1. INTRODUCTION: CONNECTING PRACTICES AND POLITICS

Funding increasingly is being recognized as an enabler for qualitative research. Part of this recognition has involved debunking the myth that qualitative research is cheap to do (Morse, 2002b). Funded qualitative research can take various forms. For example, the researcher might be granted a certain amount of money to be used directly for salaries, equipment, travel, or other expenses identified as necessary for the conduct of the research. In other cases, support for projects is offered “in kind”: The funder may choose to provide the researcher with access to specialist staff or equipment as a means of supporting the research rather than supplying cash. Thus, when we talk about funded qualitative research, it is not always money that we are talking about. Funded qualitative research is not a homogeneous category able to be reduced to a single understanding. In the same way that qualitative approaches to research are varied in focus and purpose, so are funded qualitative projects.

Seeking, gaining, and accepting funding for qualitative research is not a neutral, value-free process. Funding does more than enable a qualitative project to proceed. Any form of support for qualitative research will have its unique demands on both the researcher and the research project. In particular, the amount of freedom that researchers have—in terms of both project design and the form that the “products” of the research take—will vary depending on what type of support is received. The amount of funding
received also may be used to make statements about the relative worth of an individual researcher and to draw up rank tables of successful researchers and research institutions. Accepting funding aligns researchers with certain organizations and funding bodies. Allocation of funding reflects judgments being made as to what is, and is not, acceptable research or research worthy of being funded. Funding thus involves a series of choices being made, all of which have consequences both for the qualitative research itself and for the qualitative researcher. This chapter is about surfacing these choices, interrogating them, and exploring some of their effects. Such exploration involves scrutiny of the contested nature of research, our identities as qualitative researchers, and the nature of qualitative research itself. It moves the focus clearly onto the connections and interactions between qualitative research, funding, and politics.

The contemporary political climate at the time of writing this chapter is one that can be defined broadly as neo-liberal. Although there is no unitary or absolute form of neo-liberalism, neo-liberal governments, and the political regimes of truth that emanate therefrom, promote “notions of open markets, free trade, the reduction of the public sector, the decrease of state intervention in the economy and the deregulation of markets” (Torres, 2002, p. 368). Neo-liberal thought has permeated every aspect of contemporary Western society, including higher education and the world of research. This is evident from trends such as research increasingly being driven by corporate needs, students being positioned and referred to as consumers, and a climate where “paymasters and administrators accrete authority over academics” (Miller, 2003, p. 897). There has been a perceptible shift by governments in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and elsewhere from an emphasis on the social aspects of government to the economic aspects, with the concomitant transformation of social projects to an enterprise form and ethos emphasizing outcomes in terms of economically driven balance sheets and report cards. As Shore and Wright (1999) point out, universities are just one of the sites where “neo-liberal ideas and practices are displacing the norms and models of good government established by the post-war, welfare state” (p. 558). In such a political climate, research increasingly is viewed as an enterprise and is being colonized by corporate and market derived and sustained understandings and premises.

It is with this political backdrop always in mind that this chapter explores aspects of the practicalities of doing funded qualitative research. I asserted in the previous edition of the Handbook, some 5 years ago (Cheek, 2000), that discussions of “doing” funded qualitative research often focus only on the writing of proposals or coming up with research ideas. What precedes proposal development in terms of identifying potential funders, and what follows receipt of funding, largely remains an “untold” story. My reading of the literature suggests that this is still the case. What has changed is that managerial, legal, scientific, and economic discourses (that is, ways of thinking and writing about aspects of reality) (Kress, 1985) have emerged with increasing prominence in terms of shaping and influencing the direction of funded qualitative research, in keeping with the increased influence of neo-liberal–driven agendas. Thus, in this
chapter, as in my earlier piece of writing, I focus on identifying and approaching potential funding sources as well as on decisions and choices that arise once funding has been acquired. However, it is now not a matter of changing registers at the end of a chapter (Cheek, 2000) to consider a super-context where the “focus is on larger social issues and forces that impact on the funded qualitative researcher” to introduce a “more critical voice, one that probes, challenges, and tests assumptions about . . . the research market and the concomitant commodification of research” (p. 415). Rather, this register is present throughout—the practice of doing funded qualitative research cannot be separated from the political context in which it operates. Thus, the politics that sits behind many of the practices of funded qualitative research will be explored and will form as much a focus of the chapter as the “doing” of funded qualitative research.

As the author of this text, I am writing from a number of positions. Those that I identify are qualitative researcher, funded researcher, coeditor and associate editor of journals, panel member for a number of granting bodies, and reviewer for a number of granting schemes and journals. Just as I have argued that the intersection of qualitative research and funding creates tensions, so do the intersections of these various subject positions that I occupy at any one point in time. For example, as an individual committed to qualitative research as a legitimate and worthwhile research approach in its own right, and defined in its own right, at times I question my motives in applying for funding. Is the funding to do a project that I believe is important and should be done my driving motivation, or is it more that an opportunity to get funding has arisen and I should pursue that? In other words, what is more important to me—the funding or the project? Myself as researcher or myself as entrepreneur? I find myself on occasion torn between these positions because I, like many other researchers, am buffeted by the political context in which I operate.

An example of such buffeting is that while I am sitting here writing this chapter, I have in front of me an e-mail communication congratulating me for being in “the top 10” researchers in the part of the university in which I am located. At first this might seem innocuous or even a good thing, but a closer examination of the premises for such a ranking raises many important questions and issues. First, the criteria used to rank researchers are related to a narrow range of measures. There is no consideration given to the fact that the amount of funding received may be more a product of how much is needed to do a particular research project than a reflection of the relative ability of the researcher. For example, my research does not require large pieces of equipment worth many hundreds of thousands of dollars. Neither is there any consideration that an effect of such a rating based on individual performance may be to discourage collaboration and mentoring of other researchers, because the grant amount or research outcomes will need to be “split” across individuals in the research team. This applies to publications as well: The skill of slicing material into as many articles as possible may be more desirable than having something to say. Similarly, single-author publications will be more strategic than having to “share” performance. Nor is there any consideration of whether or not it is possible to simply transport the
language and techniques of corporate management and neo-liberal enterprise culture, such as "the measurement of 'output' and 'efficiency' through competitive league tables, 'performance indicators' and other statistical indices of 'productivity'" (Shore & Wright, 1999, p. 564) into the university and research context. That it is possible, indeed desirable, to do so is a given—indicative of the pervasive influence of the rationality of neo-liberalism.

Questions that I have been asking myself in the past few months, and again while I am actually writing this chapter, include the following: Is it important to me that I am on the "league table" of the top 10 researchers in my area, or is it more important to me that I challenge the assumptions on which such tables are drawn up? Is it better to critique from within—that is, as a person who does attract relatively large sums of money—or does that involve selling out in order to get into that position in the first place, and thereby assisting in perpetuating the structures that I aim to critique? How do I survive in an academic climate where I, like every other facet of the context, am being reduced to a dollar value worked out according to a series of formulae, a large driver in which is the amount of funding received for research? If the amount of funding is key, then where does that leave qualitative research, as I am not going to need pieces of equipment worth large amounts of dollars? What should my response be when I am invited onto grants as "the qualitative person" or because "we thought it would useful to have a bit of qualitative research in it"? My personal journey and explorations with respect to these types of questions form the text to follow. I am sure that many qualitative researchers either are confronting similar issues, or will be, in the near future. It is important that these stories are told. This chapter is a beginning contribution to such a telling.

In what follows, however, I have deliberately tried to avoid setting up any form of polemic. Thus, I am not arguing for, or against, doing funded qualitative research. Rather, I am exploring what "doing" funded qualitative research might mean for both the researcher and the research. I am viewing funded qualitative research as text, recognizing that any text has embedded within it assumptions about the reality in question and a certain view that is being conveyed to the reader of the text. This is the subtext or "the hidden script" (Sachs, 1996). This chapter attempts to surface and explore the often hidden script that shapes and constructs understandings about funded qualitative research. As such, it should not be read as either for or against funded—or any other type—of research. Rather, it should be read as text itself, text that takes a particular view of funded qualitative research. As with any text, it is up to readers as to how they position themselves with respect to that view.
other, which is emerging with increasing emphasis in the area where I work, is to respond to tenders that have been advertised from industry or government for clearly defined and clearly delineated research projects, usually of very short duration. This is sometimes known as tendered research. The reason why this type of research is emerging with more prominence in the area that I work in is that this money is perceived, rightly or wrongly, as easier to win than funding in more traditional granting schemes, in which success rates can be less than 20% and it takes months for decisions to be made by a long (and sometimes cumbersome) process of peer review. Applications for these traditional schemes are very demanding and can take up to 6 months to develop, thereby decreasing the attractiveness of such schemes. In addition, it tends to be easier for institutions, with their increasing enterprise orientation, to make a profit from tendered research, in that researcher time will be paid for (whereas in Australia, many “traditional” funding schemes will not pay the time of the chief investigators) and profit margins can be built in. In fact, in many universities in Australia, it is not possible to put in a tender for research until it has been checked by business development units to ensure that the tender has maximized revenue-generating possibilities. There is thus an overt emphasis on the research being at least as much about revenue generation as about the actual research to be conducted. In more traditional schemes, such profit usually is not possible. In fact, in many of these schemes, projects often are not funded for the full amount applied for, with the researcher left to absorb the shortfall. For example, in some of the grants I hold, the granting body will pay a fixed amount towards the oncosts (the institution’s contribution toward payroll tax, worker’s compensation, and superannuation) of research personnel. However, in some schemes this is less than the oncosts charged by the institution in which I work. This immediately leaves me with a shortfall in funding in this area before I begin. The cumulative effect of this, across several grants, often means that I am actually working on grants as a research assistant on my own time, on weekends and nights, because I do not have enough funds to cover the research after all the “off the top” costs have been taken out. From a purely financial point of view, this makes tendered research a much more attractive proposition, particularly if institutions offer incentives to individual researchers as rewards for revenue generation.

Does this matter? The short answer is that yes, it does. It has serious implications both for qualitative research itself and for the role that qualitative researchers might find themselves playing in funded research. The type of funding sought affects the type of research that can be done. For example, it is highly unlikely that a government department will tender for projects involving long time frames. This immediately eliminates qualitative approaches requiring longer periods in the field and immersion in the data. My experience is that if a qualitative approach is asked for (and it is still the case in Australia that this is the exception rather than the rule), then it is likely to involve the conduct of an already specified number of workshops, focus groups, or interviews. In other words, tendered research is often more about a qualitative researcher operationalizing someone else’s idea, intent, and design than it is about
designing research to address an issue that the researchers themselves have identified. Even if the tender is in a particular substantive area of interest, it is unlikely that the emphases in the proposed research will be those of the researcher per se. This does not necessarily mean that the research is not valuable or important, but it does mean that the researcher is positioned differently in relation to the research process. It also has implications for understandings and possible future directions of qualitative research itself. If tendered research becomes more prominent, that may skew the type of qualitative research that gets done.

Another emerging trend that I have noticed in the quest to gain an edge in locating funding is the “tacking on” of a (usually small) qualitative component to large-scale, essentially quantitative studies in funding proposals. On one hand, this is an acknowledgment that there are limitations with measuring, for example, only outcomes and opinions. However, the effect of this “tacking on,” paradoxically, can be to marginalize qualitative research even more. Often, the qualitative component of such studies involves the application of a few qualitative techniques, devoid of any theoretical grounding. Carey and Swanson (2003) note that “some applications drop in a focus group with no explanation of why it is being proposed or how the expected information will be used, and no description of the method or analysis plans. Although a similarly inappropriate use of quantitative methods could occur, I [sic] have not seen that scenario” (p. 856). This presents a very real possibility of qualitative research becoming more a technique than a theoretically grounded research approach.

Qualitative research is a way of thinking, not a method. When I am approached to be “the qualitative person” on a funding proposal that needs a “qualitative bit or part,” that alerts me to the fact that the research is likely to be compartmentalized into the main study and the qualitative component, which is usually much smaller, with far fewer dollars attached to it, and leaves me with little control over the direction of the project itself. Therefore, I am very careful when considering requests of this type. It is important to determine if the proposal going forward for funding, or the tender being called for, understands qualitative research as more than just a few techniques able to be tacked onto the “real” research. It is important to make a decision as to what that means for me as a researcher and what actions I will take in response. I have experienced being in a project in which more than 90% of a large budget was for the quantitative aspects of the study and the qualitative research was underfunded, not well understood, and undervalued. I will not put myself in that position again. By participating in that situation, however, I was able to change the thinking of members of the team and now enjoy very productive and fruitful relationships with them on other funded projects. This is but one example of the underlying and ongoing tensions that permeate the politics and practice of funded qualitative research. I cannot present a “right way” of acting in the funding process; there is no right or wrong way of acting. Rather, the discussion is designed to raise consciousness about what are often unintended consequences with respect to the positioning of both qualitative research and qualitative researchers in funded proposals and research teams.
An important part of being able to locate funding for qualitative research is to be in a position to know about and identify potential funding sources. Zagury (1997) has identified six categories of potential funding sources. These are local community funds, special purpose foundations, family-sponsored foundations, national foundations, government grants and corporate foundations, and corporate funding. It is important to be aware that there are distinct national differences in types and patterns of funding. Hence, it may well be that in certain countries, some of the above categories of funders are of less significance than in others.

One place to start in identifying potential funders is to obtain publications that list them. One such publication is *The GrantSearch Register of Australian Funding* (Summers, 2003). Watching advertisements in newspapers, particularly in the contract/tender section, is another way of identifying potential funding sources, as is getting on the mailing list of the university research office (for those who work in a university setting). Another useful way of learning about potential funding sources that may not be advertised or appear in any grant register or list is to talk to people who have received funding in areas similar to the proposed research. Thus, regardless of the actual mix of funding sources in any particular country or part of the country (there are regional variations in many nations), it is imperative that researchers “do their homework” with respect to uncovering potential funding sources. In light of the preceding discussion, this homework will involve working out what type of funding to seek or apply for, and how this funding might position both the researcher and the qualitative research itself.

Once potential funders are identified, it is important to get as much information as possible about them. One way of doing this is to obtain copies of funding guidelines and/or annual reports. These documents, among other things, give a good overview of the types of projects potential funders have funded in the past and are likely to fund in the future. From this, researchers can assess whether their proposed research seems to fit the priorities and interests of the funder concerned. If review of documentation from the agency reveals it as a viable potential funder for the research in question, the next step is to approach the agency directly to discuss the research idea. How this is done will vary, depending on the type of sponsor. For example, if the funder calls for proposals on an annual basis, the researcher can initiate contact with the office that deals with these applications, both to acquire information about the process and to introduce both the research and the researcher to the people who are likely to be dealing with the application administratively. Speaking with representatives of the agency gives insight into its processes and practices with respect to the way that funding is allocated. Furthermore, it should be possible to ascertain more information about what types of research have been funded in the past. The agency may even supply reports of completed research and/or copies of proposals that have been funded. This information is invaluable for ascertaining the format and scope expected of a proposal, as well as in assisting in the better formulation of ideas, in language appropriate to the funder in question.
Examination of previously funded research also enables the researcher to better locate the proposed study in terms of work already done in the area. Personal communication with potential funding bodies is thus critical, as it provides insights and advice not readily available elsewhere.

Much of what has been discussed also applies when researchers approach a funding agency that does not have regular funding rounds but instead tends to fund research on a more ad hoc basis. One difference is that it may not be immediately obvious whom to contact in the sponsor's organization. It is important to find the right person, in the right section in the organization, to talk to about the intended research and the possibility of funding for it. In this way, the researcher becomes familiar with the organization, and the organization gets to know the researcher. This is important, as a crucial question in funders' minds is whether they can trust a particular researcher to successfully complete a worthwhile project once money is committed to it. When speaking to a funder's representative, it is important to present a clear, simple idea that is both researchable and likely to produce benefits and outcomes that are valuable from the funder's perspective. Consider submitting a concept paper first, either by post or in person, before making personal contact with a representative of the organization. The concept paper could include any preliminary work done or data already collected. This allows the researcher to address the points identified by Bogdan and Biklen (1998) as being important when initiating contact with funders: “1. What have you done already? 2. What themes, concerns, or topics have emerged in your preliminary work? What analytic questions are you pursuing?” (p. 70).

Accompanying the concept paper should be a statement of the researcher's track record. It is important to demonstrate that there is every likelihood, based on past experience, that the research will be completed on time and within budget. Not only is it important to present the research idea, it also is important to present the researchers themselves. One of the problems facing many researchers is the catch-22 situation of needing a track record to attract funding, while not being able to get the funding needed to build up a track record. One way around this is to join a research team that already has established a track record in the same or a closely related area of research, and to work as part of that team. This has a further benefit of establishing contact with the research expertise that is collectively present. It is an ideal way to learn about the research process in a safe way and can lead to the formation of enduring research relationships between colleagues. Another strategy for building a track record is to acquire some form of seed funding. The process may be less competitive than acquiring grants from larger funding bodies, and the funding may be directed to more novice researchers. Such seed funding, though usually modest in amount, can be enough to begin a small research project that can lead to publications and thus provide a foundation on which other research can be built.

What should be evident by now is that acquiring funding is not a quick or easy process. Much lead time often is needed for planning and for establishing research
credentials and rapport with funding sources. Failures are inevitable, and it is difficult not to take these personally. Other researchers can provide valuable advice and support throughout this process. As I pointed out previously, many research textbooks begin and end their discussions of how to acquire funding by talking about proposal writing. This, I believe, is nowhere near enough. What has just been discussed—namely, the strategies that must be employed to get to the point where one can write a proposal for a specific funding agency—is, in my opinion, the actual start of “doing” funded qualitative research. In addition, it is imperative to consider, at every stage of the funding process, the politics behind funding itself and any particular funding bid.

3. Allocating Funding: Practices and Politics

The next step, after identifying a potential funder, is crafting a proposal to seek funding for the research. I have deliberately used the word “crafting” because proposal writing is a craft requiring a unique set of skills, most of which are learned as a result of practice. Writing a proposal involves shaping and tailoring a research idea to fit the guidelines or application process imposed by the intended funding agency. Each application, even for the same project, will vary depending on the characteristics and requirements of the funder being approached. When a proposal is written for a potential sponsor’s consideration, it is written for a particular audience, whose members have assumptions and expectations of the form a proposal should take and the language it should use. Thus, as I have emphasized before, it is important for researchers to know that audience and its expectations.

What follows is not about proposal writing per se. Much already has been written about this. For example, a recent edition of Qualitative Health Research (Vol. 3, No. 6, July 2003) was devoted to a discussion of qualitative research proposals. Several excellent articles focused on crafting and developing qualitative proposals, along with some of the politics that sits behind this. In these articles, the authors share their experiences by telling their stories of the development, and at times defense, of their proposals. Here, I will continue to expose aspects of what otherwise may remain hidden with respect to the politics and practice of allocating funding for qualitative research.

Writing a proposal is a political process. Researchers need to consider whether the qualitative approach proposed and the likely outcomes of the research “fit” the agenda of the funding body. It is quite reasonable for those who provide funding for research to ask whether or not the proposed project represents appropriate use of the funds for which they have responsibility. The majority of funders take the allocation of monies very seriously. They must weigh the relative merits, from their point of view, of proposals competing for limited resources. Thus, it is essential for the proposal submitted to be clear in terms of its purpose and rationale. Are the outcomes of the project stated? Are they important, useful, and able to make a difference in people’s lives?
Some funding bodies may be a little self-serving in their reasons for funding specific proposals, but on the whole, funders do make genuine efforts to fund worthy research proposals, and most treat the selection process very seriously. Funders who are seeking to let a tender for research, while still wanting to ensure that the research done will meet high standards, have other considerations as well. One of these will be cost. This lies at the heart of the tendering process, which is designed for the funder to test the research marketplace in terms of what their money can buy. Qualitative researchers entering this world need to understand the market-driven parameters of tendered research and position themselves competitively. Offering value for money means not only meeting high standards in the research; it also means considering how much, or little, money needs to be allocated to attain those standards.

The trend for universities in Australia, as elsewhere, is to move more into the world of tenders that once belonged to market researchers and consultants. This has meant that university-based qualitative researchers have had to confront issues that they may have been able to ignore in the past. The inherent quality of research no longer is the only consideration. Indeed, understandings of "quality" themselves may have undergone transformation, with traditional measures such as peer review playing less of a role and other factors assuming more prominence, such as perceived value for money. Thus, some means of acquiring funding are becoming overt forms of selling oneself and one's research skills in the research marketplace. The funder does not fund an idea; rather, a researcher's time and expertise are bought to conduct a piece of defined research the agency or organization wants done. This concept, as I have suggested previously and will return to at the end of the chapter, creates new and different tensions for the funded qualitative researcher. Not the least of these tensions revolves around what research funding is for: either remuneration for selling skills, thereby contributing to university or researcher income, or enabling the conduct of research identified by the researcher as important and needing to be done. Of course, these may not be mutually exclusive, although in my experience one or the other tends to be at the fore in any particular funding situation.

Shaping all application forms or guidelines provided by funders are assumptions, often unwritten and unspoken, about research and the way that research is understood. It is important to excavate these assumptions and understandings, for two reasons. The first is to work out whether the funding body is likely to fund qualitative research. Are the guidelines structured in such a way that it is impossible to "fit" qualitative research into them? As Lidz and Ricci (1990) point out, reviewers and funders, like all of us, have "culturally prescribed ideas about 'real' research" (p. 114). The application form and the way that it is structured provide insight and clues as to the funder's particular culturally prescribed ideas about research. Second, in light of some of the preceding discussion, insights also can be gleaned about the way that qualitative research, if present in a detailed tender brief, is understood. Hence, texts such as funding guidelines, tender briefs, and research grant application forms must be read...
carefully, not only for what they say and how they say it, but also for what they do not say. Such a critical reading enables qualitative researchers to take up an informed political position in relation to a particular funding source.

Another guide to the likely success of qualitative proposals is the composition of the review panel used by the funder. Does it contain people who are expert in qualitative research? Does it allow for the possibility for the committee to seek expert opinion outside the committee itself if a proposal comes in that is not within the methodological expertise of committee members? Morse (2003a), Parahoo (2003), and many others have noted that reviews of research proposals can indicate real ignorance about qualitative research, such as asking for power calculations for sample size. Further, Morse (2003a) notes that sometimes the seeking and/or assumption of “expert” advice about qualitative research can be very limited and somewhat ad hoc. The committee members know someone who uses qualitative research or someone who has done a workshop or short course on qualitative research, and “they use these isolated ‘facts’ as gold standards” (Morse, 2003a, p. 740). Morse refers to this sort of climate as “denigrative” of qualitative research and calls for agencies to be made more accountable for “decisions based on inaccurate, incorrect, or invalid reviews” (2003a, p. 739). Further, she notes that even if there are qualitative reviewers on panels, they invariably are in the minority, often being a “faint voice” on funding panels (Morse, 2002b, p. 1308). If the practice of averaging all the panel members’ scores for a particular proposal is followed, then in many instances, because of the relative lack of expertise in and appreciation for qualitative research among the majority of panel members, it is unlikely that average scores for qualitative proposals will be high enough for these proposals to be recommended for funding.

Once the decision has been made to pursue funding from a particular source, the instructions given for applying for funds must be followed carefully. I have reviewed many research funding applications for which it was evident that instructions were not followed. To improve your project’s chances of being funded, follow all instructions, beginning with the basics. When asked to confine the application to a certain page limit or word limit, do so. Similarly, if asked to explain something in a lay person’s terms, do so. No one is impressed by impenetrable language. Perhaps most crucial is following instructions meticulously with respect to the detail required about the research budget and the way the funds will be used. Many claims appear in proposals for amounts that are obviously well beyond the funding parameters of the grants program in question. Put simply, the proposal must be tailored to the guides, not the guides to the proposal. One strategy employed by many successful researchers to assist in ensuring that the proposal closely approximates the guidelines is to get colleagues to read the draft proposal and provide critical comments.

A key point to bear in mind is that any research proposal, qualitative or not, must formulate a clear issue or question. The initial idea that provided the impetus for the research must be transformed into a researchable focus. The rest of the proposal must
unpack that research question and demonstrate how the approach to be taken will enable it to be answered. The proposed research must be contextualized in terms of what has preceded it. The study must be situated in terms of what others are doing and how this research links to that of others. It must be justified in terms of approach and design, having a clear direction and focus with clearly achievable outcomes in line with the funder's priorities and stated goals. The credentials of the researcher or research team also need to be established. The amount of information given about the research design, analysis, and data collection will be determined in part by the format of the guidelines or application form. The proposal must be written so that the reader can understand clearly from the document what is intended for the study, and why. As the proposal is being written and after it is submitted, it is important to ascertain the deadlines and timelines involved, as well as the procedures followed by the decision-making person or committee. In other words, it is important to gain insight into the process of allocating funds. Such insight prepares the researcher to expect a response in a certain format within a set time, and it informs any necessary follow-up.

When the decision about funding finally is made, there are usually three possible outcomes. First, the request may be approved. In this case, the researcher receives funding, and the research commences as soon as all appropriate permissions, such as ethics clearance, are obtained. Another possible outcome is that the researcher is asked to add or change something, for instance, to supply more information about one or more aspects of the proposal. This should be interpreted as a positive sign. More often than not, it means that the funder is considering the request seriously and feels it has some merit; certain aspects of it, however, need clarification before the funder is willing to commit funds. In another version of this outcome, the researcher may be asked if the study could be conducted with a reduced budget, and if so, how. This is not unusual. Sometimes funders have set amounts to allocate, and if the proposed study is toward the bottom of the list of projects they wish to fund, they may be able to offer only a portion of the funds requested. It is important that researchers think carefully about whether to accept such funding. I believe that funded research should not be attempted without adequate support for the activities necessary to the research. It is very tempting to accept any funding offered, but inadequate funding can lead to all sorts of problems in actually doing research. Clearly, research funding poses issues not only about the wise use of funds but also about the wisdom of whether or not to accept funds in the first place.

The third possible outcome is one that is becoming all too common, given the increasing competition for grants: The request for funding is rejected. If this happens, it is important to get as much feedback as possible. Make an appointment to speak to the chair of the committee or a representative of the trust, foundation, or other organization making the decision. Find out as much as possible. Copies of the reviewers’ reports may be made available, and these often contain useful critiques that can be used in preparing the proposal for resubmission or submission to another agency. If these reports cannot be obtained, or in addition to them, a list of the projects that were
successful may be available. This list may give insights into whether the idea did in fact match the funding priorities of the funder, and what the funder sought in successful proposals. If no feedback at all is available from the funder, then ask researchers who have been funded to review the unsuccessful proposal and to help in debriefing the process just undergone. Talking it through may reveal things that can be done differently in the next application. However, at all times researchers should be aware of their odds of success. In many grants programs in Australia, for example, the success rate is below 20%. Such low success rates are increasingly the case in most countries as the competition for shrinking funding sources grows relentlessly. It is much more likely for researchers not to acquire funding than to be successful. Research proposals take much time and effort to complete, and it is hard to cope with rejection, but it may help to remember that no researcher is alone. By maintaining contact with others and setting in place the strategies outlined so far in this chapter, the chances of success can be maximized.

4. NAVIGATING ETHICS COMMITTEES: PRACTICES AND POLITICS

Receiving a recommendation for funding is not the end of the review process. Funded qualitative research, like other forms of research, needs to undergo a process of formal ethics review. Ethics committees thus become another layer of decision making as to what research will be, and will not be, funded. Funds may not be released until ethics approval is formally received, or if they are released, the research might not be able to proceed until ethics approval has been given. In the university in which I am located, and in keeping with standard practice in Australia, I cannot conduct research with human participants until I have formal ethics approval from the university’s Human Research Ethics Committee, as well as from any relevant ethics committees at the sites where my research is situated. An issue for qualitative researchers relates to the role and function of ethics committees with respect to giving such approval. Lincoln and Tierney (2002) assert that there is evidence in the United States that some qualitative researchers are having problems getting research that has already been funded through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) ethics process. In the United States, IRBs were initiated in 1966 (Riesman, 2002) following an order from the U.S. Surgeon General in response to questionable medical research involving elderly patients being injected with live cancer cells. Further regulations designed to protect human subjects became effective in 1974. Thus, the driving force in the establishment of IRBs was the protection of human subjects. This was in keeping with developments stemming from the Nuremberg Code, promulgated in the aftermath of unethical medical experimentation on prisoners and concentration camp inmates during World War II. Thus, the original focus of IRBs and the context from which they emerged was that of medicine and the scientific discourse that underpins medicine.
Similarly, in the United Kingdom, the Royal College of Physicians in 1967 recommended that all medical research be subject to ethical review, and by 1991 every health district was required to have a Local Research Ethics Committee (LREC), with Multi-centre Research Ethics Committees (MRECs) emerging as a means of helping streamline proposals that otherwise would have to go through numerous LRECs (Ramcharan & Cutcliffe, 2001). In the United Kingdom, as in the United States, the formalizing of ethics requirements and the establishment of ethics committees was derived and driven largely by practices from medical research. This is also the case in Australia. For example, university-based Human Research Ethics Committees are modeled on National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines. These apply to all research involving humans, whether it is health related or not. Thus, ethics committees, and the understandings of research with which they operate, often are influenced by the traditions of medicine and science, including the research methods and understandings of research that these disciplines employ.

To some extent, the emergence of qualitative research, and particularly the emergence of funded qualitative research, has occurred at the same time as the emergence of ethics committees and the formalization of ethics requirements and processes. At times, we see the collision of these surfaces of emergence and the working out of the tensions that emanate therefrom. For example, Lincoln and Tierney (2002), Ramcharan and Cutcliffe (2001), and Riesman (2002) assert that qualitative research may be being treated unfairly, and in fact may be disadvantaged, by some ethics committees. Such claims emanate from concerns that qualitative approaches are rejected on the grounds that they are “unscientific” and not able to be generalized. Research methods increasingly have become the remit of ethics committees. In effect, ethics committees can be more powerful than national peer-reviewed funding committees. Even if national and international peers who are experts in my field and the research approaches I employ recommend a project for funding, ethics committees can reject it on the basis of “poor design”—and, thus, “unethical research”—that will result in no benefit, or even possibly in harm, to research participants.

The focus on the quality of the research design stems from legitimate ethical concerns as to the ability of research to make a difference. For example, the U.K. Royal College of Physicians guidelines make the point “that badly designed research is unethical, because unnecessary disturbances may be caused to those concerned, and the lack of validity of results means they cannot be disseminated for the good of society” (Lacey, 1998, p. 215). The upshot of this is that “LRECs must therefore judge the scientific as well as ethical merit of the research under consideration” (Lacey, 1998, pp. 215–216). However, the key question arises as to what constitutes scientific merit or “good” research design, and who determines this. If scientific merit is reduced to “conventional quantitative methods” (Lacey, 1998, p. 216), then this will work against qualitative research unfairly. As van den Hooi (2001) points out, ethical review often is based on “the principles and epistemology of deductive research. . . . [This]
tends to erode or hamper the thrust and purpose of qualitative research . . . [and] it is a question of whether it is appropriate to judge the ethical merit of qualitative research using criteria derived from other paradigms of research” (pp. 19, 21). It also begs the question of whether ethics and research design are one and the same or different.

Requirements specified by some ethics committees simply can not apply to qualitative research. If, for example, it is necessary for researchers to state clearly, before research begins, each question that they will ask participants, this makes the emergent design of some qualitative research extremely problematic. As Lincoln and Tierney (2002) point out, the issue here is twofold: failure to obtain permission to conduct qualitative research as well as mandates that these studies should be conducted in a positivist fashion. Further issues arise from the politics between ethics committees themselves. Some ethics committees refuse to accept the ethics approval of other committees. Inconsistencies between the decisions and processes of different ethics committees sometimes arise, with the result that it takes a long time to gain approval. I have been caught in such politics of research with funded projects, with one ethics committee approving my research and another not. This example highlights the inconsistencies that can develop around ethics approvals. If the research concerned is a form of tendered research requiring relatively short turnaround times, this protracted approval process can preclude the research from being funded. It may also create and sustain the perception that qualitative research is problematic, unwieldy, and therefore best avoided by funders.

In light of such issues, a strategy I have used when navigating requirements of ethics committees is to write to the particular ethics committees, explaining how I have filled in the form and why I have done so, especially with respect to not being able to provide certain details of the research until the study is actually under way. I state how the initial approach will be made to participants, and I outline the general principles that will be employed regarding confidentiality and other matters. I also suggest that, if the committee would find it useful, I would be happy to talk about the research and discuss any concerns committee members might have. I have found most (but not all) committees willing to listen and to be quite reasonable. However, when talking with ethics committees who have invited me to their meetings to discuss concerns, I am continually struck by the realization that I constantly have to frame my responses in terms of the understandings of research that the committee brings to the table. The conversation usually is as much a discussion of understandings of research as it is about the ethics of that research. I have had to justify all aspects of the research process, not just those I thought were ethical matters. For example, I have found myself engaging in deep, philosophically derived debates about the nature of knowledge and the way that it is possible to study that knowledge. This was despite the fact that a national funding body had deemed the research in question rigorous enough to be funded. Afterwards, I wondered whether any of the committee had ever had to explain the philosophical basis of the research approaches they were familiar with, and I reached the conclusion
that they probably had not. This highlighted to me that dominant understandings of research were in play here and that decisions made were as much about what individuals understood and constructed research to be, as they were about the ethics of the research in question. This suggests that ethics committees and the process of ethical approval are as much discursive constructions as any other text.

As another example, a student of mine agreed to change the word “participant” to “patient” in the consent forms and information sheets that would be given to research participants. This was one of the conditions to be met for ethics approval to be granted. We (student and supervisor) had to think deeply about this, but in the end we considered that it was more important for the research to go forward than to take a stand on this issue. In reality, changing this word did not affect the way we did our research. It was more about the comfort levels of some committee members and that their understanding of the positioning of people entering the hospital was maintained. However, this example does raise an important point: At times, researchers may find themselves asked to modify proposals in a way that appears to compromise the approach they wish to take. In instances like this, they must make what I would argue is a fundamentally ethical decision: Can the research proceed under these conditions? Some readers may argue that what we did in changing the word “participant” to “patient” was an ethical issue, one in which we “sold out” to pragmatics and expediency.

One of the reasons for the initial emergence and subsequent prominence of ethics committees and their power was a rise in lawsuits pertaining to medical research that had gone “wrong.” As a consequence, van den Hoonraard agrees with “one qualitative researcher” that “qualitative researchers have become the fall guys for ethical mistakes in medical research” (2001, p. 22). He poses the question of whether the rise of ethics committees constitutes a moral panic involving “exaggeration of harm and risk, orchestration of the panic by elite or powerful special-interest groups, the construction of imaginary deviants, and reliance on diagnostic instruments” (van den Hoonraard, 2001, p. 25). In such a construction, qualitative research could be viewed as deviant, and the rise of prescribed forms of deductive research as diagnostic instruments able to be used to detect “suspect” research. The effect, unintended or otherwise, of ethics committees increasingly positioning themselves as determining what type of research will proceed and which will not is an interesting shift from the original intent of ethics committees to uphold the rights of those being researched, to a focus equally concerned with possible legal ramifications of any research undertaken. Thus, protection as a focus of ethics committees has evolved to be as much about protecting from potential litigation the institutions from which researchers come from and/or in which they do their research, as it is about protecting individual participants from adverse research effects.

Putting another spin on this, Kent (1997) notes that ethics committees sometimes take on proxy decision making for participants, making “assumptions about patient’s [sic] welfare which do not correspond to patients’ actual feelings and
beliefs” (p. 187). An interesting insight into this was provided by a recent experience I had when asking participants to sign a consent form for a nominal group I was conducting as part of funded research. The ethics committee requirement was that all participants must sign this consent form before the group could proceed. This particular nominal group comprised senior government and industry representatives. One of the participants objected to having to sign a consent form, seeing it as a form of coercion and control. I was then in a quandary. Did I ask this person to leave and preclude him from the research, or did I proceed, contravening the legalistic requirement of a signed form? In the end, I was able to talk the person around to signing the form but felt that in so doing, I was being coercive and establishing my control of the process. I felt that the forms and procedures had more to do with legalistic requirements than with ethical concerns. Far from empowering this participant, they actually were a form of control and restriction. This is not to argue against the signing of consent forms or the need for consent. Instead, I suggest that techniques employed to ensure that ethical requirements are met can themselves become apparatuses of power that actually do something other than ensuring the ethics of the research. The danger is that regulations (i.e., forms and processes) become the ethics, rather than the ethics of the research itself.

Elsewhere (Cheek, 2000), I have suggested strategies for navigating ethics committees. These include finding out as much as possible about the processes used by the committee and asking to see examples of proposals that have been accepted. These actions supply ideas of both the level of detail and the format that the committee requires. Another suggestion is to speak to others who have applied to the committee in question for ethics approval. Remember that qualitative researchers seeking funding or ethical approval have rights, as do all researchers. These include the right “to have their proposals treated with respect and due consideration” (Kent, 1997, p. 186). Stuart (2001) suggests that how we choose to act with respect to how we approach ethics committees (and we could add funding committees) is in fact an ethical decision. He writes, “Will the research be based on practices that treat people as the objects of research and provide them with limited opportunities to contribute to the production of knowledge, or will it be based on collaborative practices that view people as participants in the production of knowledge?” (Stuart, 2001, p. 38). Similarly, do we massage our research into prescribed forms and formulae, knowing that in this form it will be much more likely to achieve funding and approval, but also knowing that it may use systems and practices that work against qualitative research and leave unresolved some of the issues posed?

These sorts of decisions and weighing of tensions and alternatives are important parts of the politics and practice of funded qualitative research. They challenge us to think deeply about every aspect of what we do. It is not a matter of expediency and learning how to “play” the system. We need to try to work for real change, change that will make a difference to, and differences in, the types of research that are funded and approved. Rowan (2000) observed that
when the British Psychological Society decided that it was wrong to call people subjects, because it suggested that they were subjected to the will of the researcher; changing ‘subjects’ to ‘participants’ was for many psychologists simply a matter of calling up the ‘find and replace’ facility on the computer. It was not seen as related to a code of ethics, or requiring any change in them. (p. 103)

This highlights the layers of political action that are required to address deep residual practices that can hinder and even subvert the development of funded qualitative research. Without taking such political action, we run the risk of remaining on the surface and playing the politics of the system rather than changing that politics. As Morse (2003b) points out:

This is a task for all of us to do collectively and systematically, for it involves changes such as broadening research priorities and perspectives on what is considered researchable and what constitutes research. It involves political problems, such as expanding and sharing research funds to new groups of investigators. In this light, the administrative changes involved, such as developing appropriate review criteria, expanding committee membership, and educating other scientists about the principles of qualitative inquiry . . . appear trivial. (p. 849)

To focus only on the mechanism of practices associated with funding, be they proposal writing, peer review, or ethics review, is to run the risk of dealing only “with minor changes within the same basic structure” (Martin, 2000, p. 17). Put another way, it is to focus on “what is” and working within that, rather than on “what might be” in terms of “dramatically different allocation principles and associated consequences” (Martin, 2000, p. 21).

5. ACCEPTING FUNDING: PRACTICES AND POLITICS

Accepting funding involves entering into a contractual and intellectual agreement with a funder that has consequences for the research that is undertaken. Thus, a central consideration when thinking about doing funded qualitative research is whether or not to accept funding from a particular funding agency. Would-be researchers must consider the potentially conflicting agendas of funders, participants, and researchers. For example, at the university in which I work, we do not accept funding from the tobacco industry. This is just one example, and there are many more instances of question marks over the ethics of accepting funding from certain industries, agencies, or even governments. Other examples include whether a particular industry is involved in questionable environmental activities or health practices and whether it is a multinational company involved in possible exploitation of developing countries’ workforces. Taking money from a sponsor is not a neutral activity; it links the researcher and research inexorably with the values of that funder.
A related set of issues emerges from a consideration of who controls the qualitative research that is funded. It is a fact that once funding is accepted for research, the researcher is not an entirely free agent with respect to the direction and outcome of that research. Depending on the policies and attitudes of the funder, the degree of freedom allowed in carrying out the research (such as changing its direction if the need arises as a result of findings, or talking and writing about the research) may vary considerably. Issues of control must be negotiated carefully in the very early stages of the research, as it is often too late once the project is well under way. Too often, researchers either ignore or are simply unaware of the problems that can arise. Taking funding from someone in order to conduct research is not a neutral act. It implies a relationship with that funder that has certain obligations for both parties. It is important for researchers to discuss with funders all the expectations and assumptions, both spoken and unspoken, that they may have about the research.

As an example, one such expectation relates to what can be said about the research, and by whom. Put another way, this is an issue about who actually owns the data or findings that result from the study, as well as about how those data can be used both during and after the study. Some researchers have found themselves in the situation of not being able to write about the research in the way they want to, if at all. For example, I carried out a funded piece of research, using qualitative approaches, that produced four main findings, each of which was accompanied by a series of recommendations. When I submitted the report, I found that the funding body was willing to act on two of the findings, as it believed they were within the body’s statutory remit, but not on the other two. Although this seems reasonable at one level, I was concerned that the remaining two findings were in danger of being lost. The recommendations associated with those findings were important and, in my opinion, required action. I was even more concerned when the funder wanted to alter the report to include only the two findings it believed were relevant to it. Fortunately, a solution was found whereby the report was framed to highlight the findings considered relevant by the funder, while making reference to the other findings as well. In some ways, this may seem like an uneasy compromise, but at least the whole picture was given with respect to the findings. Somewhat naively, in retrospect, I had not anticipated the issue arising as to what data and findings should or could be included in a study, or what data, conversely, might be excluded. I am now much more careful to negotiate how the findings of a study will be reported, the use of the data, and my rights to publish the study findings in full, myself, in scholarly literature.

Qualitative approaches to research are premised on an honest and open working relationship between the researcher and the participants in the research. Inevitably, in such studies the researcher spends a great deal of time with participants getting to know aspects of their world and learning about the way they live in that world. At the center of a good working relationship in qualitative research is the development of trust. Furthermore, as qualitative researchers, we all have dealt with issues such as
participants feeling threatened by the research and therefore concealing information, or participants who are eager to please us and give us the information they think we want to hear or that they think we need to know. These issues can become even more complicated in the conduct of funded qualitative research. Therefore, when conducting funded research, it is important for researchers to tell participants who is providing the funding and the purposes of that funding. Successful researchers report the importance of making their own relationship to the funder clear. For example, are they acting as paid employees of the funder, or are they independent? Equally crucial to a successful relationship between researchers and participants is to ensure, and to give assurance, that the participants will remain anonymous and that the confidentiality of their individual information will be safeguarded. This is a major concern for some participants, who may believe they will be identified and “punished” in some way by the funder—for example, if they criticize a funder who is their employer. When conducting research in a specific setting among a specified group of people, it may be difficult for researchers to ensure the anonymity of participants. It is crucial for researchers to be clear about this issue and to discuss it with participants, who need to know what will happen to specific information in the project, who will have access to it, and how their rights to confidentiality are being ensured. Individuals may choose not to participate if they have concerns about a particular funder having access to information they have given or if they question the motives for that funding being given in the first place.

If there are any restrictions on what can or cannot be said about the findings of the research and the research undertaking itself, then it is important for researchers to make potential participants aware of this. Part of the constant process of giving feedback to participants must include informing them about any issues that arise about ownership of the research and the way it will be disseminated. All of this is to assist participants in making informed decisions about whether to participate or not, as well as to give them some idea about the uses to which the research is likely to be put. This enables them to be better positioned to follow up the research findings and to have a say in what happens as a result of them. It is a part of valuing all perspectives in the research and of treating participants as more than simply research objects who are subject to a research agenda that has been imposed on them.

A related issue can arise when the findings of a study do not please the funder. What happens if the findings are, or have the potential to be, beneficial to the participants but may displease the sponsor? Who has the say as to whether or not these findings will be published? As Parahoo (1991) points out, “too often those who control the purse tend to act in their own interests when they veto the publication of research. To others this is an abuse of power and office, and a waste of public money” (p. 39). This is a particularly important question if the research involves working with groups that are relatively powerless or disenfranchised. Researchers have found themselves in the position of not being able to publish or otherwise disseminate results in any way because of the contractual arrangements that they have entered into when accepting funds. When
finalized, a contract should be checked carefully so that researchers can be sure they are comfortable and can live with the conditions set. Such checking of the contract also pertains to the need for clarity about exactly what will be “delivered” to the funder in return for the funding received. What is it that the researcher is contracting with the funder to provide? This is an important question, raising the possibility of numerous problems arising if the parties involved do not share an understanding. It is easy and tempting for researchers, particularly if they are inexperienced, to underestimate the amount of time and energy needed for a project. Consequently, they may “overcommit” in terms of what they can deliver to the funder. They must consider carefully what it is reasonable to provide for the funding received, then make this explicit to the funder. Time frames should be placed on each deliverable so that both parties are aware of what will be produced and when it can be expected.

As we have seen, obtaining funding creates a research relationship to build during the conduct of the research, namely that between the funder and the researcher. All funding bodies require reports about the progress of funded projects. When communicating and reporting to the funder, which often involves reporting to an individual nominated by the funder, it is important for researchers to be honest and up front. This particularly applies if something has “gone wrong” or if for some reason the research plan has had to be changed. In my experience, funders would much rather find out about these things as they arise than be faced at the end with a project that has not met expectations. The extent of a funding body’s involvement in research can vary considerably, ranging from the submission of one or two reports a year to a highly hands-on approach in which a representative of the agency seeks to play an active role in the research undertaken. Whatever approach is adopted, it is important that there is clear communication as to the roles that the researcher and the funder will play in the research. It also is important to clarify that if research is being carried out in which participants will be known to the representative of the agency, then there may have to be restrictions on access to information so as to protect participants’ rights to confidentiality. Similarly, if a funder requires that an advisory board be established to provide guidance on the progress and direction of the research, it is important to clarify the parameters within which the board will operate. Such boards can be invaluable in assisting with broad issues pertaining to the substantive focus of the research. Indeed, many experienced researchers, recognizing the value of advisory boards in thinking through aspects of doing the project, interpreting the findings, and considering the routes for dissemination, may constitute such a board regardless of funder requirements. However, clear understandings must be put in place as to what access, if any, the board can have to specific sets of information collected in the study, especially if board members are connected in any way to the study site and/or to participants.

All of this highlights the careful thought that must go into deciding whether to accept money from a particular funder. Funders, just like researchers, have motives for wanting research to be done. Some bodies may be entirely altruistic, others less so. Some funders, particularly in the evaluation area, may be funding research overtly to
“vindicate policies and practices” (Parahoo, 1991, p. 37). As Guba and Lincoln (1989) note when writing about evaluation studies, “often evaluation contracts are issued as requests for proposals just as research contracts are; in this way, winning evaluators are often those whose definitions of problems, strategies, and methods exhibit ‘fit’ with the clients’ or funders’ values” (p. 124). This is why Bogdan and Biklen (1998) assert that “You can only afford to do evaluation or policy research [or, I would add, any funded form of qualitative research] if you can afford not to do it” (p. 217). It is important to consider whether it is possible to retain integrity and independence as a researcher paid by someone else or provided with the support to do research. Key questions to ask are how much freedom will be lost if someone else is paying and how the researcher feels about this loss of freedom. It is important to remember that although “in the research domain, the notion of mutual interest licenses partnerships between state, college and industry . . . such relationships merit scrutiny rather than an amiable blind faith” (Miller, 2003, p. 899) such as that preached by adherents of neo-liberal thought.

It is important in a research team that team members share similar approaches to the issues that have been raised. This needs to be discussed from the outset of the formation of the team, and it is just as important to the smooth functioning of the team as the particular expertise each team member brings to the project. There must be trust among team members that decisions made will be adhered to. Furthermore, it is important to talk about how decisions will be made in and about the team. Who will control the budget? What happens if there is disagreement about the way the research is proceeding? The involvement of a third party, namely the funder, makes the need to be clear about these issues all the more imperative. Furthermore, the team needs to have clear guidelines about who will communicate with the funder and how. Working with other researchers offers the advantages of having a team that is multiskilled and often multidisciplinary in focus. However, funding increases the need for good communication in the team and clear understandings of each member’s role, both in terms of the research itself and in terms of dealing with the funder. Strategies that research teams can employ to assist in the smooth functioning of funded projects include outlining each member’s responsibilities, including their contribution to the final report; drawing up timelines for each member to adhere to; upholding each member’s access to support and funds; and holding regular meetings to discuss issues among the team members.

Accepting funding for qualitative research affects the nature of relationships between the research participants and the researcher. Funded research also can result in the development of a new set of relationships, especially those between the researcher/research team and the funding agency, along with any other structures the funder may wish to put in place, such as advisory boards. When there is clear communication, these relationships can enhance the research effort and assist its smooth functioning. However, such relationships cannot be taken for granted and need to be worked on actively by all those involved. Their development is another part of the practices and politics of funded qualitative research.
6. **MARKETING RESEARCH: PRACTICES AND POLITICS**

The issues discussed in this chapter have arisen against the backdrop of an emergent view of research as a commodity to be traded on an academic, and increasingly commercially driven, marketplace. The late 1990s saw the emergence of a climate of economic restraint and funding cuts by governments in most Western countries. At the time of writing this chapter, this trend continues, with little likelihood of it being reversed or slowing. Fiscal restraint has greatly affected the availability of funding for research in that many funding agencies, particularly government departments, no longer have the resources to support research to the extent that they once did. At the same time, educational institutions such as universities have experienced cuts to their core funding. One of the consequences of such cuts to university operating budgets has been the imperative for staff to be able to generate income for the institution. In some cases, such income has become part of academics’ salaries; in others, this income has been factored into the operating budget of the institution to pay for basic resources needed to continue teaching and research programs.

In Australia, as elsewhere, concomitantly we have seen the emergence of increasing regulation of the university sector, including a rise in the frequency of prescribed reporting of performance indicators. We also have seen the emergence and rise of business development units designed to manage and sell research. In some divisions of universities in Australia, the greatest increase in staffing in the past decade has been in marketing and business development units. As an academic, I increasingly find myself in a world like that described by Brennan (2002), in which research is tendered out by, and oriented to, business, industry, and government. Their agendas feature increasingly short time frames for both conducting and reporting on research. This, of course, mitigates against certain types of qualitative research that are viewed as less efficient and more unwieldy. Qualitative research takes time and is very hands-on. The commercially driven tender and business development environment currently driving much research works against qualitative research. If the sole object of writing a proposal is revenue generation, then the research usually will lack strategic foundation and direction. As Morse (2003b) notes, “inadequate time, clearly, will kill a project or result in a project that has not become all that it could . . . be” (p. 846). If we are not careful, an effect of the emphasis on quick research turnaround and research “deliverables” could be to encourage the rise of an atheoretical set of qualitative techniques designed for expediency and framed by reductionist understandings of what qualitative research is and might do.

The contemporary context in which universities and qualitative researchers operate is one where the “fast capitalist texts” (Brennan, 2002, p. 2) of business and management have entered public discourse, normalizing practices and understandings of funded qualitative research and the purpose of that research. This, in some instances, has created a new imperative for obtaining funding, where the funding rather than the research has become highly prized. Put another way, it is possible that what is
becoming important to some university administrations is the amount of funding obtained, rather than the contribution of the research and its associated scholarship to new knowledge and problem solving. In such a climate, there is the potential to privilege funded research over unfunded research. There is also the very real possibility that this environment is viewed as “natural” and “normal.” We are bombarded with messages that we have to become more accountable, efficient, and effective, with clear implications that in the past research has been inefficient and/or ineffective and that researchers were unaccountable. But we must pause to ask certain questions: Efficient and effective in terms of what? Accountable to whom and in terms of what? It is a relatively recent phenomenon for research and funding to be so closely tied to the marketplace, and limited understandings of that marketplace at that! For example, in the postwar United States in 1946, Poiri and Conrad (see Bromley, 2002) in the Office of Naval Research were asked to suggest how the federal government could support university-based research without destroying academic freedom and creativity, which were recognized as important and integral to advancing discovery. Bromley (2002) notes that they came up with three fundamental principles: (a) Find the best people in the nation on the basis of peer review; (b) support these individuals in doing whatever they decided they wanted to do, as they are much better judges of how best to use their time and talent than anyone in government; and (c) leave them alone while they are doing it (i.e., minimize reporting and paperwork). Why does this approach seem so “abnormal” to those of us working in academe and/or research in the early 2000s? Is it because the understandings and dominant forms of the fast texts of the market and late capitalism have colonized research and academic cultures to such an extent that we cannot imagine that a situation such as the one Bromley described not only existed but was actively promoted, only a few decades ago?

What this highlights is that at any point in history, certain understandings will be at the fore. Which understandings prevail results from the power of particular groups at any one time to promote their frames of discourse to the exclusion or marginalization of others (Foucault, 1977). If Poiri and Conrad were to make their suggestions now, they would be marginalized, talked about as “dreamers,” and told to operate in the “real world” by many administrators. Of course, we may well dispute how Poiri and Conrad defined and operationalized some of their categories, such as “best people” and “peer review,” but their assertions are useful for highlighting how far we have moved in terms of the ways of thinking and speaking that are afforded mainframe status in many research texts in the contemporary research context. The discourse of the market is preeminent. An effect of this is changing control over the conditions and activities of researchers, who increasingly are being viewed as workers selling their labor and research products. It is the market, not necessarily peers, that determines the worth of research, and even what research will be done. Furthermore, this marketplace is tightly regulated in terms of the means of obtaining funding, what actually is funded, the way research performance is assessed, and the reporting that researchers must do both about their research and the way that they use their time in general. Such regulation codifies our
knowledge, reducing it to key performance indicators such as number of publications or number of research dollars obtained, thereby diverting attention from “more productive and educational uses of our time” (Brennan, 2002, p. 2). Emerging trends show academics, for example, being forced to estimate costs for every activity and being told that activities for which they do not get paid directly should not be undertaken. Mentoring, thinking time, community service, and unfunded research are some of the potential casualties of such reductionist discourse.

So, too, is scholarship. Scholarship increasingly has come to be associated with narrowly defined research outcomes, including the number of journal articles published, funding received, or conference papers presented (Cheek, 2002). These measures inevitably are numeric and relative. Thus, institutional lists of “top” researchers are drawn up on the basis of numeric scores, worked out using complicated formulae designed to convert research, ideas, and scholarship into measurable throughput. What becomes important is the score, not how the score was calculated or the assumptions underlying it. It doesn’t matter if a researcher’s funding is mostly for an expensive piece of equipment; that researcher will score higher than, and “rank above,” a qualitative researcher who may have acquired funding for a number of projects. In these formulae, publications also are converted to points and dollars. Morse (2002a), in keeping with many editors of scholarly journals, bemoans the fact that in submissions to the journal of which she is editor, *Qualitative Health Research,* she sees an increasing prevalence of what she calls atheoretical articles that are “shallow, thin and insignificant . . . it is the worst of qualitative inquiry” (p. 3). Morse describes a form of journal submission that is almost formulaic, “trite,” and goes on to assert that “a few comments do not an article make” (Morse, 2002a, p. 4). Why the emergence of such a trend now? Could it be an effect of the imperative to publish and that what counts (literally) is the number of articles, not their content, just as what counts is the amount of research money, and not what it funds?

Historically, there has always been a place for both funded and unfunded research in universities and elsewhere. Some types of research simply have not required funding, yet have been able to produce significant contributions to knowledge for which they have been valued. Furthermore, research serves a variety of purposes. On one hand, it can be carried out to investigate a well-defined issue or problem arising in a specific area or field, and on the other it can be conducted to probe or explore what the issues might be in the first place. Research also can be carried out simply for the pleasure of investigating new and different ways of thinking about aspects of our reality. Some research projects might incorporate all of the above. In other words, just as there are a variety of research approaches and associated techniques, so are there a range of purposes for which research might be carried out. Each research project has its own intended audience, who will relate to the assumptions framing the problem to be investigated as embedded within that piece of research. However, with the imperative for academics to generate income, there has been a subtle, and at times not so subtle, shift in thinking toward valuing research that is funded more highly than research
that is not. Given this, the question can be asked as to whether we are seeing the taking hold of what Derrida (1977) terms a binary opposition with respect to funded/unfunded research.

Derrida (1977) holds that any positive representation of a concept in language, such as “funded research,” rests on the negative representation of its “opposite,” in this case, unfunded research. In a binary opposition, there is always a dominant or prior term, and conversely there is always a subordinate or secondary term. For example, consider such common binary oppositions as masculine/feminine and reason/emotion. In each case, the first named term is given priority over the second, which is often defined in terms of “not” the dominant. However, as noted elsewhere, “the definitional dynamic extends to the primary term as well in that it can only sustain its definition by reference to the secondary term. Thus the definition and status of the primary term is in fact maintained by the negation and opposition of the secondary partner” (Cheek, Shoebridge, Willis, & Zadoroznyj, 1996, p. 189). Derrida (1977) points out that binary oppositions are constructions of certain worldviews; they are not natural givens that can be taken for granted. In the instance of funded/unfunded research, it is important to recognize that there is a binary opposition in operation and to explore both how it has come to be and how it is maintained. An interesting way to commence such an exploration is to reverse the binary pairing and note the effect. What is the effect on the way research is viewed and understood if unfunded research assumes primacy and funded research becomes the secondary or derivative term?

In a climate where funded research assumes ever increasing importance, the power of funding agencies to set research agendas has increased markedly. As Parahoo (1991) noted more than a decade ago, “a successful researcher is sometimes defined by the ability to attract funds, and most researchers know that in order to do so one must submit proposals on subjects which sponsors are prepared to spend money on. This can mean that the real issues that concern practitioners are sometimes ignored” (p. 37). What has changed in the past decade is that it is no longer the case that successful researchers are “sometimes” defined in this way, but rather that they “usually” or “normally” are. We see in play here “new neo-liberal notions of the performing professional” (Shore & Wright, 1999, p. 569). Although it is not unreasonable that sponsors should be able to fund research that is relevant to them, a problem arises if funds are not available for researcher-initiated research that addresses questions that have arisen from the field. If funding alone drives research agendas, then this may infringe on the academic freedom of researchers to pursue topics of importance and interest. As Porter (1997) notes, “pressure is therefore exerted on academics to tailor their work in order to meet the requirements of funders” (p. 655). Creativity may be sacrificed for expediency, in that some research topics will have more currency than others in terms of their likeliness to attract funding. Drawing on Mills (1959), Stoesz (1989) observes that “to the extent that this happens, an enormous problem emerges—social science [read qualitative research] becomes a commodity, the nature of which is defined by the bureaucracies of the corporate and governmental sectors” (p. 122).
The emerging emphasis on funded research, in terms of its ability to produce income for institutions, has in my opinion seen the emergence of research as a commodity to be bought and sold on the research market. Information and data from research projects are seen as a “product” to be traded on this market and sold to the highest bidder. Researchers increasingly find themselves struggling with the often competing demands of research as the generation of new knowledge, against research as a commodity to be traded in the marketplace. Such a struggle is exacerbated by a trend in which the act of winning funding for research is itself viewed as a currency to be traded in the academic marketplace. For example, promotion and tenure committees in many universities are influenced by the amount of funding received as a measure of research success. This has the effect of maintaining the binary opposition of funded/unfunded research, in that performance in terms of funded research is valued, while the absence of funding—that is, unfunded research—is not. The idea of research being perceived as a commodity, along with the trend to privilege funded research over unfunded research, poses some particular dilemmas for qualitative researchers. For instance, it is still true that most funding is attracted by research projects using traditional scientific methods. This means that it is relatively harder to obtain funding for qualitative research. If success in obtaining funding is used, rightly or wrongly, to measure performance and to put a value on research, then there is a real danger that qualitative research could be marginalized because it is not as easy to attract funds using qualitative approaches.

All of this is to bring into sharp focus some fundamental questions with which qualitative researchers need to grapple. These questions relate to the background assumptions about research and research performance that are driving many research agendas and researchers. Assumptions about how research performance is measured and valued need to be exposed. They can then be considered and explored in terms of the effect they have on notions of what research is for and what the nature of a research product should be. Funding is important in that it enables research to be carried out that otherwise would not occur because of resource constraints. It is not funding itself that is the issue here; rather, it is the uses to which the act of gaining funding is being put, apart from enabling a specific piece of research to proceed. I am not arguing against funded qualitative research—far from it! What I am suggesting is that researchers need to think about their own assumptions about funded research and how such assumptions have embedded, within them, many taken-for-granted as about the nature of research and research products in what is increasingly becoming a research marketplace.

7. PRACTICES AND POLITICS BEYOND THE “FIND AND REPLACE” FUNCTION KEY

Doing funded qualitative research is not a neutral and value-free activity. Researchers must constantly examine their motives for doing research and the motives of funding
bodies in funding research. This is particularly important in a context in which new forms of neo-liberal rationality are emerging, defining the performance, worth, and mission of research, researchers, and the institutions in which they work. In writing this chapter, I am advocating suspended readings. Such readings suspend notions of funded research and attendant practices and organizations, such as funding panels and ethics committees, in order to take another look at what otherwise become taken-for-granted parts of the funding process. This other look begins by exploring the origins of understandings shaping research, and particularly funded qualitative research, how these understandings are maintained, and what this reveals about the context in which researchers operate. I am not advocating that we replace one set of understandings with another, but rather that we recognize, for what they are, current trends and issues in the politics and practice of funded qualitative research, so that we might best position ourselves in relation to them. Questions we need to ask ourselves include the following: Can we accept and live with the tensions and contradictions posed to us as funded qualitative researchers in the reality in which we live and work every day? What should we defend, and what might we give up? How do we respond to the enterprise culture of neo-liberalism increasingly so pervasive in every aspect of the research process? In all of this, a key question and challenge is how to avoid being always located at the margins, as the “faint voice” (Morse, 2002b, p. 1308) in funding panels or funding received, in order that qualitative research can be viewed as legitimate and mainframe.

There are no easy answers to these questions. The position taken by each of us as individuals will be different. What is important is that this conversation is held and that the inherent political nature of funded qualitative research is surfaced and explored. This chapter has provided a lens to bring into focus issues concerning the regulation and production of forms of knowledge, through practices associated with, and arising from, the funded research process. How qualitative researchers respond to the imperatives that confront them every day, and to the imperatives for political action that emanate from the discussion herein, will go a long way in determining what the future holds for qualitative research itself and its positioning, either mainframe or at the margins. The identities that we individually want as qualitative researchers must be embedded in all facets of our research endeavors, including the seeking, acquisition, and use of funds to support that research. We must avoid atheoretical pragmatic types of qualitative research techniques emerging as synonymous with understandings of funded (or fundable) qualitative research. Instead, it will be increasingly important to promote theoretically and politically robust qualitative research. For me, this is the key challenge facing qualitative research as it becomes “more accepted” into the funding fold. Such acceptance can be a double-edged sword for the unwary and could see a subversion of all that we have worked to establish if we are not on our guard. In all of this, I reiterate that funding itself is not the problem—funding is useful as an enabler of qualitative research. Problems arise if funding becomes the end, rather than the means, and qualitative research (or a variant
thereof) is subverted to the expedient end of gaining that funding. The choice is ours, both individually and collectively, as to which of these positions we adopt.

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