

# 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](http://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**

Shukran  
Thank you