact on those with whom anthropologists work or collaborate. There are always pressures for ethnographers in fieldwork situations to consult with people about how they will be represented in final reports. The practitioners have a double burden because they know that the findings could well have direct impacts on people's lives. They are then obligated to assess, as comprehensively as possible, the potential impacts of this research on the group or several groups to be affected. The issue of differential power cannot be ignored. Anthropologists are obliged to discuss this with the affected populations and must do so *before* a contract is signed or a job accepted.

Another issue pertains to the fact that practicing anthropologists are frequently in contact with communities, policy makers, agencies, businesses, and other formal bodies. This sort of visibility carries the responsibility of representing the discipline of anthropology to a larger world. Practitioners cannot escape this obligation and therefore have to be professionally competent in all their activities. The practicing anthropologist cannot escape to the relative shelter of the university. He or she has to meet and satisfy, or be confronted by, the various stakeholders and parties that may have very different expectations of performance or results. Such obligations require the practitioner to be forthright about skills, methods, recommendations, and ethical issues.

Summary: Collaboration and Collegiality in Ethical Consultation

Thinking, debating, and writing about professional ethics is an absorbing and vital exercise for anthropology, but it is also a perilous topic. It seems that for any principle, we can also find legitimate caveats, exceptions, or contexts in which situational ethics, based on general guidelines, are more appropriate. Furthermore, new ethical dilemmas are always arising. Senior professors or veterans of many years of practice will continue to face hard decisions throughout their careers. Another pitfall is that, by writing or talking about ethics, we can sound sanctimonious or preachy. Some may be quick to condemn the decisions of others, but sometimes that is based more on particular visions of social responsibilities, resulting in a more ideologically based disapproval than a question of pure professional ethics. For instance, some anthropologists may feel that it is inappropriate to work for business and that we should only work for the oppressed. But that decision is not a matter of professional ethics.

The work of practicing anthropologists can be very complicated. They have to answer to a number of bosses and publics beyond what abstract codes can anticipate. Yet the ethical practice of nonacademic practitioners is, in many respects, effective, because such practitioners have to survive on their reputations. If they were engaged in unethical or dubious practice, they could not do it for very long. Their bad reputations would catch up with them relatively quickly.

So out of these muddles and conflicts, how should we approach ethics for practice? To begin with, a student should become familiar with all of the ethical codes that have been formulated and read the core literature that relates to ethics, both academic and applied. A very

significant way of transmitting ethical perspectives has been through the swapping of "war stories." For almost a decade, the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology, through the efforts of Neil Tashima and Cathleen Crain, has been providing an ethical forum and workshop at the annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association. There, practitioners discuss ethical dilemmas of their practice and invite the audience members to make suggestions about how they might resolve them. What is interesting is that there are often several solutions for the same problem.

A number of practitioner cases were discussed at the 1996 meetings. One practitioner may have "jumped the gun" in revealing details of research findings before the actual owners of the information had given their permission. In another case, a lucrative bidding contract was offered, but there was inadequate time to prepare an effective proposal and provide for appropriate informed consent. Finally, a government department that legally owned the data had asked researchers to provide complete transcripts of focus groups that had already been conducted with a promise of confidentiality. At the meeting session, practitioners told the audience how they had resolved them. Practitioners may actually make use of the suggestions provided by the audience.

This positive approach leads to the most effective pursuit of good ethical practice. Joan Cassell (1980) in an article titled "Ethical Principles for Conducting Fieldwork," recommends that anthropologists regularly consult peers and colleagues to review research designs before commencing work. After the project is finished, the same process should be repeated, ideally with the same colleagues looking at the ethics associated with the analysis stages. That could be extended to consideration of how reports are to be written or the ways information is disseminated to the public, clients, and professional communities. The reality is that all of us, no matter what our stage of professional development and experience, can use this kind of help. There are just too many ethical difficulties that can unexpectedly arise for even veterans to feel overconfident about their ethical practice.

The best venue for such mutual counseling on ethics might be through a local practitioners' organization (LPO). LPOs can provide peer group support. Discussions about ethics might be among the best reasons to form an LPO. It is probably best for practitioners to provide support and advice for each other rather than to rely on the standards and advice of academic anthropologists, because there can be such a difference in working conditions. If there are not enough local colleagues to form such organizations, with the aid of networks such as ANTHAP (http://www.acs.oakland.edu/~dow/anthap.htm) and others on the Internet, people can get advice and debriefing without face-to-face encounters. Such consultations should be done in a context of collegiality and consist of helpful advice, not involve sanctimonious accusative roles.

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