

Toward Epistemological Ethics: Centering Communities and Social Justice in Qualitative Research

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Abstract: As qualitative researchers based in the United States, we theorize and ground ethical issues within our work as inherent to the continuum of methods, epistemologies, and research relationships. Through collective and transgressive reflexivity, we write as members of the Society for Qualitative Research in Psychology (SQIP) Ethics Task Force, re-imagining the American Psychological Association's (APA) Ethics Code as a resource that is inclusive of qualitative inquiry and responsive to the "evidence based" quandaries encountered in our praxis. In this article, we name the gaps in the Code that are incommensurate with social justice oriented qualitative research and shake the epistemological ground of the Code from bottom-up. We interweave our vision for a new ethics Code that foregrounds the intersubjective and reflexive nature of knowledge production, preserves dignity, attends to power relations within and outside of the research endeavor, critiques relational and epistemic distance, and explicates the internal connection between epistemology, validity, and ethics. In our writing we note disruption of normative ways of knowing and being within the academy and within qualitative research.

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1. Background: The Origins of the Ethics Code

"Contrary to autobiographical accounts of how professions take shape over time (e.g., Golann 1970), social historians suggest that ethics Codes are invented at moments of professional vulnerability, not at moments of strength" (STARK, 2010, p.339).

"I approach this work with the belief that our existing ethical Code is a necessary, though not sufficient, resource for ethical practice in qualitative research" (HAVERKAMP, 2005, p.146).

"Ethical principles alone tend to be rounded generalities without evident personal implication; the presentation of the principles in conjunction with incidents should make the Code eminently useful" (APA, 1953, p.viii).

Fifty-six years ago, members of the Council of Representatives of the American Psychological Association (APA), the largest group of psychologists based in the United States, adopted "The Ethical Standards of Psychologists" as its official policy (APA, 1953). Henceforth we refer to this document, and its amendments, as the "Ethics Code" or the "Code." The Code was developed at a time of crisis in the United States. It was a time of overt state-sanctioned racism, state-sanctioned murder of non-white peoples, social conservatism, civil and insurgent resistance to war, militarism, communism/McCarthyism, Jim Crow laws¹, and homophobia among other socio-political issues. Psychology, as a discipline, also had its own crisis of meaning. John B. WATSON and the behaviorists were the dominant school of psychological thought. However, in the aftermath of Japanese internment camps, World War II, the Holocaust, the Nuremberg Trials, the Korean War, and several Supreme Court cases that challenged the constitutionality of segregation, our discipline experienced a shift away from rat psychology toward the scientific study of social relations. A group of mostly Jewish, Black, and European psychologists were pursuing socially responsive inquiry on: authoritarianism, group dynamics, social influence, prejudice, discrimination, racism, and action research. We are referring here to Theodor W. ADORNO, Floyd H. ALLPORT, Gordon W. ALLPORT, Isidor CHEIN, Kenneth B. CLARK, Stuart COOK, David LEVINSON, Kurt LEWIN, Mamie PHIPPS-CLARK, Nevitt SANFORD, Henri TAJFEI, John C. TURNER and many others. In this ethical/moral zeitgeist further edits, to the burgeoning Code, were made by voting APA members in 1954, and the document was finalized in 1955. Thousands of psychologists provided critical commentary on the 170-page document (APA, 1953; FISHER, 2016). [1]

The groundwork for the Code was started in 1947 by the Committee on Ethical Standards for Psychology (CESP), which was chaired by Edward TOLMAN

1 Briefly, McCarthyism refers to a political campaign which searched for evidence of treason, led by Senator Joseph McARTHUR between 1950-1954, directed at alleged communists in the: US government, sciences, performing arts, and other institutions. The term McCarthyism is oft used to characterize baseless attempts to slander and undermine the careers of persons critical of the US settler colonial nation state. Jim Crow laws broadly refer to state and local laws that enforced racial segregation in the Southern United States between 1870s and 1965.

(FISHER, 2016). This committee sent letters asking the then 7,500 members of the APA, to share ethical quandaries and decisions, they experienced "firsthand" using critical incident reports" (APA, 1953, p.vi). A second CESP in 1948, chaired by Nicholas HOBBS, was charged with analyzing over 1,000 submissions for commonalities and recurring themes (FISHER, 2016). The committee struggled with developing a method to make sense of the incidents; ultimately, they decided to group the incidents into six categories. The six categories were ethical standards in public responsibility, client relationships, teaching, research, writing and publication, and professional relationships (APA, 1953). The Code was touted as the "the first attempt to use empirical methods to define ethical standards" (p.vi.). The preliminary thematic analyses were presented to subcommittees of psychologists and presented back to CESP for additional refinement. Results were also presented at subsequent convenings of the APA, and published in the association's main journal, *American Psychologist*. In short, feedback and suggestions for revision were solicited from multiple stakeholders. We find it ironic that qualitative methods and qualitative data analytic strategies were used to articulate our Ethics Code. The Code, however, is still silent even after 11 revisions² on many of the issues inextricably linked to the epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies of qualitative research psychologists. We yearn for an Ethics Code that is inclusive of qualitative inquiry and rigorously responsive to the 'evidence based' quandaries encountered in our praxis. [2]

The Code's name was changed to "The Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct" in 1992 (POPE & VETTER, 1992). It is still the primary ethical touchstone for psychologists. The 2017 version maintains the same structure of its predecessors. It contains a preamble, an introduction, five aspirational general ethical principles and ten specific ethical standards. The five-aspirational general ethical principles are beneficence and nonmaleficence, fidelity and responsibility, integrity, justice, and respect for people's rights and dignity. The ten ethical standards are meant to guide resolving ethical issues, competence, human relations, privacy and confidentiality, advertising and other public statements, record keeping and fees, education and training, research and publication, assessment, and therapy. [3]

In this article, we reclaim critical incident reporting as reflexive means of naming the gaps in the Code that are incommensurate with social justice oriented qualitative research. We unsettle the epistemological ground of the Code from bottom-up. We each share critical incidents. These are not mutually exclusive and some extend the ethical standards while others are missing from the current Code altogether: the intersubjective and reflexive nature of knowledge production (Alexis), robust (re)considerations of respect for people's and dignity (Monique), attending to power relations within and outside of the research endeavor while critiquing relational and epistemic distance (Anne), and explicating the internal connection between epistemology, validity, and ethics (Peiwei). Whereas these research projects are distinct, they share layered understandings of

2 The "Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct" was revised in: 1959, 1963, 1968, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1990, 1992, 2002, 2010, and 2016. Amendments vary in length from one-page to fourteen pages.

intersubjectivity, commitments to reflexivity as an approach to sustaining ethical praxis in lieu of established guidelines, and insist on hermeneutics of love (LAURA, 2013). Insisting on hermeneutics of love is a refusal. Refusals enact/denote ontological, epistemic, and ethical detachments with white hegemonic positivist transactional ways of being in research (TUCK & YANG, 2014). Hermeneutics of love refuse distance between researchers and participants, hierarchies of expertise, foreground the relational aspects of qualitative inquiry, and work diligently toward relationships that transcend research. Hermeneutics of love refuse stoicism and unemotionality in our interactions and in the writing up of our work that denies our mutual humanity and mutual vulnerability (GUISHARD, 2009). Hermeneutics of love also refuse epistemological violence, illuminate/document structural injustice, reject deficit theorizing, and insist on preserving the dignity of our co-theorists, participants, and co-researchers, even if we do not understand or disagree with their interpretations of the data we collected together. We conclude with suggestions for reimagining an ethics Code that is reflective and inclusive of the ethical concerns of social justice oriented qualitative inquiry. Our conclusion is a fusion of hope and cynicism about the theories of change undergirding the Code, whether it will ever reflect "de/colonizing" the onto-epistemologies of qualitative research, and about the urgency of cultivating maroon ethics Codes, restorative practices, and curricula (BHATTACHARYA, 2009). [4]

2. Continuing the Genealogy of Ethics Committees

We are members of the Society for Qualitative Research in Psychology (SQIP) Ethics Task Force, dwelling within, to borrow Laura STARK's words in the quote above, yet another moment of "professional vulnerability" (2010, p.339). Briefly, SQIP has a nascent position within the American Psychological Association (BRADBURY, 2014). It was added as a subdivision of Division 5, Quantitative and Qualitative Measures³ in 2014, as a compromise after a proposal for the creation of a division of qualitative inquiry was rejected (JOSSELYN, n.d.). Being situated within Division 5 demonstrates how SQIP is methodologically and epistemologically "other" in APA—even as researchers across divisions use qualitative methodologies. It is from messy positionalities as both outsiders-within and insiders-without (COLLINS, 2002) that we seek to develop an ethics Code that takes into consideration how this "otherness" frames the challenges that we encounter in our research praxis. [5]

Almost three years ago, in July of 2015, a group of attorneys, led by David HOFFMAN, published a 542-page report entitled "Independent Review Relating to APA Ethics Guidelines, National Security Interrogations, and Torture" that shook the ethical foundation of American psychology (HOFFMAN et al., 2015). This report was the result of 6 months of investigations and is more often called *The Hoffman Report*. It summarized the results of an independent investigation into allegations that members of APA leadership colluded, with the U.S. Department of Defense during President George W. BUSH's administration, in

3 APA Division 5: Quantitative and Qualitative Measures was formerly called the Division of Evaluation, Measurement and Statistics.

promulgating revisions to the Code (in 2002 and 2005) that permitted psychologists' involvement in interrogation and torture related to threats to national security. After the so-called Hoffman Report was disseminated, intense debate about the role of the psychologists, harm/nonmaleficence, the nature of the revisions processes, and theories of change behind the Code ensued. Many members of the 56 divisions that comprise the APA issued divisional statements denouncing APA's complicity in torture. For several months the APA reserved a space for dues paying members of the association to comment on the report and its findings. Some of the commentary expressed outrage, however, some members did not perceive any ethical violations of human rights or conflicts of interest that warranted action. [6]

In the context of the Hoffman Report and a larger national movement to revise federal research ethics regulations, in May of 2015, the SQIP leadership formed the Ethics Committee. Our charge was to address issues of social justice, research relationships, accountability, and power, post-HOFFMAN. We analyzed the APA Code of ethics, made its assumptions explicit, and noted the lack of resonance between the Code and the ethical deliberations of qualitative researchers from participatory action research, critical, feminist, indigenous, liberation and other methodologies. We also reached across other divisions and associations within the raced, classed, and gendered structure of the organization itself. We attempted to have Monique seated on the new commissioned APA Ethics Code Task Force, in the spring of 2017, and were unsuccessful. This was an expected loss for us, as APA members who wondered how the organization might undertake structural change—absent perspectives that offer epistemic diversity, scholarly critique, and radical possibility. In March of 2017, we prepared a response to APA's call for commentary on the Code, in preparation for drafting a new Code which the call for papers indicated should be visionary and transformational (GALLETTA, GUSHARD, HALKOVIC & LI, 2017). Considerable energy is focused into the re-visioning of the Code as one that is responsive to our needs as researchers, while also critical of a lack of recognition of what it means to be a psychologist who works with and feels a commitment to specific communities, intentionally addresses social justice issues through research, or develops relationships with participants that do not adhere to the assumed dichotomy between researcher/researched (BROWN, CARDUCCI & KUBY, 2014). [7]

We locate ourselves in the genealogy of the early committees that were instrumental in establishing and subsequently amending the Code. We gravitated toward critical incident reporting organically in our analyses of what was said, implied, and unsaid within the document. However, we disbelieve the fantasy that a one-size-fits-all Code can serve as an ethical compass for all American psychologists. Our disbelief is also rooted in the hypocrisy of theorizing/enacting ethicality on land that is the unseated territories of indigenous people, built by chattel slaves and their descendants without recognition of this history and present. We all read the Code separately, with specific incidents from our work in mind. We read it with hermeneutics of suspicion and of love (JOSSELYN, 2004; LAURA, 2013). In each of our incidents, we imagine a qualitative research

psychologist looking to the Code for direction. This is the theory of the Code's implementation,

"Although the Preamble and General Principles are not enforceable rules they should be considered by psychologists in arriving at an ethical course of action. The Ethical Standards set forth enforceable rules for conduct for psychologists. Most of the Ethical Standards are written broadly, in order to apply to psychologists in varied roles, although the application of an Ethical Standard may vary depending on the context" (APA, 2017, p.2). [8]

KITCHENER and KITCHENER's (2009) and GUISHARD's (2015) research on the ethical decision making of social scientists suggests that researchers are more likely to consult their own moral compasses, request feedback from advisors and colleagues before consulting professional Codes of ethics. In the next section, each of us describes a critical incident wherein we confronted a qualitative ethical dilemma, consulted the current ethics Code for guidance, and found it lacking. [9]

3. The Intersubjective and Reflexive Nature of Knowledge Production (Alexis)

When I conducted research on the ways women resist their vulnerability to sexual and other violent assault, I recruited women I met while participating in 106 hours of self-defense and 23 hours of gun training classes (HALKOVIC, 2017). I shared a common experience with these women by becoming vulnerable through the practice of learning to fight for myself—both verbally and physically. We underwent *stress inoculation training*, the trainers intentionally triggering our fight/flight response, so we could learn to fight *as if* we were actually being assaulted or raped. During the classes, many women shared intensely personal emotional experiences. As I was conducting ethnographic research, I introduced myself and my research at the beginning of each class (and to the instructors and the person "in charge" at each organization I took classes with; in advance of my participation) and I did not record the stories women told in class. I felt like it was important that women be able to have the full experience of taking the classes, without the thought that I was recording or otherwise using their stories. In a space that had been created to empower women to stand up for themselves, it felt like an ethical issue for me to mine the space for data. As such, I conducted an autoethnography. Noting that autoethnography allows us to examine cultural phenomenon through personal experience (ELLIS, ADAMS & BOCHNER, 2010), I documented and analyzed my own reactions to the emotional and embodied aspects of the classes, identifying that my difficulty engaging in verbal self-defense techniques was not unique, but likely similar to other women's, which I corroborated after analyzing the interviews I conducted with other women who took the classes (HALKOVIC, 2018). [10]

And yet, afterwards, I felt that the shared experience of having participated in the classes together made it more likely that women would tell me their most traumatic stories—often ones that were shared with few, if any, others. This was

evidenced when multiple women initiated the interview by telling me about experiences of incest, rape, domestic violence, or childhood sexual assault. And while this happened repeatedly, I was still thrown off guard when these stories came up at the very beginning of the interview. For me, this raised an ethical issue based on the (real or imagined) relationship I shared with the other participants. Had my participation in the self-defense classes with these women developed a rapport that made women open up in ways they might have wished they had not (here, I think of CORBIN and MORSE's [2003] work on the *ethics of reciprocity* and MORGAN's [2015] work in the context of conducting research on women's experiences of victimization)? If so, how could I honor their trust? [11]

Looking to the APA Code of Ethics, Principle B (fidelity and responsibility) refers to psychologists having "relationships of trust" with their participants and avoiding conflicts of interest (APA, 2017, p.3). And yet, these conflicts emerge as we develop relationships, often in the process of conducting research. For those of us who engage with participants (either individually or in communities), relationship is inevitable—particularly if we have an aim to conduct research that addresses issues our participants are facing. The ethical issue that arises here is one of expectation and commitment. We, as socially engaged researchers, make commitments—to ourselves and to our participants to do something (in this case, develop research that would advocate for resources that will facilitate women's ability to defend themselves) and thus establish expectations from those whose narratives inform our research. In our desire to conduct research that addresses issues faced by communities—a core value of liberation psychology (MARTÍN-BARÓ, 1994)—we develop our own conflicts of interest. Whereas the Ethics Code cautions us against this, it gives no guidance on the inevitability of research where social engagement is at the very core of the research process. This silence in the Code on questions of intersubjectivity is based on a dichotomous and hierarchical relationship between the researcher and the researched that is a culturally-based assumption. It is at the core of the objections to the APA Code that prompted the Society of Indian Psychologists to develop their own ethics Code (GARCÍA & TEHEE, 2014), which moves beyond complaint and inspires us to endeavor towards an *ethical imagination* (REDWOOD & TODRES, 2006). [12]

In my study, I did critical autoethnography, centered my own embodied experiences of the training classes, and identified, as ELLINGSON (2006) described, both as a researcher and a participant in my own study. I noted that verbally establishing boundaries was not something that I (and other women I interviewed) felt comfortable or authorized to do—and was not something that women, in general, (in the US) were socialized to do. I also experienced this blurring of roles as I transcribed and coded the interviews I conducted. Transcribing was emotionally distressing for me as I listened deeply, rewound, replayed, and relived the traumatic stories women revealed to me. I found myself to be drained by this work. I had nightmares and a heightened startle reflex—at one-point it led to me nearly dealing a powerful blow to my husband's head when he surprised me in the kitchen. Mentors I reached out to advised me that I had secondary trauma and that I needed to take a break from this work. Whereas I am grateful for the mentors who recognized what I was going through, I also think

about the absence of a reference in the Code to the ways in which we, as researchers, become entangled in the emotional life spaces of our participants. Identifying that therapists deal with this, developing a principle of self-care seems essential. [13]

This incident forced me to reflect of the intersubjective nature of the relationships between my participants and myself based on our common experience and our common desire to address the problem of gender-based violence. Our entanglement was based on a hermeneutic of love (LAURA, 2013). My own desire to know and to be able to authentically reflect their lives and to honor their knowledge as survivors of trauma and women who worked hard to transform themselves. The relationships formed, trust established, and exposure to traumatic stories are not unique to this incident, and yet guidance for managing complicated relationships that span power dynamics, need, and expectation are not mentioned in the APA ethics Code. My own process of writing reflexively about my experience (autoethnography) and consultation with trusted mentors provided me with guidance that helped me to maintain what Ruthellen JOSSELSO (2007) called an *ethical attitude*. Notably, cultivating an ethical attitude is an intersubjective, not an individual endeavor, as my consultation with others—including Monique, Anne, and Peiwei—has proved to be an essential part of my ethical praxis. The Code should, at minimum, identify that maintaining "fidelity and responsibility" (APA, 2017, p.3) is both a reflexive and intersubjective praxis, requiring ongoing monitoring and checking in with respected colleges who share your epistemological commitments. [14]

4. Preserving Dignity (Monique)

As a participatory ethicist and researcher, I hold many stories in my body that push me to think about dignity, in perhaps unconventional ways. I am the great-great-granddaughter of an enslaved Antiguan woman who grew up poor and working class. I have had to defend the dignity of my mother, Black, Latinx, and working poor peoples—all my life. Dignity haunts me, not in a supernatural sense, but in the way Avery GORDON (2008) talks about haunting, as a way of knowing and being that cannot escape the past, as I work toward actualizing fugitive futures. I cannot forget that research has been and is a site of intense trauma and (re)humiliation for many people (TUCK & GUISHARD, 2013). I cannot forget that research presumes: studying down hierarchies of power and an extractive transactional relationship. The incident that I will discuss comes from six years ago when I was hoping to add an ethnographic study of a Bronx-based research review board's community consultation processes to my doctoral dissertation data. Briefly, community research review boards (CRRBs) and community advisory boards (CABs) are comprised of persons from geographic communities, but also people with shared interests, causes, and self-identifications by: ethnicity, race, gender identity, sexuality, dis/ability, or disease. CRRBs and CABs meet with researchers to provide guidance and ethical evaluations of community-based and community engaged research projects. These review sessions are crafted at analyzing community-level risks and benefits to study participation, power between community and academic collaborators, authorship,

transparency, accountability, concerns about data ownership, and the return of findings to participants among other issues (GUISHARD, 2015). Some CRRBs and CABs complete extensive trainings in the federal regulations governing research with human participants in the United States and have the credentials of an institutional review board. These groups are known as community IRBs (C-IRBs) whereas other CRRBs and CABs are intentionally not credentialed. Seeking community consultation and at times community consent from CRRBs and CABs is completely voluntary but highly recommended (GUISHARD, 2015; QUINN, 2004; SHORE et al., 2014). CRRBs and CABs fill an important void in our analyses of ethicality in research because they are not reliant on individualized, western, and white-privileged conceptualizations of ethicality and include members of the populations under study in contemplations of research risks, benefits, and burdens. [15]

I met the members of the Bronx Community Research Review Board the month prior. I was interested in observing the board's review processes and in writing about evaluating ethical conduct in research outside of the procedures institutional review boards' evaluate (COUPAL, 2005)⁴. The board is an intergenerational, multi-racial, multi-ethnic group of Bronx residents (DEL CAMPO, CASADO, SPENCER & STRELNICK, 2013; GUISHARD, 2015). The members were from different neighborhoods, ranging from the poorest congressional district in the US to affluent parts of the borough. I did not know that the board members were actually participants in a federally funded feasibility study. Much was riding on the feasibility study findings, particularly an evaluation of their efforts. This data would show funders that Bronx residents—whom most write off as uneducated and whom tomes of scholarship blame for their own ill health—are more than capable of being involved in research, beyond their participation as research subjects. I remember wondering at the time whether they would view my work as yet another layer of surveillance. [16]

I looked to the Code to give me some direction about how to respectfully engage with the board in a manner that would not continue extractive traditions of helicopter, parachute, and mosquito research. Briefly, helicopter and parachute research refer to the practice of academic researchers inserting themselves into vulnerable communities to collect data, and abruptly leaving without returning findings to, or meaningfully impacting the lives of intended and unintended participants. Mosquito research is a term coined by Indigenous peoples in North Carolina; it names the tendency of graduate student researchers seeking to conduct research over the summer months. Researchers are likened to mosquitos, to an ephemeral, pestering and disruptive presence—that leaves bites

4 Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) are ethics regimes in the United States. IRB panels are mandated (by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) to oversee research with human participants under the National Research Act of 1974. The federal guidelines that direct the activities of the IRB, define research as "a systematic investigation, including pilot research, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" (US DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, 2017, p.7260). IRBs are tasked with reviewing proposed research involving human participants that is federally funded. Human subjects are defined, as living persons from whom a researcher will obtain "data" through intervention or interaction with the individual or identifiable private information. IRBs have the authority to approve, request revisions, or to disapprove of a research project.

and wounds that take time to heal. Finding no concrete assistance in the Code beyond the aspirational principles, I immersed myself in the literature on non-mainstream (i.e., white) approaches to ethics, including virtue and communitarian ethics, Indigenous, Black feminists, and critical race ethical scholarship (BHATTACHARYA, 2009; COLLINS, 2002; GUISHARD, 2009; LAURA, 2013; SMITH, 2013; TUCK & GUISHARD, 2014). Through this literature I learned about, developed, and presented a memorandum of understanding (MOU) detailing what I could offer the board members. Our MOU would allow me to use participants' observations of the board's review session in exchange for assisting with transcribing their meeting notes, notetaking, accessing my institution's resources, and acting as an impartial evaluative ally between the community and academic partners. Our MOU was crafted toward developing a mutually beneficial research relationship. Nowhere in the Code are psychologists directed to be of service, to demonstrate trustworthiness to participants, clients, or collaborators prior to engaging in research. [17]

The coordinator of the board gave me permission to sit in the meeting to get a feel for the group, but I was not allowed to participate. I recall being slightly disappointed, but I understood that although we were neighbors and shared race, ethnicity, culture, and social class, I had not earned their trust. I also understood that I was entering a sacred space. I did have a successful track record of conducting community-based research for almost ten years, but they didn't know that. [18]

The critical incident in question centers on a (re)presentation of the results of the 360-degree evaluation of the board, from the perspective of: board members, the academic principal investigator, the community-based partners, the facilitators of their research ethics trainings, and the researchers who had presented their studies for community consultation. The part of the meeting that still haunts me and has influenced my ethical praxis and enactment of hermeneutics of love was when the evaluator presented back-transcribed excerpts of the individual interview data board members participated in. The evaluator was a graduate student from a prominent university unaffiliated with the academic and community-based collaborators who directed the research review board. The evaluator was hired to assess the implementation, facilitation, and impact of establishing The Bronx Community Research Review Board. This evaluation was their capstone project. [19]

We were seated around a large table as data, as snippets from the interviews and focus groups were projected on the wall of the conference. Though the narratives were de-identified and anonymized some folks recognized their words and speech. All qualitative researchers have pondered this possibility. Analyses of the interview transcripts gleaned rich insights into the feasibility study. Briefly, members had slightly different ideas of the purpose of their participation; only a small minority had a clear understanding of what they would be doing. This is not uncommon in action research. Project rationale, aims, plans for action, what constitutes data must often be restated (GUISHARD, 2017a, 2017b). Board members were unprepared for the extensive time commitment the project

required. Some folks mentioned wanting researchers to know that the board was confident in researcher's ability and ethics. Others were concerned that the group was too tough, with a minority saying that this was serious business, and a tough unemotional persona was necessary. All of this was projected on white paper taped on the left wall of the conference room. The narratives were transcribed verbatim, leaving some of the text grammatically incorrect, with misspellings and other errors. I distinctly recall someone asking the evaluator to clean it up, to make it sound better, more professional, to project the burgeoning representation of the board, in publications and the evaluator's subsequent presentations. As other members conveyed their agreement, I remember holding my breath while I waited for her response. I wondered what I would do in that situation. The ethical standards in the Code, everything I read in my graduate research ethics class and in the federal ethical certification modules—all stressed securing the integrity of data collected. The APA Ethics Code is inattentive to the ethics and politics of (re)presentation in collaborative inquiry, though qualitative researchers have illuminated dilemmas in this vein (DENZIN & GIARDINA, 2007; DILL, 2015; DRAME & IRBY, 2016; FINE, 2004; GUSHARD, 2017a). The evaluator said that this was the nature of qualitative research. They said that imperfect speech was to be expected, was part of the process, and that it would be unethical for them to change it. They apologized and mentioned that they would discuss this with their graduate supervisor. The excerpts were never changed. It would take five years for the evaluator to share the final write up with the board because recordings, transcripts, and report were not considered shared data. [20]

I was allowed to conduct the ethnography. I completed it two and half years later and board members attended my thesis defense (GUSHARD, 2015). I am now the board chair and lead of an engagement award, which we obtained to help sustain the board's review activities. What went down at that meeting haunts me and the meeting space of the board. It has become a story long-serving members tell newer ones. It is both testimony of what the board survived and a cautionary tale; the board's reputation as allies, gatekeepers, and belligerent arbiters of ethics in the South Bronx are still in question. I have referenced the exchange between the evaluator and the board members often while teaching participatory action research ethics. These references are not about shame, vilification, or (re)humiliation of the graduate student evaluator. I share this critical incident as an instructive exemplar, an all too common occurrence, which illuminates what is incommensurable between the Code and the relational ethical issues around re-representations, dignity, and self-determination in qualitative inquiry. [21]

The Code references the term dignity three times in one of the five aspirational and thus not enforceable principles: respect for people's rights and dignity. This principle urges psychologists to, "respect the dignity and worth of all people, and the rights of individuals to privacy, confidentiality, and self-determination" (APA, 2016, p.6). Thinking about my experiences with longitudinal qualitative research, including consulting to dozens of participatory action research projects, I argue that the current Code's attention to dignity is incomplete, weak, and reflective of ethics of good intentions. Ethics of good intentions are well meaning, are speculative, not demonstrable. Racialized, minoritized, and marginalized

communities are over-researched peoples who are sick and tired of researchers' good intentions. The Code's current exposition of dignity did not cause pause or prevent the psychologists, implicated in the Hoffmann Report, from planning and conducting torture to ascertain threats to US national security, because Muslims, like so many other minoritized groups, were not ontologically included in psychologists' conceptions of human, of persons worthy of dignity and respect. [22]

If the evaluator, in the critical incident that I described, was a psychology graduate student, the Code's exposition of dignity would not have changed the decision they made to ignore requests to alter the narratives so that the participants would not come across as uneducated and inarticulate to audiences of future presentations. More robust, demonstrable ethics of honoring the dignity of participants, co-researchers, clients, and community partners should be taught to all researchers, irrespective of their disciplines and methodological inclinations. I want to be hopeful and suggest that such a revision to the Code would be meaningful, but I am not there yet. I am more cynical and pessimistic about the usefulness of the project of revisioning an ethics Code that was never meant to love or honor non-white peoples' humanity. As Crystal T. LAURA (2013, p.291) contends, "taking love seriously in social research means that the process and product of scholarship has real consequences for the lives of three-dimensional human beings, the researcher him or herself included, not for imagined 'others' somewhere out there"; no ethical touchstone can teach this, researchers either get this or they do not. Instead I choose to focus my energies on haunting the Code, by illuminating its insufficiencies, by highlighting its complicity in scientific racism and anti-Blackness (GUISHARD, 2017a, 2017b) because the search for ethics is not meant to resolve anything. Contemplations of ethicality dredge, unsettle, and are meant to unremittingly shake shit up. [23]

5. Silence in the Code (Anne)

In a case study of school desegregation described in GALLETTA (2013), I pursued questions on how students, parents, and educators experienced and conceptualized racial inequality over a period of forty years. I note in a section on researcher reflexivity how I avoid critical consideration of structural conditions in my interview with Dan (pseudonym), a white man. Dan narrates social inclusion and academic success within the early 1960s in high school in an inner-ring predominantly white suburban district experiencing increasing enrollment of students of color. Dan speaks about the exclusionary arrangement by race and religion of all-white social club memberships for youth. In reflexive writing on this interview experience, I note how I engage with Dan's justification of these memberships as naturally occurring. In the interview transcript, my complicit participation in race and class privilege at this juncture within the interview is evident. What is also lost at this point in the interview is the opportunity to explore with Dan more deeply how such processes might not be natural—opening the possibility for critical engagement about other structural conditions within the school system. [24]

This experience is in contrast to a later interview with Anthony (pseudonym), a young black man, who began his schooling trajectory in the city school district's enrichment program, taught by predominantly white teachers. In elementary school he experienced alienation and a view from his teachers that he was "challenging," and he did not complete high school. In this interview, I follow Anthony's narrative that teachers found him "challenging," and ask him to talk more on what he meant by that. At some point I interrupt his narrative. I make the observation that white teachers might interpret a challenge from white students as more socially acceptable than a challenge from black students. I later write reflexively on this interruption on my part, examining my effort to dialogically uncover with Anthony how a middle class black child of college educated parents in a gifted program became so disaffected that he left high school. [25]

Other interpretive communities would not support such an interruption on my part with Anthony, or my assertion of naturalness of exclusion with Dan. In this manner, dialogical data generation does not reflect a philosophy of science that aims for distance from the participant and neutrality in data collection and analysis. Within the Standard 3, human relations, the APA Code speaks to psychologists' ethical obligation to not engage in unfair discrimination, to avoid harm, and refrain from relationships that may impair objectivity. However, there is silence in the Code as it relates to critical co-construction of knowledge with one's participants or co-researchers. These processes are not unethical within critical approaches to case study, ethnography, narratives, and participatory action research. What they reveal is an effort to construct meaning within relationships shaped by historical and current hierarchies of power. Further ethical deliberation as it relates to my interview with Dan and with Anthony took place in my listening to my interview tapes and analyzing the transcripts. This led to additional questions—why am I at ease with interrupting the young black man to raise questions on white privilege but simultaneously reluctant to de-naturalize with a white man the exclusionary processes within the social fabric of youth organizations? [26]

In my research and the research collectives in which I participate, there is attention to ethical dilemmas as they relate to the meaning making processes. In my interviewing within a case study and my participation in critical participatory action research (PAR), I explore the connections between lived experiences and constellations of human relationships, institutional structures and discourse, and broader sociopolitical considerations, "revealing the webs of power that connect institutional and individual lives to larger social formation" (WEIS & FINE, 2004, p.xxi). CARSPECKEN and APPLE (1992) refer to dialogical data generation that "proceeds through establishing an intensive dialogue between the researchers and those researched" (p.548). This requires a degree of critical engagement with participants or co-researchers within any number of qualitative research approaches. However, efforts to move toward critical engagement can sustain researcher privilege and fail to achieve more co-constructed or collective inquiry with individuals close to the research topic. Alternatively, not to engage substantively in a PAR collective or to flee participation in dialogical opportunities within an interview may be shallow responses to ethical commitments to a critical

analysis within the site of meaning making (STITH & ROTH, 2006). In this manner, working towards a "radical posture" of solidarity (FREIRE, 2000 [1970], p.49) occurs at particular junctures within data collection and analysis. Here I understand FREIRE's radical solidarity as requiring an interrogation of my role as a white academic in relation to my participants. How do I *not* derail potential openings to examine and unhinge white privilege? [27]

LAURA's ethic of love speaks to two deeply relational processes: witnessing and engaging. Witnessing involves "the deliberate attendance to people, seeing and taking notice of that which they believe is meaningful" (2013, p.290). Engaging is a form of problem-posing with one's participant and the "highlighting of contradictions" (ibid.). In this manner, LAURA's call for an ethic of love dialogically places both the hermeneutics of faith and of suspicion within the space of the researcher-participant relationship (JOSSELSO, 2004; RICŒUR, 1981). This reflects a relational and interpretive closeness between participant and researcher. It requires reflexivity within and well beyond the actual data collection event. [28]

These ethical dilemmas find no psychic reach with ideas articulated in the APA ethics Code, nor could they, given its adherence to a single paradigmatic frame reflecting ways of knowing, being, and valuing that view the researcher as expert, the relationship as one of distance, and the production of knowledge as a neutral endeavor. Instead, there is a silence that fails to acknowledge what for me is considerable ethical discomfort and epistemological noise. [29]

6. Ethics, Epistemology and Validity (Peiwei)

I (Peiwei) was sitting at the table as part of a community-based research collective that focuses on substance use and mental health issues of young people in my city—a northeastern urban center with a poverty rate of 31%. "The youth just need to change their behaviors and learn how to make better choices," the head of nurse of the city concluded. "We need to examine the fidelity of how the substance use screening program is implemented," a senior researcher from a large research university in the region commented. And he turned to a representative from a community agency, "Can you share the data that you collected with us to do more systematic analysis on this issue?" There were no youth at the table. Most people appeared to be white and most likely not living in the city. A meeting agenda was pre-determined by three key players, the same university researcher, a health research institute analyst, and the head of a community agency, who had their own meeting prior to this meeting. I was sitting there with increased agitation and frustration and didn't know what would be the best/right thing to do in the moment. [30]

Should I raise the group's awareness that in our very basic conception of community-based research we totally ignored structural problems such as poverty, racism, and associated consequences of trauma, depression, and despair that inflict on the bodies and psyches of youth? By lodging the blame on the youth (of color) and reducing complexity to individual behaviors, are we

completely losing sight of what FINE and RUGLIS (2009) call the *circuits of privilege and dispossession*? A circuit is formed, where accumulated dispossessions of rights and dignity of the marginalized make up the accumulated privileges of the dominant groups. Does this way of doing research, in the name of "community-based" research, actually perpetuate what TUCK (2009) calls "damage-centered" research, where the intention of advocating for resource reallocation ends up reproducing a *one-sided* view of the community as depleted, inferior, and helpless? Or should I call out the imbalanced power in the room where the researchers took it for granted that they were the experts of knowing and the dominant voices in the room? What does it mean to facilitate critical consciousness-raising in this situation? What is my role and positionality in all this? [31]

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of this experience was the realization that all my internal struggles might not even constitute what would be typically considered an ethical dilemma. Research is being done in this way almost all the time (in psychology): the researcher with most valued expertise can leave her subjectivity and positionality at the door, and objectively study *about* people's problems. Objectivity here implies an anonymous and disinterested third person position, who can simply observe and record what happens without influencing the situation. This is an epistemological stance—although when it is normalized and privileged, it appears "natural" and thus rendered invisible. I wonder what it would take for the researchers at the table of the meeting to recognize the work of legitimized power that comes with this epistemological positioning? [32]

In fact, the term "epistemology" or "epistemological" is completely absent from the current APA Code. This omission/silence is troublesome. It suggests a discursively accepted and reproduced normalcy of what constitute (psychological) knowledge and of what is considered legitimate and valid knowledge. However, if the discipline of psychology is considered an apparatus of knowledge production, we cannot examine ethical conduct of psychologists without also taking a self-reflective stance to explicate our own epistemological assumptions. Assumed neutrality or objectivity would only disguise or self-deceive hidden relationship between power and knowledge that is ever present during the entire research process including the research space I was in at that meeting. Psychology with a reflexive engagement has a better chance for "strong objectivity," following Sandra HARDING (1992), where power dynamics are carefully unpacked and addressed on intrapersonal, interpersonal, and collective levels (DRAME & IRBY, 2016). I felt I failed miserably to effectively engage in this endeavor in that critical moment described above. [33]

It also occurs to me that navigating ethical conducts not only calls for *know-what* type of knowledge that aims for clarity and complexity (like what I'm trying to strive for here in my writing) but also a *know-how* type of knowledge, a communicative/relational competency to act and engage with others and the specific context with courage, and act in ways that upholds the principle of social justice. The current Code does foreground "benevolence" and "do no harm" (APA, 2017, p.2) as its founding principles but a deeper connection to social

justice is yet to be established. To do so would call for a genuine critical deliberation about those terms. The current conceptual framework is largely based off individualistic assumptions about rights, benefits, and harms, which inevitably reduce complex cultural, structural, and systemic issues to individual behaviors, attributions, and responsibilities. A new horizon needs to reconstruct this individualistic template with a collective and holistic one. The latter would foreground the rights and well-being of the communities that we engage with in research, stemming from the hermeneutics of love (LAURA, 2013) as an epistemological responsibility. This necessitates the need to conceptualize research phenomena and problems in light of social inequality, unequal power, privilege and all forms of marginalization, and to seriously examine the interface and tension among individuals, structures, and the institutions during the entire research process. [34]

Furthermore, I argue that the realm of ethics has a deep epistemological root (LI, 2016). Ethics is not only *about* knowledge but constitutes knowing itself. This links ethics to the concept of validity—validity as a methodological concept, not how it is reduced to replicability in the context of measurement/assessment as it appears in the Code. (The word "validity" appears five times under Code 9.01, 9.02, and 9.08 in the context of selecting and applying psychological assessments.) Should genuine and valid knowledge also be simultaneously ethical in nature? If this were so, then ethics would be inherent to research validity. This deeper contemplation about knowledge, ethics, and validity has already been made by scholars across multiple disciplines inside and outside of psychology (LATHER, 1986; MARTÍN-BARO, 1994; SMITH, 2013). TEO (2010) used the term *epistemological violence* to capture the form of violence when data interpretation in the name of "knowledge" and "science" perpetuates the inferiority of the *Other* and does harm when viable alternative interpretations are available. By being largely complacent at my meeting, did I perpetuate the discursive reproduction of epistemological violence? Likely so. What does it mean to not to perpetuate this form of violence even in its subtle forms like this? Some alternatives would be engaging in *racial solidarity* that Anne described above citing FREIRE (2000 [1970]) or embracing the hermeneutics of love as a deep recognition of others as "my people" (LAURA, 2013, p.291), but also consciously walking the hyphen of self-other that connects and separates us (FINE, 1994) in the web of power. That is, an ethic Code that is intersubjective in nature—a radical epistemological shift in its very constitution. [35]

Knowing and knowledge production inherently come with an epistemological responsibility that is simultaneously, an ethical responsibility—how we ought to engage with the world and with *others* as a researcher and person. And these two aspects of being are never separable either. Ethics thus is rather a dynamic process of knowing, doing and being, far beyond a set of guidelines and procedures as how it often appears or is perceived (LI, 2017). To meaningfully wrestle with ethics necessitates an engagement with epistemological ethics, which requires us to think deeply about what research is, why we do research, who is (should be) doing research, how we relate to the researched, and what makes valid, good, and just research. Those aspects of ethics need to be made

explicit and dynamic in the new Code, although this endeavor would always resist a totalizing attempt and the Code must stay open to be questioned and reconstructed with new horizons. [36]

7. How to Honor the Convergences in our Incidents that Speak to Hermeneutics of Love

"Qualitative researchers who invoke love in their work choose to witness, engage, and labor for the people who we admire and respect, and we treat them with the regard and reverence that we would extend to our own kin. Not 'the subjects,' but 'my people'" (LAURA, 2013, p.291).

In each of these critical incidents, we each identified that the process of reflexivity was essential to identifying that there was an ethical issue to begin with: Alexis (The Intersubjective and Reflexive Nature of Knowledge Production) noted that researchers develop relationships with participants that might lead to participants revealing more than they otherwise would, while also making the researcher vulnerable to secondary trauma. She identified that intersubjectivity needs to be understood through a process of reflexivity and discussion with respected colleagues. Monique (Preserving Dignity), stressing the damage that has been done to communities in the name of research and the potential for communities to transform their self-perception (conscientization) through participation in community-based research, identified that *dignity* should be a core part of the Code, rather than window dressing. Anne (Silence in the Code) reflected that while the Code condemns harming participants, it is not considered unethical for researchers to engage in critical inquiry that privileges their own group. This silence allows research to perpetuate inequality. Peiwei (Ethics, Epistemology and Validity) discussed that the lack of any reference to epistemology in the ethics Code underscores the assumptions that researchers are the knowers and researched are the known—a tone-deafness to the ethical obligations of researchers engaged in social justice work. In each of these cases, striving for hermeneutics of love (LAURA, 2013) does not make us immune from our own shortcomings as researchers and humans engaged in relationships with participants and co-researchers—in fact, sometimes this commitment increases our likelihood of making ethical blunders. [37]

The dilemmas that each of us have surfaced are entangled in the quality of the relationships that we have with participants, noting the relationships are cultivated, intentionally, respectfully, over time in our research contexts. In many cases (e.g. community-engaged research) it is impossible to do our work without cultivating these relationships. Guidelines for managing these, often complex, intense, long-term, relationships are beyond the scope of the Code, leaving researchers, like us, to search for our own ways of addressing or managing our ethical concerns. Questions revolving around intersubjectivity—the extents and limits of relationships and how to care for the self when encountering, on a deep level, the lives of others are essential to how we manage our day-to-day lives and interactions. Questions such as "How can I rigorously respect the dignity of this person/this community through my research practices and representations of

their lives and their words?" are not only central to our praxis but also to the lives of people who are affected by research. This is not a trivial matter, as the history of violence through research reaches back far in our discipline and simultaneously travels unnervingly close to the present. [38]

In each of our critical incidents, we identified that: research is relational in nature and intersubjectivity is the foundation of knowing in research (ROTH, 2018). These relationships are steeped in place(s) and history—histories that we hold in our own bodies in numerous ways. Histories and social contexts that sometimes keep us silent and sometimes demand our speaking up. Those silences and moments of interruption have consequences, just as the relationships we develop and the ways we develop them hold deep meaning—for us, as researchers, and for the people with whom we develop research relationships. These relationships are tricky to negotiate (GUISHARD, 2017b), especially when we overpromise, falter, and fail to honor the dignity of the people we seek to understand through hermeneutics of love (LAURA, 2013), faith, or suspicion (JOSSELSO, 2004). What we have to offer our participants for their time, for their stories, may not be measurable and, indeed, may seem like nothing. Critical reciprocity is sometimes difficult to imagine, to calculate. However, we suggest humbly asking where we might be of service, *before* introducing requests to initiate more research. [39]

As psychologists, we are engaged in the process of making knowledge and this knowledge resides in communities, manifests through collaboration, storytelling, shared experience, silences, omissions, complex dialectics, and the stubborn adherence to abstract guiding principles. We are self-consciously aware that, in spite of our goals and training, our epistemological commitments may or may not be the same as those of our participants. Our engagement in making knowledge, whereas relational, is steeped in a tradition of working with communities who may or may not think about making knowledge in the same ways that we do. And yet, this is our calling. [40]

When we encounter the complexity of holding our ethical obligations, we envision a Code that considers these obligations as we do. A touchstone that holds the possibility to provide direction in moments of ethical conflict, taking into consideration that relationships with people and communities—and holding their interests at heart—is at the core of all ethical considerations (DENZIN & GIARDINA, 2007; GALLETTA et al., 2018). [41]

8. Envisioning an Ethics Code Responsive to Intersubjectivity

Our vision for a reimagined Code would require psychologists to 1. show face, 2. rigorously triangulate their findings, 3. share/present results back to participants in ways they can understand, 4. be explicit about their hermeneutical lens, 5. publish differences in interpretations of study findings between researchers, participants, and community partners, 6. resist research ventriloquism, and 7. embrace ethics of solidarity by honoring all contributors as co-authors and co-owners of the products of collaborative inquiry. [42]

This Code that we envision would address the dilemmas we each identified above, by recognizing that the researcher, not just the participant/co-researcher, is vulnerable within the research dynamic (HALKOVIC, 2017). It would acknowledge that learning about the lives of others—especially "my people"—can be tricky, painful, or traumatic. It would identify that a researcher, like Alexis, might need distance, support, or a reflexive practice to address the transfer of emotions/experience that occurs in qualitative research when participants' words are repeated in one's ears. This Code would acknowledge that respecting the dignity of others might mean challenging other researchers, reflecting on and eschewing pre-determined research practice, or overcoming people's fears related to researchers who have come before you, as Monique relays. It might require putting in time, refusing to do "helicopter research" (DILL, 2015, p.130). This Code would also acknowledge that power and privilege have a role in the interviewing process as well as the analysis of data, as Anne reveals. It would advise researchers to reflect on ways they interact with different participants differently and how this might affect the research process. This Code would also acknowledge that intersubjectivity means that participants/co-researchers are members of communities, hold knowledge of their subjective experience, and live and navigate systems that are entrenched in hierarchies of power, noting that we as researchers are also entangled in these hierarchies of power. And this Code would ask us, as Peiwei does, how our research can facilitate justice for members of the communities. This Code would explicitly reference social justice as the purpose of research (MARTÍN-BARÓ, 1994), identify that researchers must do more than "do no harm," proactively learning from members of the community itself how research might help the community in question, acknowledging their expert knowledge of their own conditions. This Code would explicitly call on researchers to engage in reflexivity throughout the research process to learn how one's own (or other researcher's) epistemological stance/assumptions and behaviors affect the research process, including analysis and findings. This Code would identify dignity of participants and co-researchers as a core value of research, explicating that this includes understanding how researchers see themselves in research products and acknowledging that these perceptions are valid, not just as data, but as an objective of critical scholarship. (Note that numerous participatory projects have focused on changing the negative perceptions that others have of them (cf., CAHILL, 2007; DILL, 2015; HALKOVIC & GREENE, 2015). We acknowledge that no ethics Code can address every scenario we will encounter, and we do not wish to propose a totalizing Code. And, yet, we aspire to a Code that will set a principle of intention

that will lend meaningful guidance as we wrestle with ethical praxis that continuously unfolds in our ways of engaging with others. [43]

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