

Describing Differences in Approaches to Organization Science: Rethinking Burrell and Morgan and Their Legacy

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When Gibson Burrell and Gareth Morgan wrote *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis*, I doubt that they, or anyone else, would have anticipated the widespread impact or resultant contestation that their four-paradigm grid would have. Many grids had appeared before in sociology and after in organizational studies, but none have gained the almost hegemonic capacity to define the alternatives in organizational analysis (see Pfeffer 1982, Astley and Van de Ven 1983, Rao and Pasmore 1989, Hirschman and Holbrook 1992, Power and Laughlin 1992, Latour 1993).

I believe that there are reasons for this significant influence beyond the clarity of presentation and exhaustive compilation of literature. When the grid and discussion were published in 1979, those of us doing alternative work readily embraced it for it gave each of us a kind of asylum. While some of us were uncomfortable with the dimensions and philosophical analysis, we happily accepted the newfound capacity to present ourselves to mainstream critics as doing fundamentally different, but legitimate, kinds of research and began to work on concepts and evaluation criteria within our now produced as different and unitary communities. Many of those doing more mainstream work also found it appealing since, as I will argue, the dimensions used to produce the grid reproduced the world as viewed from the mainstream tradition thus reaffirming that tradition and providing a "safe" understanding of the developing alternatives. Further, the separate but equal pluralism implicit in Burrell and Morgan's conceptualization could be used by the dominant "functionalists" to protect themselves from growing criticism (the isolationist strategy noted by Reed 1985). They, too, would have a safe and separate place.

But as organizational science and research agendas have continued to evolve, problems with the Burrell

and Morgan grid have become more pressing. First, the grid has been used to reify research approaches; and second, and more importantly, its dimensions of contrast obscure important differences in current research orientations and lead to poorly formed conflicts and discussions.

While not primarily a result of the original analysis, the four-paradigm solution has often led to quick categorizations and to debates around paradigm commensurability (Jackson and Carter 1991; Willmott 1990, 1993) and appropriate use of the different paradigms (Hassard 1991, Parker and McHugh 1991). Some of these problems and debates arise from the tendency to reify concepts, especially in educational programs and materials. The Burrell and Morgan grid can easily produce four classified things given object status, rather than providing two lines of differentiation that draw attention to important differences in research programs. Burrell and Morgan invite reification by claims of paradigmatic incommensurability, by staying at the level of theory and reconstructed science, and by accepting Kuhn's loose conception of paradigms. The dimensions can be used as a way of focusing attention rather than as a means of classification, but few writings have done so. One purpose of this essay is to fight the tendency to reduce conceptions to categories or reduce sensitizing concepts to definitions (see Deetz 1992, ch. 3; Sandelands and Srivatsan 1993).

But my main concern here is not paradigm commensurability nor reification but rather the dimensions of contrast themselves. A deeper and more interesting understanding of contemporary research practices and debates is possible by focusing on other dimensions. The question is not: Are these the right categories or who fits in each? But: Are these differences that make a difference? Do these dimensions provide insight into

genuine differences in research programs? I hope to aid rethinking the differences and similarities among different research approaches, hopefully making our conflicts and discussions more productive rather than simply replacing four boxes with four different boxes.

In line with modern discourse theory, conceptions are always contests for meaning (see Epstein 1988; Deetz 1992, ch. 5). Language does not name objects in the world; it is core to the process of constituting objects. The appearance of labeling or categorizing existing objects is derived from this more fundamental act of object constitution through language. The world can be constituted in many ways, depending on alternative systems of valuing. The most significant part of this contest for object constitution is the capacity to enact the lines of distinction producing some things as alike and others as different. Only secondarily is the contest over the positive or negative valence ascribed to the produced things. For example, feminist writers for years have shown how male dominance is maintained by the dominant group's ability to define the dimensions of difference and position themselves at the positive end of each dimension (see Treichler 1989, Weedon 1987). Marginalized groups, following this analysis, are defined as "the other" thus acquiring an identity and valued functions but only as given by the opposition pole in the dominant group's conceptual map (e.g., "emotionally supportive" rather than "rational" or "private" rather than "public"). They acquire a type of autonomy but only in a language/conceptual game not of their own choosing. In accepting the state of "other" they have little self-definition, and the game is stacked (see further, Bourdieu 1984, 1991).

In an analogous way, I believe that Burrell and Morgan largely accepted the conceptual distinctions from sociological functionalism and its supporting philosophy of science. From this dominant conception, they merely asked who else is "other" and, from this position, in what ways are they "other." Burrell and Morgan performed a political intervention as they spoke on behalf of the oppositions, the negative terms, the "others" of "sociological functionalism." But, functionalism retained definitional authority. In contrast to their analysis, each identified marginalized paradigmatic group would have defined its difference from the dominant functionalist conceptions differently, if each had had definitional authority. This positioning, as I have suggested, partly accounts for the rapid acceptance of the Burrell and Morgan grid into the mainstream of management science.

Further, this move protected functionalist researchers from the most damning critiques (and ones

they would not understand) in favor of their preferred battles (e.g., between objectivity and subjectivity). At the same time, the most innovative of the new researchers found it now even more difficult to express what they did since they had to use a language in which their meanings did not fit. They had to choose between misrepresenting themselves clearly through Burrell and Morgan or representing themselves well but being considered obscure or bad writers. Thus, the effect was to normalize the emerging research paradigms favoring rather traditional directions even within them. For example, as will be shown in more detail, when Burrell and Morgan provided "interpretive" work with the "subjective" ascription (even if now positively valued) they, perhaps unwittingly, tended to favor cultural studies that focused on member's meanings which were more subject to management control. At the same time the "objective" ascription protected "functionalist" studies from a thorough analysis of their hidden values and sources of subjectivity, as if they might be too objective—a preferred flaw—rather than too subjective—a flaw they would not understand. Similarly, the many critical theorists with strong suspicions of humanist philosophies suddenly found themselves either conceptualized as radical humanists or invisible (lost in some hole in paradigmatic space). The Frankfurt school's attack on the subjective domination in science all too often got lost in the radical humanist conception.

My point is not that Burrell and Morgan were representationally wrong in the presentation of management science (for there are many representationally "right" schemes and surely the nearly 20 years since their work has led to many changes), but their conceptions continue to foster less interesting and productive conflicts and developments than are possible. Further, the grid revisions have been insufficiently radical. Most of the revisions of Burrell and Morgan begin, as did they, with a philosophy of science based in representational views of language and a subject-object dualism. This is why as others suggest new dimensions of contrast they nearly always retain some form of the subjective-objective dimension (see Kavanagh 1993 for development; and for examples: Pfeffer 1982, Astley and Van de Ven 1983, Hirschman and Holbrook 1992, Latour 1993). Furthermore, functionalist researchers appear to collapse the regulation-change dimension to the subjective-objective one. Perhaps it is not Burrell and Morgan's or other authors fault, but a political agenda is quickly (mis)understood as simply another "subjective" position. The processes of differentiation in mainstream functionalist sociology must be abandoned be-

fore more challenging differentiations are possible and alternative research programs can be given a full complementary role in organizational science. There are better differentiations available to us already (Rao and Pasmore 1989) and I believe that a more general set of differentiations can be developed here.

Before I suggest new dimensions of contrast, I should situate myself. My work, like that of many of the new research programs, has sought to work out the significance of the "linguistic turn" in modern philosophy for organizational analysis and practice (see Deetz 1992, 1994b, d, 1995). My disciplinary interests are in the constitutive moves of discourse in organizations rather than in psychological, sociological, or economic theories of organizational behavior (Deetz 1994c). In regard to research I am interested in how organizational science is practiced—how research representations are produced, disseminated, and used rather than their truth or reconstructed justifications. In this conception, paradigms are produced and reproduced in discursive practices of unity and separation. Paradigms are incommensurable as they strive to maintain coherence, but are commensurable to the extent that they encounter the ultimately indeterminant outside world. Communication across paradigms is both possible as different groups try to build a world together, but yet incomplete in that every determination is partial (one-sided and unfinished). Following this position through, what makes social research programs different from each other is the degree of participation they favor in the interaction with other research programs, research subjects, and the wider society and the moves they make toward closure or indeterminacy in those interactions. This will form the bases for the dimensions suggested.

In my development below, I will privilege programmatic differentiations rooted in what I will develop as a dialogic perspective. What Burrell and Morgan called "functionalist" research will thus be implicitly represented as an "other." In doing so, both the lines of division and the arguments that extend from this can be redrawn. "Functionalist" style work can be reclaimed as legitimate in specifiable ways as reunderstood from dialogic conceptions. Nondialogic research programs will not be seen as alternative routes to truth, but as specific discourses which, if freed from their claims of universality and/or completion, could provide important moments in the larger dialogue about organizational life. The test of my suggested differentiations is not whether they provide a better map, but whether they provide an interesting way to talk about what is happening in research programs.

The Boring and Misleading Subjective-Objective Problem¹

The most problematic legacy of Burrell and Morgan's analysis is the perpetuation of the subjective-objective controversy. Since the underlying conceptions are still widespread, a little "flogging of the dead horse" seems advisable (see for development, Natter, Schatzki and Jones 1995). Subject-object dualism is as old as Western theoretical writings (at least as reconstructed in the modern period). The discourse of "functionalist" researchers (or what is organized as such in Burrell and Morgan) as well as that of many humanists and interpretivists reproduces a basic psychological distinction between an interior and exterior world. Phenomena can either be interior or exterior. And, the research process itself is seen as directed by either the interior (thus subjective) or exterior (thus objective).

The subjective-objective distinction performs political functions by constraining the conception of science and creating hierarchies of research programs based on the same faulty logic as the distinction itself. Codified, and often quantitative studies, continue to get the privileged "objective" label and positive association to the natural sciences since, in the interior-exterior relation, they claim a double (both method and phenomenon) exterior. "Interpretivists" acquire the "subjective" (implying personal and/or particularistic) label since they claim a double hermeneutic (an interpretation of an interpreted world). While, like many marginalized groups, interpretivists may try to reverse the valence of the ascription or even claim a type of objective science, the presence of a host of social and institutional conditions reproduce the hierarchy (for example, university promotion processes that count the number of publications or journal review processes that emphasize specific types of methodological rigor over others or other criteria). The problem is the ascription, not the valence. Little is gained if subjectivity is good and objectivity bad, the same limitations remain. Three of them are most evident.

First, the meaning of the objective-subjective labels is already socially contrived. Not only is the subject-object split a cultural conception rather than a natural fact, the "objective" practices are those that Husserl (1962) and others (see Apel 1979, Bernstein 1984) have shown to be the most "subjective." While widely misunderstood, from the start the primary critics of positivism found the natural science model to be too subjective, not too objective. In so-called "objective" research, concepts and methods are held a priori, are unknown projections of researchers' own ways of en-

countering the world, constitute the world as observed without ownership or critical reflection, and are not subject to the "objection" of the outside toward possible alternatively constituted worlds (see Deetz 1973 for further development). Both functionalists and humanistic psychologists missed the point, as did Burrell and Morgan.

What warrants exploration is the subjectivity and implicit desire to dominate others and nature, rather than the objectivity, of the "objective" research programs. Probabilistic and law-like claims are artifacts of a particular peer group shared language game or set of constitutive activities. Questions of determining which problems to study, the relevancy of findings, and the translation back to the subject's world have always posed constitutive and value-laden issues at the very heart of any "objective" research that intends to have a social effect (Gergen 1978). The control orientation of much "objective" research (see Hamnett et al. 1984) can be seen as the domination of a particular group's desires over and against existing communities and the natural environment. A point well made by Harding (1991). In both respects, in practice so-called "interpretivists" and others often labeled as "subjective" often have the better claim to objectivity through the way they allow alternative language games and the possibility of alternative constructions arising from existing communities denying both research community conceptions and preferred methods as privileged and universal. Thus, I treat the claim of objectivity or subjectivity as a rhetorical move in a research program's system of justification rather than as a useful descriptive label. My point is not that all research is both subjective and objective nor to decide which are which. As argued below, subjectivity and objectivity are simply not very interesting ways of thinking about research program differences (see Bernstein 1984; Natter, Schatzki and Jones 1995).

Secondly, the subjective-objective conception, rather than describing a meaningful difference, reproduces a neo-positivist philosophy of science and obscures the nature of other research programs. While few claim to be a positivist anymore (given more than 50 years of critique), the retention of the discourse of the subject-object split (even given 100 years of critique) leaves most researchers still practicing a kind of neo-positivism, whether subjective humanists or hardcore abstracted empiricists. There is a reason that this conception will not go away: the subjective-objective distinction affords identity protection and privileges for powerful groups, both in the academy and other organizations. In many ways, interpretivists gain as much

identity and group stature in their oppositional identity as do the functionalists.

A growing discourse of organization researchers explicitly denies the subject-object (interior/exterior) split through different concepts of language and experience and through demonstrating the abstract and politically motivated conception of the difference (e.g., Cooper 1989, Willmott 1990). Without a metaphysical separation between subjects and objects, objectivity and subjectivity occupy a different discursive space. The philosophical distinction between subjectivity and objectivity is widely challenged by nonwestern groups. And its refutation is core to the twentieth century writers (e.g., Husserl, Heidegger, Wittgenstein), who in developing a "linguistic turn" in philosophy, have served as inspiration for many of the "nonfunctionalists" organizational researchers (including many feminists, critical theorists, poststructuralists, postmodernist, and labor process theorists). Such research programs are not at a different place on the subjective-objective continuum; the dualism itself is disputed (see Willmott 1990, 1993 for a similar point). As language replaces consciousness as central, theories of discourse and representational practices replace philosophies of science based on subject-object, idealist-realist, rationalist-empiricist, or similar contrasts. Any attempt to classify these new research programs on the subjective-objective dimension of Burrell and Morgan does an injustice to their conceptions and practices and leads to distorted understandings.

Thirdly, the retention of the conception of subject-object separation has led to the continuation of rather misleading conflicts and equally misleading presumed relations between so-called qualitative and quantitative research. The association of qualitative research with the subjective label collapses the distinction between purely impressionistic musing and rigorous interpretive work and differences between studying practices or meanings. Further, neo-positivist researchers accepting dualism (whether called interpretivists or functionalists) often reduce the difference in qualitative and quantitative research to different ways to collect data and, thereby, retain the dream of triangulation as if different research programs simply provided additive insights into the same phenomenon. This hides the real conflict. More important than data collection techniques are the questions asked and the intent of analysis. At root, what the research is trying to do is different. The modes of analysis do not work from different points of view on the same thing; they are producing and elaborating in the act of researching different phenomena for different reasons.

The qualitative-quantitative difference could be retained if "functionalist" researchers recognized that their "natural" objects of a presumed external world are "produced" objects for temporary methodological convenience and interpretivists saw that their "natural" objects of another's social world are emergent and interactionally formed, but in neither case does the private/subjective experience of one or the other influence more strongly. They simply enter at different places and in different ways. Both kinds of objects are socially shared, historically produced, and general to a social group. Since both can accept objects as constituted as if they were given in nature (as in any "realist" description) rather than to explore their constitution, positivist conceptions and assumptions are not unique to "functionalist" researchers but are often present for interpretivists also. Quantitative research itself could be greatly improved if freed from pretenses of functionalist ontology. Many human questions admit of numerical answers, and these answers should be good ones. But when codification, counting, and statistical reduction are separated from the full process of constituting objects, determining problems and influencing communities, when only one slice of the research process is claimed as science, research loses relevance and critical parts of the process are not investigated. The subjective-objective conception contributes to this problem.

Striking New Differences

Accepting the "linguistic turn" (thus locating research differences in discursive moves and social relations rather than procedures and individuals) gives us a more contemporary look at alternative research programs in organization science. Two dimensions of contrast will be developed here. The first dimension focuses on the origin of concepts and problem statements as part of the constitutive process in research. Differences among research orientations can be shown by contrasting "local/emergent" research conceptions with "elite/a priori" ones. The second dimension focuses on the relation of research practices to the dominant social discourses within the organization studied, the research community, and/or wider community. Research orientations can be contrasted in the extent to which they work within a dominant set of structurings of knowledge, social relations, and identities (a reproductive practice), called here a "consensus" discourse, and the extent to which they work to disrupt these structurings (a productive practice), called here "dissensus"

discourse (see Deetz 1994c, 1995). I see these dimensions as analytic ideal types in Weber's sense mapping out two distinct continua. While categories of research programs are derivatively produced by the dimensions, the intent here is to aid attention to meaningful differences and similarities among different research activities rather than classification.

Local / Emergent-Elite / A Priori

The key questions this dimension addresses is where and how do research concepts arise. In the two extremes, either concepts are developed in relation with organizational members and transformed in the research process or they are brought to the research "interaction" by the researcher and held static through the research process—concepts can be developed *with* or applied *to* the organizational members being studied. This dimension can be characterized by a set of paired conceptions which flesh out contrasts embedded in the two poles. Figure 1 presents an array of these contrasts. The choice of and stability of the language system is of central importance since the linguistic/conceptual system directs the statement of problems,

Figure 1 Characterizations of the Local/Emergent-Elite/A Priori Dimension

Local / Emergent	Elite / A Priori
Comparative communities	Privileged community
Multiple language games	Fixed language game
Particularistic	Universalistic
Systematic philosophy as ethnocentric	Grounded in hoped for systematic philosophy
Atheoretical	Theory driven
Situationally or structural determinism	Methodological determinism
Nonfoundational	Foundational
Local narratives	Grand narrative of progress and emancipation
Sensuality and meaning as central concerns	Rationality and truth as central concerns
Situated, practical knowledge	Generalizable, theoretical knowledge
Tends to be feminine in attitude	Tends to be masculine in attitude
Sees the strange	Sees the familiar
Proceeds from the other	Proceeds from the self
Ontology of "otherness" over method	Epistemological and procedural issues rule over substantive assumptions

the observational process itself in producing objects and highlighting and hiding potential experiences, the type of claims made, and the report to external groups.

The elite/a priori pole draws attention to the tendency in some types of research programs to privilege the particular language system of the researcher and the expertise of the research community as well as hold that language system constant throughout the research process.² Such research tends to be heavily theory driven with careful attention to definitions prior to the research process. The experiences of the researched become coded into the researcher's language system. Demands of consistency and/or reliability require changes in the conceptual system to take place outside of rather than in the research process. Whether intentional or not, the conceptual system of the researcher is considered better or more clearly represents what "really" is the case than that of everyday people and seeks generality beyond the various local systems of meaning. In privileging a language system there is further a tendency to universalize and justify such moves by appeals to foundations or essentialist assumptions. Research claims, thus, are seen as freed from their local and temporal conditions of production. In most cases these research approaches follow an enlightenment hope for producing rational knowledge not constrained by tradition or particular belief systems of the researcher or researched. The produced knowledge is treated as progressive or reformist in conception leading to increased capacities or well-being. The more functionalist (or what I will call "normative") versions openly proclaim "objectivity" and value neutrality based on the shared language game and research methods and tend to overlook the positions of their own community or alliances with other groups. The more critical versions quickly note the presence of values and distortions in normative work and hold out the hope for a better, purer form of knowledge based in processes that include more interests and means of analysis in the work.

The local/emergent pole draws attention to researchers who work with an open language system and produce a form of knowledge with less lofty claims. Central to their work is the situated nature of the research enterprise. Problem statements, the researcher's attention, and descriptions are worked out as a play between communities. The theoretical vocabulary carried into the research activity is often considered by the researcher as a first cut or guide to getting started constantly open to new meanings, translations, and redifferentiation based on interactions in the research process. The knowledge form is more often one

of insight rather than truth. Such insights may be particularistic regarding both time and place even though the emerging analytic frame is designed to aid in the deeper understanding of other particular settings. Cumulative understanding happens in providing stories or accounts which may provide insight into other sites rather than cumulative universal aspiring claims. The research attends to the feelings, intuitions and multiple forms of rationality of both the researched and researcher rather than using a single logic of objectification or purified rationality. The study is guided more by concept formation than concept application. The "otherness" of the other (the way people and events exceed categories and classifications of them) is sought by the researcher to force reconception and linguistic change. This is considered more valuable than the identification and naming of preconceived traits, attributes, or groupings. Objectivity, to the extent that it is considered at all, arises out of the interplay and the constant ability of the researched to object and correct. The researcher is more a skilled collaborator in knowledge production than an expert observer. Such a position is expressed well by those engaged in various forms of participatory research (see Reason 1994, Whyte 1991).

Focusing on the origin of concepts and problems using a dimension of "local/emergent-elite/a priori" allows three advantages. Firstly, it acknowledges linguistic/social constructionism in all research positions and directs attention to whose concepts are used in object production and determination of what is problematic (see Deetz 1973). Secondly, the focus on the origin of concepts helps distinguish fundamentally different kinds of knowledge. Elite/a priori conceptions lead more to the development of "theoretical codified" knowledge, a kind of "book" knowledge or "knowing about." Local/emergent conceptions lead more to the development of "practical" knowledge, a kind of "street wisdom" or a "knowing how." Thirdly, reconceptualizing this dimension allows us to more easily see that both the application and discovery of concepts can demonstrate implicit or explicit political alliances with different groups in society. For example, to the extent that organizational researchers' concepts align with managerial conceptions and problem statements and are applied a priori in studies, the knowledge claims are intrinsically biased toward certain interests as they are applied within the site community (Mumby 1988). The knowledge claims become part of the same processes that are being studied, reproducing world views, personal identities, and fostering particular interests within the organization (see Knights 1992).

Consensus-Dissensus

The "consensus-dissensus" dimension draws attention to the relation of research to existing social orders. Consensus or dissensus should not be understood as agreement and disagreement but rather as presentation of unity or of difference, the continuation or disruption of any prevailing discourse. See Figure 2 for conceptualization of this dimension. This dimension is similar to Burrell and Morgan's use of the traditional sociological distinctions between an interest in "change" or "regulation," but enables some advantages. Principally, the change-regulation distinction tended in most usages to assume the presence of a coherent dominant group or orders, and the primary conflict initiating change was class conflict. While many researchers do use a similar analysis of managerial or company domination, the more pressing "critical" concerns of the day are the ways dominant discourses (though often disorganized and disjunct) place limitations on people in general including managers and limit the successful functioning of organizations in meeting human needs. The problem is not group against group, but rather the suppression of parts of the human being and the presence of destructive control processes, technocracy, consumerism, careerism, environmental destruction, and

exclusive concern with economic growth (see Abercrombie et al. 1980, Mumby and Putnam 1992, Alvesson and Willmott 1995, Heckscher 1995). And further, the processes of domination are less often seen today as macro-sociological and more often as routine micro-practices in the work site itself (Knights and Willmott 1989, Deetz 1994a, d). The focus on discursive rather than group relations aids the understanding of domination and its reproduction.

The consensus pole draws attention to the way some research programs both seek order and treat order production as the dominant feature of natural and social systems. With such a conception, the primary goal of the research is to display a discovered order with a high degree of fidelity or verisimilitude. The descriptions hope to "mirror" entities and relations that exist out-there in a relative fixed state reflecting their "real" character. Language is treated as a system of representations, to be neutralized and made transparent, used only to display the presumed shared world. Existing orders are largely treated as natural and unproblematic. To a large extent through the highlighting of ordering principles, such orders are perpetuated. Random events and deviance are downplayed in significance in looking at norms and the normal, and attention is usually to processes reducing deviance, uncertainty, and dissonance. In most cases where deviance is itself of attention it tends to be normalized through looking at the production of deviant groups (i.e., other orders). Conflict and fragmentation are usually treated as system problems, and attention is given to how orders deal with them in attempts at maintenance.

The dissensus pole draws attention to research programs which consider struggle, conflict, and tensions to be the natural state. Research itself is seen as inevitably a move in a conflictual site. The existing orders indicate the suppression of basic conflicts and along with that the domination of people and their full variety of interests. Research aims at challenging mechanisms of order maintenance to reclaim conflicts and tension. The nonnormative aspects of human conduct and extraordinary responses are emphasized along with the importance of largely random and chance events. Rather than language naming and describing, researcher conceptions are seen as striking a difference, de- and re-differentiating experience (see Martin 1990, Cooper and Burrell 1988, Cooper 1989, Weedon 1987, Deetz 1992). The "mirror" gives way to the "lens" as the metaphor noting the shifting analytic attempt to see what could not be seen before and showing the researcher as positioned and active. For

Figure 2 Characterizations of the Consensus-Dissensus Dimension

Consensus	Dissensus
Trust	Suspicion
Hegemonic order as natural state	Conflicts over order as natural state
Naturalization of present	Present order is historicized and politicized
Integration and harmony are possible	Order indicates domination and suppressed conflicts
Research focuses on representation	Research focused on challenge and reconsideration (representation)
Mirror (reflecting) dominant metaphor	Lens (seeing / reading as) dominant metaphor
Validity central concern	Insight and praxis central concern
Theory as abstraction	Theory as opening
Unified science and triangulation	Positional complementarity
Science is neutral	Science is political
Life is discovery	Life is struggle and creation
Autonomous / free agent	Historically / socially situated agent
Researcher anonymous and out of time and space	Researcher named and positioned

dissensus style research, the generative capacity (the ability to challenge guiding assumptions, values, social practices, and routines) of an observation is more important than representational validity (see Gergen 1978, Rorty 1989). The research is, in Knights' (1992) sense, "anti-positive." Dissensus work does not deny the significance of an ordered observed world, rather, it takes it as a powerful (and power filled) product and works to break objectifications to show fuller potential and variety than is immediately apparent. For example, consensus orientations in cultural studies seek to discover the organizational culture or cultures. Dissensus orientations show the fragmentation inherent in any claim of culture and the work required for site subjects to maintain coherence in the face of this as well as subjects' own forms of resistance (see J. Martin 1990, 1992; Smircich and Calás 1987; Calás and Smircich 1991). Consensus orientations apply role and identity classifications and relate them to other variables. Dissensus orientations see identity as multiple, conflictual, and in process.

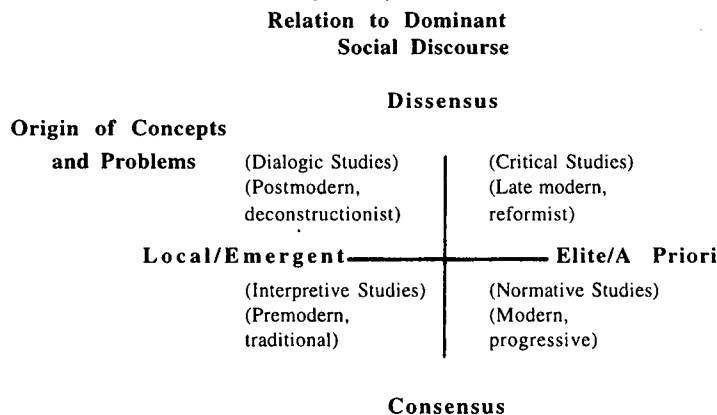
While these differences can be characterized clearly in abstraction, in continuous time every consensus arises out of and falls to dissensus, and every dissensus gives away to emerging (if temporary) consensus. The issue is not the ultimate outcome desired nor likely but rather which part of this flow through time is claimed in the research process. For example, while critical theorists clearly seek a social consensus which is more rational, their research tries to produce this through the creation of dissensus in place of dominant orders. For example, ideological critique in the critical theory conception of the negative dialectic is to reclaim conflict and destroy a false order rather than produce a

new one. Thus, I place them on the dissensus end. Critical theories differ from many dialogic or "post-modern" positions primarily in whether dissensus is produced by the use of elite understandings and procedures (as in Habermas 1984, 1987; Mumby 1987; Kunda 1992; or several essays in Alvesson and Willmott 1992) or in a deconstructive process whereby elite conceptions are unmasked to allow organizational activities to be given multiple and conflicting descriptions within particular sites (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, Martin 1990, Calás and Smircich 1991, Linstead 1993, Kilduff 1993). The dialogic outcome requires a constant dedifferentiation and redifferentiation for the sake of demythologizing and enriching natural language and consequently opening to reconsideration the most basic and certain experiences of everyday life.

Paradigms Lost, Orientations Still

The grid produced from these two dimensions still provides a spatially and visually convenient four-discursive space solution (hence we should always be easily reminded of its arbitrary and fictive character); see Figure 3. I will describe these as different discourses to note a way of articulating arguments and engaging in research practices rather than a means of reconstructive self-naming. Each discourse provides an orientation to organizations, a way of constituting people and events in them, and a way of reporting on them. I hope that this also leads us to think about which discourse is being used or how it is joined with others rather than pigeonholing specific authors. Figure 4 provides sketchy prototypical descriptions of each research orientation

Figure 3 **Contrasting Dimensions from the Metatheory of Representational Practices**



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Figure 4 Prototypical Discursive Features

Issue	Discourse			
	Normative	Interpretive	Critical	Dialogic
Basic goal	Law-like relations among objects	Display unified culture	Unmask domination	Reclaim conflict
Method	Nomothetic science	Hermeneutics, ethnography	Cultural criticism, ideology critique	Deconstruction, genology
Hope	Progressive emancipation	Recovery of integrative values	Reformation of social order	Claim a space for lost voices
Metaphor of social relations	Economic	Social	Political	Mass
Organization metaphor	Marketplace	Community	Polity	Carnival
Problems addressed	Inefficiency, disorder	Meaninglessness, illegitimacy	Domination, consent	Marginalization, conflict suppression
Concern with communication	Fidelity, influence, information needs	Social acculturation, group affirmation	Misrecognition, systematic distortion	Discursive closure
Narrative style	Scientific / technical, strategic	Romantic, embracing	Therapeutic, directive	Ironic, ambivalent
Time identity	Modern	Premodern	Late modern	Postmodern
Organizational benefits	Control, expertise	Commitment, quality work life	Participation, expanded knowledge	Diversity, creativity
Mood	Optimistic	Friendly	Suspicious	Playful
Social fear	Disorder	Depersonalization	Authority	Totalization, normalization

related to a dozen dimensions of interest shaping research programs in organization science.

Calling these discourses paradigms would be a mistake for several reasons. First, each of these four discourses, which are provisionally held apart for viewing, are filled with internal conflict and strife—including theory debates, moments of incommensurability, dilettantes, and tyrants. Second, the edges are not demarcated. Most researchers and teachers do not cluster around a prototype of each but gather at the crossroads, mix metaphors, borrow lines from other discourses, and dodging criticism by co-optation. Often practicing researchers happily move from one discourse to another without accounting for their own location. They operate like other organizational members borrowing on discourses that suit their immediate purposes and the fashions of the moment (see Deetz 1994d). There are certainly more and less serious plays across the lines, but the issue is not crossing but the seriousness of the play. And third, the discourses are not themselves sealed off from each other. They pose problems for each other and steal insights across the

lines. For example, the philosophical fights between Habermas and Gadamer, Habermas and Lyotard, Habermas and Luhmann, Foucault and everybody, have left their traces in each one's work. From these struggles, the various organization research programs based in these works have gained enriched conceptions of power, knowledge, agency, and political action (see Mumby and Putnam 1992, for example).

Provisional ordering of discourses is not to police the lines, but to provide a view of the social resources from which researchers draw and an understanding of the stock arguments used by those who do police the lines. The ideal types aid the understanding of differences that matter that are hard to see in the flow of research activity. The discursive orientation here hopes to provide insights with words which differentiate research activities and justifications before they are merely captured by the category named and become part of the commerce of research. Clarifying the tendencies in specific types of research positions helps clarify debates and the relation of different groups to them. For example, the interpretive, critical, and dialogic

critiques of normative research are quite different. Normative researchers who are accustomed to making arguments against subjectivity and traditionalism simply miss the point of each of these critiques; they often reduce them to abstract and confused presentations of what they think "opponents" should be saying rather than concrete but different arguments from what they expected.

Further, while most researchers are not purists, their work carries assumptions and responsibilities which are central to understanding and evaluating their work, but are rarely explicit in study reports. For example, many feminists' writings carry a general sympathy with the conceptual and analytic power of dialogic research programs, while they still wish to have a political agenda that requires critical preconceptions which assume social divisions and gender-based domination to be general (see Fraser and Nicholson 1988, Flax 1990). Such works (e.g., Martin 1990, 1994) can be classified as dialogic, but the ethical and political character of many of these studies can not be justified easily with dialogic conceptions alone. The distinctions developed in this essay can help display the tensions and the resources from which such researchers draw to conduct and justify their work.

This can further be shown using my own work as an example. I often draw on conceptions from critical and dialogic writings. For me, critical theory conceptions of ideology and distorted communication provide useful sensitizing concepts and an analytic framework for looking for micro-practices of control, discursive closure, conflict suppression, and skewed representation in organizational sites. But rarely are these conceptions closely tied to the full critical theory agenda. They require considerable reworking in specific sites, and the results of my studies aim more at finding and giving suppressed positions a means of expression than realizing an ideal speech situation or reaching a purer consensus (see Deetz 1994b, in press a, b). What is important is not whether I am a late-modern critical theorist or a dialogic post-modernist, but rather the meaning and implications of concepts that I draw from these two competitive research orientations. My degree of consistency is of less interest than how I handle the tension and whether the two conceptual resources provide an interesting analysis or intervention. When I submit a study report for publication I should not have to answer to "normative" study criteria nor preform group membership rituals of purification based on some categorization. But I carry special responsibilities. I must answer to some criteria based on some community agreement. But when conflictual communities are

involved I assume a greater responsibility to justify the work and explicitly deal with the tensions. Rarely do I have the page space to reconstruct the entire philosophy of science supporting choices I made in the work, especially in enough detail to satisfy reviewers with a firm and/or singular philosophy of science of their own. Some clarity and general understanding in alternative research orientations provide guidance and accountability or at least a common stock of material for building and evaluating new arguments in these cases.

In an ideal research program we might identify a complementary relation among research orientations, each asking different questions at different moments and each at the moment answering to specific criteria of an orientation. This might operate as kind of rotation among incompatible orientations without any being simply a prelude or supplement to another. For example, my work relies much on a conception of discursive closure where cooperative decision making is hampered by arbitrary limits enacted in the discussion (see Deetz 1992, pp. 187 ff.). As a *critical* researcher I must show how these closures are intrusions of power relations usually based in or supporting social divisions which lead to distorted communication and a false consensus. My study appeals to reason, logical analyses, and a coherent demonstration. As a *dialogic* researcher I see these closures as the suppression of conflicts and see my own concerns with consensus and appeals to reason as acts of closure.

My analysis is now judged by the way indeterminacy is allowed to reemerge and the compelling quality of recovered claims and voices. But at another moment yet, I may well pose *normative* questions: What means of closure are used most often? Who uses them? When are they used? Can people be taught to avoid them? A study designed to answer such questions now appeals to standards of definition, measurement, sampling, and data analysis. And further yet, there are *interpretive* concerns: What sense do these discursive moves have in a community? To what ends are they used? How are they self understood and justified? What are their actual consequences in specific circumstances? Interpretive research standards are now relevant. One can easily see how such a rotation through orientations might be constant and productive without in any sense losing the separation and tension, but precisely because of them. Yet, to be honest, few research programs are treated this way and most researchers, like myself, follow their own lines of interest, commitments, and training which leads to the eclipse of questions and concerns from other orientations. The point is still for the researcher to be clear about what type of questions

or claims drive the work at any particular time and how the work addresses the standards and criteria appropriate to that kind of work.

Some basic understanding of alternative research orientations enables short-hand accounts and helps distinguish intentional and/or productive ambiguities from careless and/or unproductive ones. As a reviewer I am often frustrated by nonreflective mixing of metaphors and conceptions in submitted essays. Often the claims made would require a different kind of study based on different assumptions and research activities. Partly I think this arises from authors trying to anticipate reviewer needs for normative type generalizations while being committed to a nonnormative research orientation, but it also comes from inattention to what makes different kinds of research different. Clearly a balance must be struck between (1) reifying research orientations through simplistic grids and subsequent over-characterizations and rigid standards or (2) having each study try to be totally self-justifying and cut loose from any community. While I do not think that there is any easy way out of this tension between committing new type 1 or type 2 errors, having good dimensions of contrast and good characterizations helps. I hope that these might be useful. A very brief sketch of the four orientations may aid further in highlighting differences and similarities in these community discourses along the suggested dimensions of difference (for development, see Alvesson and Deetz, *in press*).

The Discourse of Normative Studies

The researchers producing this discourse have been described as methodological determinists, functionalists, covering law theorists, or simply practicing the variable analytic tradition. This discourse is still largely dominant in North American organizational research and in applied organizational research throughout the world. It is reconstructed and well justified in Donaldson (1985). I describe this discourse as "normative" to emphasize the centrality of codification, the search for regularity, normalization of experience, and a strategic/directive control orientation (see Deetz 1973, Hollway 1984). Conceptions of operationalization, "objectivity," and law-like relations are merely the most obvious form of practice. The research practices mirror 19th century conceptions of the natural sciences often involving the most recent advances in operationalization, hypothesization, statistical reduction, and pattern "recognition" processes. Conventional practices and methodological determinism have in most cases replaced any strong allegiance to the positivist

philosophy of science that grounds many of the methods and assumptions. The "objects" constructed by the practices of this science are given qualities of constancy and permanence as if given specific attributes by nature. The combination of a priori conceptions and focus on consensus leads the artifacts of these practices to be described as facts.

The discourse is decisively modern in Gergen's (1992) sense, and the knowledge is considered positive, cumulative and progressive. A grand narrative of emancipation is shaped by a commitment to make a better world through discovery of fundamental processes and the increase of production (Lyotard 1984). The organization is usually treated as an existing object produced for instrumental ends, usually making money, though some conception of the invisible hand makes that goal well integrated with other social goals of development and widespread availability of goods and services.

This discourse is most present in classical management theories, theories of leadership, contingency theory, most other systems theories, and other places more completely described by Burrell and Morgan in their discussion of "functionalist." But it is also clearly present in those advocating the management of culture (e.g., Schein 1992, Deal and Kennedy 1982) through their conception of culture as a variable or object to be strategically deployed (see Barley, Meyer, and Gash 1988 on the normative co-optation of cultural research). Many of those working with new conceptions of organizations as "post-modern" (rather than postmodern approaches, Parker 1992) have a discourse primarily structured in a normative fashion (e.g., Bergquist 1993). Many Marxist studies utilize normative themes. Most academic Marxist works depend on privileging particular social communities and employ economic and structural explanations based on normative conceptions. Lenin's embracing of scientific management was in no way inconsistent. Within managed economies, the managerial elite group giving rise to the concepts is quite different, of course, from the managerial elite accepted by most Western European and North American studies. Elite planning and strategic management are generally highly dependent on this discourse (see Knights and Morgan 1991, Knights 1992).

The Discourse of Interpretive Studies

For interpretive researchers the organization is a social site, a special type of community which shares important characteristics with other types of communities. The emphasis is on a social rather than economic view of organizational activities. Traditional methods of studying communities are seen as especially useful.

The discourse often draws on traditional and premodern themes (Gergen 1992). This is not to suggest a focus on the past as much as a concern with those aspects of life which have not yet been systematized, instrumentalized and brought under the control of modernist logics and sciences. Interpretive studies accept much of the representational and consensual view of science seen in normative writings but shift the relation between theoretical conceptions and the talk of the subjects under study. People are not considered to be objects like other objects, but are active sense makers like the researcher. Theory is given a different conception and different role here. While theory may provide important sensitizing conceptions, it is not a device of classification nor tested in any simple and direct manner. The key conceptions and understandings must be worked out with the subjects under study. Research subjects can collaborate in displaying key features of their world. But like normative research the pressure is to get it right, to display unified, consensual culture in the way that it "actually" exists. The report is to display convincingly a unified way of life with all its complexities and contradictions.

Most researchers use ethnography, phenomenology, or hermeneutics in a rigorous way as the principal means of study. Studies are usually done in the field and are based on a prolonged period of observation and depth interviewing. The interest is in the full person in the organization; thus, social and life functions beyond the work process are considered. The workplace is seen as a site of human activity, one of those activities being "work" proper. The expressed goal of interpretive studies is to show how particular realities are socially produced and maintained through norms, rites, rituals, and daily activities. In much of the writings a clear preservationist, communitarian, or naturalist tone exists. It moves to save or record a life form with its complexity and creativity that may be lost to modern, instrumental life or overlooked in it. Gergen (1992) describes the romantic sense of this discourse with its depth and connection to the inner life. Cultural studies in organizations are interpretive to the extent that they have not been captured by normative, modernist co-optations (see Barley, Meyer, and Gash 1988; Enz 1992). Most interpretivists have taken culture to be an evocative metaphor for organizational life, rather than a variable or thing that an organization has (Smircich 1983; Frost et al. 1985, 1992).

Gradually, many researchers doing interpretive work have begun to question the logic of displaying a consensual unified culture and have attended more to its

fragmentation, tensions, and processes of conflict suppression (Martin 1992, Frost et al. 1992). And similarly, much more attention has been paid to the politics of representation and the role of the report author (Clifford and Marcus 1986, Marcus and Fischer 1986).

The Discourse of Critical Studies

Critical researchers see organizations in general as social historical creations accomplished in conditions of struggle and domination, a domination that often hides and suppresses meaningful conflict. Organizations are largely described as political sites; thus, general social theories and especially theories of decision making in the public sphere are seen as appropriate (see Deetz 1992, 1995). While commercial organizations could be positive social institutions providing forums for the articulation and resolution of important group conflicts over the use of natural resources, distribution of income, production of desirable goods and services, the development of personal qualities, and the direction of society, various forms of power and domination have led to skewed decision making and fostered social harms and significant waste and inefficiency. Either explicit or implicit in critical work is a goal to demonstrate and critique forms of domination, asymmetry, and distorted communication through showing how social constructions of reality can favor certain interests and alternative constructions can be obscured and misrecognized. If these can be overcome, conflicts among different interests can be reclaimed, openly discussed, and resolved with fairness and justice. The research aims at producing dissensus and providing forums for and models of discussion to aid in the building of more open consensus. Of special concern are forms of false consciousness, consent, systematically distorted communication, routines, and normalizations which produce partial interests and keep people from genuinely understanding, expressing, or acting on their own interests (Alvesson and Deetz, in press; Alvesson and Willmott 1992; Mumby 1988). Of the four orientations, critical studies have the most explicit set of value commitments and most direct attention to moral and ethical issues. With this, much of the discourse has a suspicious and therapeutic tone, but also a theory of agency which provides an additional activist tone. People can and should act on these conditions through improved understanding as well as access to communication forums.

Studies have focused both on the external relations of organizations to the wider society, especially the social effects of corporate colonization, rationalization of society, and the domination of the public sphere,

and on the internal relations in terms of the domination by instrumental reasoning, discursive closures, and consent processes (see Vallas 1993, Deetz 1992). Critical studies include a large group of researchers who are different in theory and conception but who share important discursive features in their writing. They include Frankfurt school critical theorists (see Alvesson and Willmott 1992, for examples; Czarniawska-Joerges 1988; Mumby 1988; Alvesson 1987), conflict theorists (Dahrendorf 1959, Lehman and Young 1974), structurationists (Giddens 1984, 1991), some versions of feminist work (e.g., Harding 1991, Pringle 1988), and most doing recent versions of labor process theory (Braverman 1974; Burawoy 1979, 1985; Knights and Willmott 1990). While not necessarily so, in practice researchers working from the later, more explicitly political and moral writings of Foucault engage in a critical discourse (see Knights 1992).

The Discourse of Dialogic Studies

I have chosen the term "dialogic" rather than the more obvious "postmodernist" to organize this discourse because it attends to key features of this work and because of the growing commercial use of the term "postmodern," which makes it increasingly difficult to distinguish between realist assumptions about a changing world (a postmodern world which as well could be postindustrial, post-Fordist, or ad hoc) and a postmodern or dialogic discourse which denies realist assumptions (Parker 1992, Alvesson and Deetz, in press). The term also makes it easier to include older theories like Bakhtin's (see Shotter 1993, Tyler 1988). Their themes include focusing on the constructed nature of people and reality, emphasizing language as a system of distinctions which are central to the construction process, arguing against grand narratives and large-scale theoretical systems such as Marxism or functionalism, emphasizing the power/knowledge connection and the role of claims of expertise in systems of domination, emphasizing the fluid and hyper-real nature of the contemporary world and role of mass media and information technologies, and stressing narrative/fiction/rhetoric as central to the research process. Examples of writings including this discourse include: Hawes (1991), Martin (1990), Calás and Smircich (1991), Mumby and Putnam (1992), Knights (1992), Burrell (1988), and several of the essays in Hassard and Parker (1993).

Dialogic studies focus on the fragmentation and potential disunity in any discourse. Like critical studies the concern is with asymmetry and domination, but unlike the critical studies' predefinition of groups and

types of domination, domination is considered mobile, situational, not done by anyone. Group and personal identity cannot be seen as fixed or unitary. The attention is to reclaim conflicts suppressed in everyday life realities, meaning systems, and self conceptions and the enhancement of local forms of resistance. Fixed conceptions give way to the appeal of that beyond conception, the "otherness" of the world and other (B. Martin 1992, Linstead 1993). Rather than critical theory's reformation of the world they hope to show the partiality (the incompleteness and oneness) of reality and the hidden points of resistance and complexity (Martin 1990, 1994; Smircich and Calás 1987). In place of an active political agenda and the often utopian ideals therein, attention is to the space for a continually transforming world by recovery of marginalized and suppressed peoples and aspects of people.

Pluralism and Complementarity

The intent here has not been to display definitively new groups or to record self-defined groups, rather I hope to have better displayed differences that give some insight into different discourses in organization studies today, displaying some of the ways that they are alike and different. Burrell and Morgan provided a great service by clearly expressing alternatives to the dominant "functionalist" tradition. For deeply embedded, and often uncontested, in functionalist/normative studies has been the acceptance of a managerial bias in conception of the organization and articulation of organizational goals. The justification for this approach to research has often been grounded in a conception of corporations and management as a kind of value-neutral tool which scientific study can improve without direct attention to the uses to which this tool has been applied. With such a conception, scholarly concern could be narrowed to the perfectibility of the tool. To the extent that this conception has been useful, organization studies have enhanced the effective use of resources and fulfillment of human needs.

Many researchers are now questioning this "tool" version of organizations and research, claiming that researchers missed much regarding the nature and effects of modern organizations, and insufficient attention was given to their numerous social and political functions. With the presence of continued environmental destruction, economic instabilities, growing social inequality, and increased awareness of the diversity of social groups, more researchers (e.g., Alvesson and Willmott 1992) and managers (e.g., the development of the World Business Academy) are following Burrell

and Morgan in reconsidering the values and social effects of the so-called "neutral tool" and dominant forms of research. Understanding our alternatives requires understanding both the relation of conceptions to the various social stakeholders and the relation of research discourse to dominant social discourses. Thinking through these relations helps provide an opening for discussion.

Despite all the differences and tensions within any display of competitive research traditions, the problems and injustice of classification has to be balanced with the gains of clearly saying that different research programs have different goals and assumptions and require different forms of evaluation. As argued, the relations among these alternatives are not well thought in exclusionary, pluralistic, supplementary, or integrative terms. Each orientation creates a vision of social problems and tries to address them. Different orientations have developed specific ways of answering the types of questions they pose and do not work terribly well in answering the questions of others. The choice of orientation, to the extent that it can be freed from training histories and department/discipline politics, can probably be reduced to alternative conceptions of social good and preferred ways of living. This grounds theory and method debate in a moral debate that is neither terribly common nor explicit in organization science, but can be made clearer when research is considered as a set of interaction processes producing identifiable social discourses. Studies need to be understood and evaluated on their own terms but should also appeal to larger social needs where both the needs and means of accomplishment are contested. Understanding their form of discourse helps.

I, like many others, sometimes wish we were all multilingual, that we could move across orientations with grace and ease, but this type of Teflon-coated multiperspectival cosmopolitan envisioned by Morgan (1986) or Hassard (1991) is often both illusionary and weak (see Parker and McHugh 1991). Good scholars have deep commitments. Multiperspectivalism often leads to shallow readings and uses of alternative orientations since unexamined basic assumptions have unexpected hidden qualities. Some scholars are more multilingual than others, but doing good work within an orientation still must be prized first. A tenuous balance between tentativeness and commitment is probably a sign of maturity of any scholar. Struggling with understandings and having arguments across programs of work are important, but the outcome is well conceived in neither synthetic (integrative) nor additive (pluralistic, supplementary) terms. Complementarity of

forms of research questions and procedures is probably better (see Apel 1979, Albert et al. 1988). Not everyone needs to do each, but each has to be fostered both by giving space and taking their concerns and arguments seriously, seriously enough and with enough understanding to debate and make demands on all groups for justification and clarity of purpose.

Any research group dominating over time becomes inward looking, isolated from the problems of the larger society, and filled with blinders and trained incapacities. Its acts of perpetuation exceed its attempts at social service, its prophets become priests. Similar to most societies, marginalized research groups have had to learn two systems—their own and the dominant one—and dominant groups only one (Collins 1986). As we gradually learn socially the positive effects of diversity—beyond "separate but equal" and integration—organization science can also benefit from better discussions. This does not mean that we each should automatically find other groups' issues and procedures interesting or helpful, nor should we believe that all of them are. But let us make our claims and the relation between our claims and procedures clearer so objection and conflict can be on those grounds rather than impose traditional problem statements and methods on those doing something else. In doing so, the ultimate point is not in arguing it out to get it right, but to reclaim the suppressed tensions and conflicts among the many contemporary stakeholders to negotiate a life together based in appreciation of different and responsive decision making.

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Endnotes

¹This section is revised from an earlier discussion that appeared in Deetz 1994c.

²"Elite" is a loaded word, and I am uncomfortable with the negative connotations; but the word works precisely because it draws attention to privileging practices. Academic discourse growing out of the enlightenment is itself privileged in many regards, and it is hard to do either critical theory or normative science very long before you either implicitly or explicitly purport to be more rational, insightful, or knowing than those being studied. The enlightenment legacy provides a defining role for the intellectual and science, which is largely taken on by normative and critical researchers (i.e., the expert role for normative work, the leadership role for critical research). To say that they take a stance as an elite is not to claim, however, that

they are elitist, though some may be. The opposite given to elite here is local. I suspect that the better term would be "across place and time privilege," but that is too awkward.

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