Ethicists Create Value for Research Projects: Friend Them Early*

NCP Academy Training
RRI and Ethics in Horizon 2020


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Consider: Beauchamp & Sen

I. Example of Social Science Project Proposal from Friedrich Schiller University, Jena
   ◦ WH&R: Cultural Heritage of War and Reconciliation

II. Ethics as 1) Compliance and 2) Doing Good

III. Make Ethicists Your New Best Friends

IV. Conclusion: Ethics as “Doing Good” Should Be Clear In Whole Project Description
Consider… Tom Beauchamp
Four-Principles Approach, 2009

- 1. Respect for Autonomy
- 2. Nonmaleficence
- 3. Beneficence
- 4. Justice

Belmont Report 1978, responds to:
- Tuskegee Syphilis Study (1932–1972)
Consider... Amartya Sen
Idea of Justice, 2009

Niti: institutions, rules, and organization
Nyaya: Comprehensive Idea of Realized Justice
I. Case Study/Example of Social Science Project Proposal

- Cultural **Heritage of War and Reconciliation**
- **WH&R Goals** (name, acronym, and details below modified from original grant proposal)
  - Develop Elements of EU Identity
  - Past Wars Remembered in Cultural Identity Markers
    - War Memorials…
  - Explore How This Cultural History Can be “Re-Framed to Support Reconciliation and EU-consensus Values
  - Create Scientific Case-Study Database and Research Resources for Both Academic and Applied (Political) Use
I. Jena Case Study

- Key Issue for Ethics: Research Involves Human Subjects
  - Primarily “Social Psychology” Methods Relevant for Ethical Part of Project Proposal
- Transdisciplinary / Interdisciplinary
  - Social Scientists
  - Historians
  - Pedagogical (academic, textbook publishers)
  - Reconciliation Studies
I. Elements Requiring Attention to Ethics Issues

- Focus Modules in Politically-Sensitive Areas
  - Balkans, Turkey/Armenia, Greece, Cyprus, Czech Rep., Bosnia/Kosovo

- Focus upon Politically-Charged Ideas
  - Classroom texts
  - Cultural Monuments (Memorials, Statues, Sites)
  - Collective Memories… Identities…

- Best-Practice Reconciliation Data Collection
  - Platforms of Oral Histories, Conflict-related personal interviews…
Checklists Work for:

- Air Travel Safety
- Preventing Infections in Hospitals
- \textit{AND} Ethics

- Plenty of evidence for effectiveness
- Important tool, but has limits
II. Ethics as 1) Compliance and 2) Doing Good

- Project was not funded:
- Reviewers’ Recommendation:
  - Good overall review, high marks
  - Ethics section was fine,
  - Yet, the reviewers wanted to see the ethics issues integrated into the whole project proposal

- Raises Question: **What is Ethics for Reviewers?**
  - 1) Yes: Compliance
    - (Break No Rules)
  - 2) But also: Doing Good… from Aristotle:
    - Virtuous action, in compliance with law and social customs, and ordered to the good of the community
II. Ethics

- Reconciliation Studies – Ethical Issues
  - General Social–Psychological Studies are generally unproblematic in controlled/laboratory settings
  - Yet most interesting studies involve persons affected by violent conflict, however directly or indirectly
  - Issues involve re–traumatization, personal risks and risks specific to conflict and post–conflict regions

- Done Well: DFG–Sponsored “Hearts of Flesh–Not Stone” in BGU–Israel (PI: Shifra Sagy)

- Ethically Problematic: “Belfast Project” Boston College
  - Legal petition forced release of data to courts
  - Started with good premise and model, but did not anticipate difficulties of protecting project data
II. Ethics 
(Any Grey Areas?)

- Human Subject Principles: (US National Institute of Justice 2010)
  1. The right to end participation in research at any time
  2. Voluntary, informed consent, of competent subjects
  3. Respect for persons: treated as autonomous agents
  4. Right to safeguard integrity
  5. Benefits should outweigh cost
  6. Protection from physical, mental and emotional harm
  7. Access to information regarding research
  8. Protection of privacy and well-being
II. Ethics: Move Grey to Black

1: Must be clear and non-negotiable
2–8 = Aspirational principles: need support showing project consistent with RRI goals

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The European Charter of Fundamental Rights

Dignitarian Aspects

- **Article 3 – Right to the integrity of the person**
  - Everyone has the right to respect for his or her physical and mental integrity.
  - In the fields of medicine and biology, the following must be respected in particular:
    - the free and informed consent of the person concerned, according to the procedures laid down by law;
    - the prohibition of eugenic practices, in particular those aiming at the selection of persons;
    - the prohibition on making the human body and its parts as such a source of financial gain;
    - the prohibition of the reproductive cloning of human beings.

- **Article 7 – Respect for private and family life**
  - Everyone has the right to respect for his or her private and family life, home and communications.

- **Article 8 – Protection of Personal Data**

- **Article 13 – Freedom of the Arts and Sciences**
A. Grunwald: *Hermeneutic Side of RRI* (2016)

- One Approach: Risk Calculation & Rule Compliance
- The Hermeneutic Approach: “tell us a story for this project” of NEST (New & Emerging Science and Technology)

1. Uncertain Futures: Dealing with Risk
   - Narrative frame (a) new, (b) risks, (c) benefits–value

2. Beyond Precautionary: Governance Construction

3. Hermeneutic Circle: Defense of Diversity

4. Deliberative Democracy & Utilization of I.
III. Make Research Ethicists Your New Best Friends


- Kaiser/Carr (2013) Key Insight:
  - Bring in ethicists at early stage of proposal drafting

- Relevant for all disciplines
  - Competence: Compliance obviously necessary
  - Grant Calls for social sciences = Ethical
  - Grant “Impact” can be enhanced...
  - Ethicist help not only avoid danger, but can help shape and clarify project’s “Good”

- Including Ethics consultation in funded line demonstrates commitment to RRI
Synthetic Biology and J. Craig Venter

- Venter included ethical deliberation of the science from the very beginning
- Foresaw and effectively addressed legitimate public concern
  - Creation of a Bacterial Cell Controlled by a Chemically Synthesized Genome, in Science 02 July 2010 Vol 329 Issue 5987: 52–56.
    
  - Der Stand Der Ethischen Diskussionen Um Sythetische Biologie, Johannes Achatz, Martin O'Malley, and Peter Kunzmann
    
    Chap. 7 In Synthetische Biologie: Entwicklung Einer Neuen Ingenieurbiologie?, edited by Kristian Köchy and Anja Hümpel, 165–90:
Learning for RRI:

- **End in Mind – From the Start… with Ethicists**
- **Spirit of principles** (human subjects, 6 RRI elements) not just protected (compliance), but integrated in entire work

**Proposal:**
1. **Identifies** all potential ethical “issues”
   - in both proposal body and ethics section
2. **Explains** how ethical issues are respected as part of the project work (not as afterthought, nor in checkbox fashion)
   - Provide sufficient info to support “Yes” in “4–Ethics issues table”
3. **Integrates** ethical considerations into milestones and reports
   - Commit project to independent ethical evaluations with reports
   - Review whether this can be supported by project funds or by host institutions
IV.2: Negotiation Principle (MGA): Ethics Creates Value*

Learning for RRI:
- Research Generates Value for Society
    - Available at:
    - https://uni-jena.academia.edu/MartinOMalley

*MGA: Mutual Gains Approach, Project on Negotiation (PON)*
So, Friend Research Ethicists Early in the Planning/Writing Stages*

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