From the outset, the culture of American research ethics, like American society as a whole, has been individualistic. Individualism narrows the broad concerns of traditional ethics to the immediate problems of isolated individuals, often cutting the individual off from others, as well as from the history of the communities—local, regional, national, international—to which he/she belongs. The language of individualism finds moral expression in utilitarian cost-benefit calculations based on aggregating individual preferences, and in the Kantian-based respect for the autonomous decision-maker that dominates contemporary bioethics, including research ethics. These individualistic ethical orientations are impoverished vehicles for ethical deliberation, because they focus on persons apart from the social traditions, institutions, roles, shared goals and environments, natural and social, without which human beings can neither survive nor flourish. By focusing the moral agent on costs or payoffs to individuals (or aggregates of individuals), apart from their communities and environments, individualistic ethics diverts attention from thinking morally about the traditions that inform agents and about the complex problems of groups seen in light of their stories, experiences, and aspirations.
In the absence of ethical discourse that embodies communal concerns, Principal Investigators (PIs) and Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) confront the daunting task of translating moral principles and rules designed to safeguard the interests of individuals to collectivities, ranging from highly structured Native American tribes and Pacific Island clans, to loosely affiliated urban neighborhoods of poor people united by little more than a few shared interests. Given the scant attention paid to the moral issues involved in conducting research with groups, it is not surprising that moral uncertainty surrounds such questions as: What moral responsibilities accompany group research beyond the familiar duties of investigators to individual research subjects? When does a group become worthy of separate ethical consideration? How do we measure harms and benefits when the interests of individuals clash with those of a group? How should informed consent guidelines be modified to take account of particular group characteristics, such as third-world communities in which the modern Western concept of the autonomous individual is comparatively undeveloped? What moral qualities constitute a genuine research partnership with a group? Who best represents the group? And how do we think about various kinds of representation, e.g., traditional, charismatic, legal-rational, democratic? How does the researcher deal with competing representatives? Does a community have a right to demand confidentiality? Under what circumstances? When groups become research partners, who owns the data and results? What does the researcher do when his or her commitment to the intrinsic value of truth conflicts with the values of a community, for instance, protection of its reputation? If community representatives have access to research data, how is the confidentiality of individual research subjects protected? Simple enumeration of these
questions underscores the poverty of our current ethical thinking about research with groups, and the importance of both deepening ethical analysis of these topics and widening the circle within which dialogue about them takes place.

My goal in this paper is to sharpen our thinking about some of the meta-issues that inform moral consideration of questions that arise when groups are involved in research. I am a professor of ethics, not a researcher, although I spent two years in the bioethics office in the Clinical Center at NIH, overseeing the ethical review of all the research protocols of the 13 intramural institutes that then made up the National Institutes of Health. Having struggled with NIH protocols involving Native Americans, African tribes, Pacific Islanders, and various domestic ethnic and racial groups, I know first-hand that no easy application of current research ethics works with groups. I also know, from my own IRB experience at NIH and elsewhere, how confused even experienced IRB members become when suddenly faced with evaluating and voting on a research protocol involving a group, especially one that challenges individualistic assumptions about research ethics. For example, I recall one protocol that involved a double-armed, doubled-blinded study of sick babies in a third-world tribal group, which raised questions for IRB members about whether we should accept the tribal council’s consent on behalf of its members, or insist on introducing into this culture the individualized type of informed consent required by current Western moral values. In the absence of any reliable information about the tribe and the potential implications of this proposed change for its traditional beliefs and practices, and pressed to make a quick decision, the IRB decided to require the PI to follow NIH guidelines and obtain informed consent from individual parents on behalf of their infants. No one at the IRB meeting on
this protocol proposed a moral partnership with the tribe that might set the stage for involving the tribal council in a dialogue about how the study might best be conducted in light of both the tribe’s traditional beliefs and practices and NIH standards. The PI was instructed to follow the letter of NIH informed consent requirements, without community input on such problems as communicating the information that a baby might be given a “placebo” in a culture in which all medicine is seen as endowed with magical properties. No IRB members thought of asking the PI about his strategy for dealing with these and other communication problems, or providing feedback of the results of the study to the tribe at the conclusion of the investigation.

The articles and abstracts in the report titled, “Collaborative Initiative for Research Ethics in Environmental Health” (dated February 1, 2002), raise a number of the major ethical issues with researching with groups, but these papers also contain sharply different basic orientations to the core ethical question: how should we think ethically about community research? I shall structure my analysis in this paper around the similarities and differences in these basic ethical approaches, in an effort to differentiate the most persuasive ethical arguments around which consensus about group research may be built, from those that are more controversial and deserving of further dialogue and negotiation.

**Toward A New Ethic for Research-with-Groups**

What are the areas of ethical agreement among those who advocate taking account of groups in human research? Interestingly, the most obvious ethical agreement embraces the three core principles of bioethics that have guided research with individuals since the Belmont Report (1979): respect for persons, non-
maleficence/beneficence, and justice. Contributors Dianne Quigley, Steve Wing, Linda Silka, Sheldon Krimsky, Alison Kole, and Doug Brugge draw frequently and liberally on these three standard bioethical principles. They argue strongly that researchers should practice respect for persons different from themselves, citing cases in which researchers have harmed Native Americans and African Americans by callously ignoring their distinctive histories, beliefs, and practices. They urge researchers to avoid actions that would be perceived as harmful within the cultural tradition of potential subjects, and they implore researchers to seek creative ways of extending the benefits of research beyond academia to the lives of the subjects of study. They also ask researchers to act with awareness of the past injustices suffered by the groups they study, to avoid unfairly further burdening with scientific interventions already burdened communities, and to consider offering help to disempowered groups in their efforts to correct past and present injustices.

None of these arguments really breaks new ethical ground, at the level of normative principles. Most involve the application to groups of ethical principles that have long informed individual research. Indeed, part of the message of the research-with-groups literature is that a subject’s rights and interests can be more vigorously protected by taking account of the group(s) to which he or she belongs. Consider, for example, a potential subject who is directed by a researcher to consider the costs and benefits to her, as an individual, of participating in a research project that offers the advantages of continuous expert medical monitoring of, and help with, her chronic health problems, at the minimal cost of monthly visits to a nearby clinic for a routine free examination. If the informed consent document were to include information that widened
her perspective beyond the costs and benefits to herself, to those of the community with which she identifies, the desirability of participating in the research project might sour—for example, if the research risked stigmatizing her entire ethnic group by public disclosure of exceptionally high levels of sexually transmitted diseases (see Quigley, p. 5). An informed consent process that siphons the individual from his or her community may fail to convey the genuine significance of the study to the subject, and thus fall short of truly informed consent. Or, to take a common occurrence in Native American and African-American communities, potential subjects might refuse to participate in a research protocol that would significantly benefit themselves and their community because they distrust the white males running it. These subjects would be more likely to view their participation positively, if the researchers were to show genuine empathy for the injustices suffered by the disadvantaged group. In both these cases, applying standard bioethical principles to the potential subject’s group improves the moral quality and prospects of the research.

Steve Wing’s work is instructive as an example of the application of standard bioethical principles to groups, and it also nicely illustrates the extension of those arguments in new directions. His article, “Social Responsibility and Research Ethics in Community-Driven Studies of Industrialized Hog Operations,” demonstrates the way advocates of new standards for research with groups tend to combine straightforward applications of received ethical norms with novel ethical arguments that often subtly extend those norms beyond their conventional boundaries. By “extension” of an ethical standard, I have in mind stretching traditional moral meanings.
Wing’s article straightforwardly applies the conventional principle of non-maleficence (“do no harm”) in indicting hog producers for injuring the health of people living near hog operations. Clearly, residents are harmed when odors are so noxious that they affect their mental health and air-born pollutants increase episodes of wheezing among asthmatics and others suffering respiratory disease (Wing, p.7). Wing relies on standard justice criteria in making a case for the unfairness of additionally burdening poor African-Americans with a disproportionate share of pollution. There is nothing new about the distributive justice principle Wing invokes on behalf of the worst off groups in society. It is common fare in Jewish and Christian social ethics, socialist writings, John Rawls’ *A Theory of Justice*, and the extensive literature on the “maximin” distributive principle Rawls has spawned. Wing’s article additionally invokes the usual meaning of liberty to defend the freed speech of both poor African Americans and university researchers. The reader does not need to think in novel ethical ways to appreciate that it is wrong to threaten individuals with dire consequences in an effort to prevent them from speaking or publishing the truth, as they see it. John Stuart Mill’s essay, “On Liberty,” would suffice as an ethical guide.

Steve Wing’s article not only applies received ethical standards, it also *extends* them in novel directions, as when Wing urges researchers to consider the “autonomy” of “entire communities.” (Wing, p.6) The concept of “autonomy” in bioethics is not usually applied to groups and it is not easy to determine exactly what Wing means by attempting to apply a concept usually confined to the mental capacities of competent adults. Presumably, he is using “autonomy” in its original meaning of “self-rule” (*auto* means “self,” *nomos* “rule” or “law” in Greek). In context, his usage urges respect for the
outcome of a group’s self-legislating processes. However, the “group” of African-American inhabitants of the geographical area around the hog operations in his study hardly seems sufficiently integrated and organized to exercise “self-rule,” in any ordinary sense.

A more promising extension of current discourse is implied in Wing’s implicit appeal to a “right” to reasonably clear air. Although Wing does not explicitly identify a basic “right” to a healthy environment, his depiction of “noxious odors, so severe that residents…sometimes leave their homes,” implies that neighbors in the vicinity of polluters have a “right” to the enjoyment of a reasonably clean environment—at least one that does not make them sick or seriously impair their quality of life. What does one have when one has a right? Usually, one has a claim against someone else to constrain his or her behavior. If I have a “right,” others have a correlative “duty” to respect whatever my right protects—my privacy, for instance. Just as one has the right to expect others to refrain from interfering with one’s freedom of thought, movement, or expression, a “right” to clean air seems to imply, perhaps as part of our right to the pursuit of happiness, that one has a claim against others, in this case hog-farm operators, not to have the air one breathes or the water one drinks contaminated by noxious chemical substances. The claim is akin to a property right. If I own property, others cannot use it without my permission. If they do, and damage my grounds, I have a right to compensation. That “odorant chemicals” violate a person’s freedom as much as a trespasser is implied by statements like: “Odorant chemicals can penetrate clothing, curtains and upholstery, thereby affecting people long after plumes of
emissions pass, and subjecting them to possible ostracism at school or in public.” The rhetoric of Wing’s article leads the reader to conclude that residents not only are harmed, but that they have a very strong claim against polluters, a claim that is akin to the rights of a property owner.

In selecting Wing’s article out for special attention, I do not wish to imply that his argument is unique among advocates of researcher’s taking groups into account. Most of the contributions to the literature on this issue apply standard principles of research ethics and extend standard meanings. To take another example, many of Dianne Quigley arguments are based on current standards of research applied to groups or communities. Quigley commends Beauvais’ recommendations for expanding informed consent for individuals to Native American communities, using the standard requirements to provide full information about the nature and intent of the research, risks and benefits, the right to terminate participation and so forth (Quigley, p. 18). But Quigley extends the standard ethical requirements by arguing on behalf of “community rights.” The idea is that communities possess a unity sufficiently akin to individual persons to enable them to make certain rights claims, and that researchers are obliged morally to respect the structural and cultural integrity of the groups with which they deal. Researchers would be guilty of breaching this duty if they were seriously to disrupt the existing group solidarity or to intrude into communal life without obtaining the community’s informed consent. Here, the intrusion is into the life of the community, rather than into the lives of individuals that Wing stresses. Nonetheless, Wing agrees with Quigley that community rights require researchers to be concerned not “only with protection of individual research participants…. [but] the communities where the
research…[is] conducted" (Wing, p.24). A question for both authors that needs further attention is what are the criteria for a “group” to be a possessor of rights.

Differentiating the method of application from extension helps in reading Sheldon Krimsky’s “Some Ethical Considerations for Health Research in Sensitive Communities.” Krimsky's article stands out among the contributions under review for advocating only the application of existing principles of research ethics, and resisting any extension of standard meanings, such as Quigley, Wings, Gold, Silka, and others propose. Krimsky mainly cites conventional moral and legal guidelines. His aim is not to change these meanings so much as to apply what he thinks they mean to “groupings of people,” where “people” really translates “individuals,” not “communities.” One result of Krimsky’s application of research ethics is that respect for non-Western communities comes up against strong constraints in his work. Individualized consent, in its current meaning, remains a requirement of all research, no matter how different the culture; group consent is only recognized as long as it is granted alongside individual consent by “representative” structures, like tribal councils, that are selected “democratically.” (Krimsky, p.35) Where democratic “representative structures” do not exist, community informed consent can only be “ethically justified when such structures are created.” (Krimsky, p.5) Krimsky does not appear to be prepared to extend the concept of informed consent in intercultural research, as others would, to a traditional or charismatic leader or non-democratically selected council. Convinced of the universalizability of individualistic moral principles and rules, Krimsky appears to have few qualms about imposing Western cultural beliefs in the context of intercultural
research. He even questions the “partnership model,” because he does not see how standard principles of mutuality or reciprocity can be extended to cover a group. Indeed, the partnership model is morally suspect in Krimsky’s view, because the community’s input might compromise “pursuit of truth.” Truthfulness is, for Krimsky, as for Kant, “a categorical imperative” that trumps most other moral standards for the researcher, including, presumably, the kind of respect for others the concept of partnership embodies. The applied model here makes ethics a static enterprise that offers little to those who would explore new approaches to research with groups.

Much of the innovativeness displayed by advocates of a new ethical approach to research with groups lies with extending standard meanings in new directions. Non-maleficence, for example, is broadened to require researchers to avoid harm not just to individuals, but to community needs, interests, and values. Freedom is re-defined to include the right of an intact community not to be intruded upon by outsiders in pursuit of interests at variance with those of the community. As Quigley points out, Aboriginal and Native American communities object to top-down research that is imposed on the community without regard to its local effects. (Quigley, pp. 4, 8) Informed consent is expanded to embrace group deliberation, so a decision reached by group consensus may be as valid as one reached by an individual or majority vote. Justice, which bioethics confines mainly to interpersonal relations isolated from their larger social contexts, is extended to groups. Distributive justice criteria become much more important in the group context than in mainstream bioethics. Dianne Quigley and Linda Silka even expand justice to cover empowerment. Quigley, citing Herbert et al, opines that “equity in research refers to building an empowered community with equity of
resources, capacity to solve problems, ability to identify problems and solutions, increased participation in community activities and a stronger sense of efficacy.”

That most advocates of a new ethic for group research rely partly on currently accepted bioethical standards means that individual rights are also kept in play in their applications and extensions of standard meanings. This commitment to basic human rights functions as a bulwark against the dangers emanating from elevating the moral status of groups, namely, that of correlative lowering respect for the individual. For much of Western history, since Plato extolled undivided loyalty to the Polis, conservative social theorists have advanced the allegedly greater interests of State and Church against individual members, on the normative/ontological ground that societies are organic-spiritual realities superior to the individuals who constitute them. This belief was carried to its logical conclusion by 19th century German social theorists, like Otto Von Gierke (1841-1921), who treated the group as an organic entity with a personality of its own. These theorists viewed as rightly persuading or coercing members to implement the general will. By advocating respect for each individual person while also acknowledging respect for groups, contemporary proponents of a group ethic for researchers implicitly ally themselves with Emile Durkheim’s similar efforts to join a strengthened human rights tradition with deep appreciation of communal life, including especially moral solidarity. (See Wallwork, 1973) No acceptable formula has yet been proposed, however, for resolving moral dilemmas caused by the inevitable conflicts that arise when the rights of an individual clash with those of a group.

Postmodern Sensibilities
Advocates of a new ethic for research with groups generally ascribe to a cluster of post-modern attitudes that account for much of the radicality of their perspective, beyond the mere extension of principles. Indeed, from this post-modernist orientation, the “principlism” of recent bioethics is suspect. “Principlism” represents the philosophical attempt to provide health care professionals with a systematic, coherent, and comprehensive set of justified principles that should be applied to all clinical and research cases. (For a critique of principlism, see Paul Root Wolpe, in DeVries and Subedi, ch.3.) Anne Gold’s, “Research Ethics from the Cultural Anthropologist’s Point of View,” expresses a post-modern, anti-principlism preference for local knowledge in refusing “for reasons of style and conviction…to generalize from the particularities of unique situations.” (Gold, p.1) Gold cites Pels on the desirability of an alternative “emergent ethics,” which would “see ethics emerging from situations and interactions, rather than forcibly laid on top of them.” (Gold, p.13) Although Gold’s is the most consistently self-conscious post-modern article in “Collaborative Initiative for Research Ethics in Environmental Health,” her postmodern style of interrogation of standard ethics is also exhibited in varying degrees by most of the contributors to the dialogue about group research. Most of these authors join post-modern sensibilities with some lingering commitment to the principlism of modern ethics.

Significantly, virtually all of the contributors ally themselves with postmodernism by their awareness of the socially constructed nature of knowledge, including knowledge “discovered” by allegedly “objective,” “neutral” scientific research. Taking their cues from the social sciences, more than from the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment philosophical tradition that informs bioethics, most contributors to the
emerging ethics literature on group research are acutely aware of the social
underpinnings of research agendas and the moral arguments of investigators. This
awareness encourages a hermeneutics of suspicion with respect to the covert power,
hidden ambitions, and cultural biases that infuse supposedly “impartial” scientific
research. Quigley, citing Davis and Reid (1999) on the self-deception of scientists,
observes that scientific ideals like benefiting humanity and expanding scientific
knowledge have unconsciously obscured awareness of the exploitation and
dehumanization of research subjects in Native American communities. From this
deconstructive perspective, good intentions and altruistic research goals cannot be
relied upon to counter the all-too-human propensity for self-serving self-deception.
What is needed to correct the inevitability of researcher bias is for local populations to
be encouraged to interrogate research protocols and to propose alternatives that would
be more likely to benefit the community, as well as the researcher and his or her
community.

A second post-modern aspect of the literature on group research has to do with
the concept of the individual research subject as moral agent. In standard bioethics, the
individual is presumed to be an impartial, asocial, autonomous, rational decision-maker
who comes to a moral choice with fully articulated preferences. Left out in this account
are the social relations that profoundly shape the individual, as well as the context of the
problems he or she faces. Consider a potential research subject in a poor immigrant
community, say, a Cambodian living in Lowell, Massachusetts, as described by Linda
Silka in “Rituals and Research Ethics.” The standard bioethics model governing
research sees the potential subject as a free agent capable of deciding rationally for or
against participation on the basis of probable costs, benefits and risk tolerance. What this account misses, which those interested in groups take up, is that the potential research subject is also a part of the immigrant Cambodian culture, a member of a family with complex roles and ties, a participant in multiple discourses, and the object of intense pressures stemming from limited economic opportunities, educational level, geographical location, associational ties, American and Cambodian peers, etc.. In systematically overlooking social ties, mainstream bioethics appears limited by its own culture-bound assumptions about the radically isolated individual’s “free choice.” The individualistic ideology permeating the discipline makes it difficult to determine how many research subjects are likely to come to the best decision. For instance, really good decisions are sometimes reached by consensus within a traditional family, after mulling over the decision’s meaning and impact on everyone affected within the mutually supportive extended kinship group. Decisions of this kind are ruled out by the Western presumption that families are coercive, rather than facilitative of the individual’s best decision-making. To foster genuinely autonomous choice, in the sense of a reasonably voluntary decision reached in accordance with the best justifying reasons, the individualistic sense of autonomy as independence of any constraining influences, needs to give way to a more realistic sense of the lives of those from traditional cultures.
A third dimension of post-modernism in the group research ethics literature is the emphasis on pluralism, multiculturalsim, and respect for difference, rather than the universalism of respect for rational autonomy. The distinction between respect for the autonomous individual of liberalism, and respect for difference in post-modernism, is subtle but important. In the liberal discursive tradition, the other person is respected insofar as he or she possesses a rational will. The liberal tolerates pluralism and difference, but with the expectation that enlightenment eventually will lead all rational persons to agree. This liberal ideal of respect for an individual's essence, conceived as rational autonomy in the Kantian tradition currently best represented by Jurgen Habermas, cannot be easily reconciled with genuine multiculturalism. The latter offers no prospect of eventual agreement. Where the liberal erases particularity and culturally constituted identity, postmodernists stress respect for alterity or difference. The Other in postmodernism is not another version of myself, but radically different. As Emmanuel Levinas urges, the Other transcends all my efforts to comprehend him or her. Imposition of my conceptualizations on an Other is a form of violence. The primal ethical moment for Levinas occurs when we stand back in genuine appreciation and awe of the Other's transcendence of even our best efforts to empathize. Identity in this post-modern ethic adheres in difference rather than similarity. (See Levinas, 1969, 1998)

The emphasis on partnerships between researchers and communities is an offshoot of this emphasis on difference, in that it is through negotiation that cooperation among really different people can occur. This makes partnership
much more essential in overcoming conflict than in standard bioethics, where conflict is thought to be resolvable by appealing to shared interests and values. To be sure, the ideal of a partnership between researcher and subject is a familiar theme in contemporary bioethics, too. Robert Veatch devotes an entire book to it. (Veatch, 1987) But in standard bioethics, the research subject of partnership is depicted in a passive, receptive mode. The initiation of the protocol in standard research ethics lies squarely with the researcher and his/her institutional backers. Once undertaken, administration and termination of the research also remains in the hands of researchers. The subject is active primarily by consenting and showing up for an agenda planned by someone else.

The research with groups literature envisions a much more active relationship between the parties, partly because it assumes genuine difference, and even distrust, between them. If both parties realize they need each other, they can agree, but only by each accommodating his/her understandings and activities with those of others. The result is a radically different moral basis for the relationship between researcher and subject. The subject is no longer a passive object of another’s interest and agenda, but a person, with the full moral overtones of the word. As a person, or better, a group of persons, subjects emerge as full partners of research, who rightly have a voice in establishing the goals of research, how it is carried out, and the circumstances under which it is terminated. As Linda Silka articulates the partnership goal, “the crucial issue is not how results can be shared, but how nonscientists can be involved from the very outset in research so that the ultimate findings are useful to people’s lives
and shared ownership of research becomes a given” (p.1) She also notes that partnership is less about power and the need to equalize power than about “establishing trust,” sharing responsibilities, drawing knowledge and expertise from the community and the university, and initiating as well as sustaining creative social initiatives aimed at solving community-wide problems (pp. 2, 10).

**Conclusion**

The new approach to research with human groups that emerges from these recent contributions appears to inaugurate a significant new phase in post-Nuremberg research ethics. The Nuremberg code was an important historical milestone in setting forth fundamental criteria for protecting research subjects. But it proved woefully inadequate in practice, largely because the Code left decisions about the ethical acceptability of research solely in the hands of the individual researcher. The researcher was to be guided by his/her own conscience. During the decades following the Nuremberg trials, the outrageously unethical conduct of researchers at Willowbrook State School, at Jewish Chronic Disease Hospital, in Tuskegee, and on Native American reservations bombed with nuclear weapons drew dramatic attention to the merits of external ethical oversight. Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) were mandated to provide a group solution to problems arising from unregulated, laissez-faire individualism in research. IRB oversight has been enormously successful in protecting individual research subjects, but IRBs have been less successful in fostering the ethical treatment of groups affected by research. Ironically, this failing persists, despite
the fact that the Nuremberg Code and IRBs were both byproducts of the mistreatment of vulnerable groups.

Advocates of community-based research ethics attempt to correct this deficiency by extending existing bioethical guidelines, without challenging the normative standards explicated in documents like the Nuremberg Code and the Belmont Report. However, there are noteworthy differences among contributors about the extension of the standard guideline to groups, as well as the moral standard or standards that should serve as the pole-star for ethical analysis. Sticking closely to existing rules and regulations, Sheldon Krimsky insists on the primacy of truth-seeking among scientists, with individual informed consent serving as a side-constraint. For Krimsky, the community-scientist partnerships in research proposed by Quigley, Kole, and Brugge are dubious innovations that may threaten “the quality of the research,” judged in terms of pursuing the truth and publishing it.

Although Dianne Quigley, Steve Wing, Alison Kober and Doug Brugge do not dispute Krimsky’s emphasis on existing standards, they all also favor a new set of guidelines specifically tailored for research with groups, which emphasizes community-scientist partnerships. However, each of these contributors emphasizes a different moral standard or set of standards. For Dianne Quigley, the primary normative guidepost appears to be “non-maleficence,” or “do no harm.” Her article, “Research Ethics Issues with Native American Communities,” highlights what she variously describes as “the abuses” and “harms” caused Native American communities by academic and government scientists pursuing
“top-down” research projects. Steve Wing’s “Social Responsibility and Research Ethics in Community-Driven Studies of Industrialized Hog Operations” is guided, not so much by the principle of non-maleficence, though he is certainly troubled by the harm inflicted on neighbors of hog operations, but by “distributive justice.” He focuses ethical attention on the inequities suffered by the worst off groups in society, specifically poor African-American farmers in the rural South, and calls for redressing the inequalities they suffer in the distribution of the bad effects of pollution. Alison Kole and Doug Brugge, in “Case Study: Healthy Public Housing Initiative,” focus primarily on extending the three principles of “respect,” “beneficence” and “justice” in the Belmont Report (1979) from individuals to groups. They draw special attention to the kind of respect for others that makes partnership possible, despite intractable differences (p.6).

In contrast with Quigley, Kobe, and Brugge who favor a new set of guidelines for research with groups, Anne Gold and Linda Silka are suspicious of all ethics codes. In their place, Gold urges straightforward humane treatment of Others. Linda Silka writes: “the creation of rules communicates the exact opposite of trust. Setting up rules suggests that so little trust exists that all possible contingencies must be spelled out in advance” (p.2). Silka’s emphasis on researchers being open to being changed by encounters with people different from themselves is closely allied with Gold’s, in its stress on virtues more than principles and rules. For both Gold and Silka, the primary moral focus is on respect for the alterity of the Other. Gold cites Copan’s comments as encapsulating her view: “Ethics for the anthropologist is this constant doubt about
the other and about oneself and, consequently, about one’s professional practice, called scientific. An ethic of doubt is an ethics of dialogue and democracy, of cultural reversal” (Copans 1999:118, cited Gold, p.15).

The diverse moral orientations of these contributors to research ethics with groups may be partly an artifact of the particular themes pursued in their articles, but one suspects a deeper commitment on the part of each author to a particular value-constellation. An ethic for research with groups needs to be aware of these moral differences, even as it seeks to make room for as comprehensive a set of normative standards and perspectives as possible. Here, the partnership ideal usefully suggests that our research ethic itself needs to be jointly negotiated and constructed among mutually respectful participants, willing to be changed through dialogue about how to cooperate in joint undertakings.
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