Teaching Skills in International Research Ethics (TaSkR)

Ethical Considerations and the Cultural Contexts of Research

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Structure of Presentation

1. Objectives of Presentation
2. Cultural Studies: many perspectives, one reality
3. Global ethics?
4. International Research (IR) Ethics?
Structure - continued

5. Basic Research Ethical Principles
   5.1. Respect for Human persons in Cultural contexts
   5.2. Beneficence in cultural contexts
   5.3. Justice in cultural contexts
6. Case studies
7. Challenges of IR Ethics
8. Ethical guidelines in IR: Teaching and Practice
1. Objectives of Presentation

- Raise issues/questions/challenges - thorough analysis for deep understanding of contexts

- No ready made formulas because contexts differ and are complex– give guidelines

- Controversial – value of workshop

- Demonstrate teaching skills in IR ethics
2. Cultural Studies: many perspectives, one reality

- The six blind men and the elephant

**Exercise 1:** Position & perspectives

**Exercise 2:** Fact or perception & the big picture
3. Global Ethics?

- Global ethics? i.e. universally accepted standards of right & wrong? (See: www.globethics.net)

✓ Basic ethical values common to all cultures & religions
✓ Ethical values = human/universal values - To be human is to be ethical

- Being human/ethical is understood/expressed/lived differently depending on cultural contexts

Cultures & Religions differ, ethical values/principles don’t
4. International Research Ethics?

- IR Ethics – Absolutely necessary guidelines – conceptualization, standardization, BUT

  - Context matters - All research involving human subjects takes place in specific cultural contexts

  - Research contexts differ from place to place and from time to time

  - Not allowing for contextualization of IR ethics is imperialistic and therefore unethical
5. Basic Research Ethical Principles

- Respect (dignity/value) for every human person but ‘person in community’
- Beneficence- Process & end of ethical acts
- Justice - Categorizes into:
  i) Corrective - compensate, restore, retribution
  ii) Distributive – natural justice, legal justice, social justice
5.1 Respect for Human persons in Cultural context

- How respect is understood and expressed vary from one cultural to another.

- There are many cultural contexts
  - International context
  - Regional context
  - National context
  - Local context
  - Personal context
5.2 Beneficence in Cultural Context

- Pursue good ends through good means – Maximize good/benefits

- Avoid evil ends and all means – Minimize evil/harm

Need for deep & holistic analysis of context of research to understanding benefit/harm (material, spiritual, psychological, social, etc), long term, & short term ends

When in doubt, do not act.
5.3 Justice in cultural context

Deep and holistic understanding of benefits/risks of research required to enable:

i) Corrective justice - compensation, retribution, restoration of harm/loss to research populations/subjects

iii) Distributive justice – Natural justice (global commons), legal justice (law in context –who sets law for who), & Social Justice – the 90/10 GHR gap
6. Case studies

**Exercise 3:** Analyze the Sample Informed Consent (Handout 1) indicating what ethical issues this may raise: Concept? Process- Choice of research subject & area? Design (conceptual, methodology- tools & methods), implementation (data collection, analysis, interpretation), reporting, publication?

**Exercise 4:** Language sensitivity in IR (Handout 2)

**Exercise 5:** Sensitive reporting in IR (hand out 3)
7. Challenges of IR Ethics

1. Professional ethical concerns
   - Research objectivity – value of subjectivity
   - Exhaustiveness – Details matter but how far can a researcher go?
   - Ethical research dilemmas

2. Relationship between science/research and community
Challenges - continued

3. Equity in research (the 90/10 GHR gap)

4. Complexity of contexts - contexts within contexts

5. Contextualizing universal principles - teaching/learning what you don’t know
8. Ethical Guidelines in IR: Teaching and Practice

- Cuts across (not just multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary but also assertively anti-disciplinary)
- Cooperative & integrative not competitive or compartmentalized
- Flexible not rigid, Be ready to breaks down walls
- Inclusive not exclusive
Guidelines - continued

✓ Holistic not dualistic (not “either or”) – deep analysis of all possible perspectives:
  ➢ not ethical relativism Vs absolutism,
  ➢ not global Vs local,
  ➢ not individual Vs community,
  ➢ not bottom-up Vs up-bottom,
  ➢ not theory Vs practice,
  ➢ not deontology Vs teleology,
  ➢ not objective Vs subjective,
  ➢ not ABC Vs SAVE approach, etc
Food for thought

Verily, verily, I say unto you It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a researcher to be ethical (Luke 18:25)

Keep striving towards the goal

Learn, learn, learn – life is a classroom
Thank you