TEACHING ETHICS IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Introduction

Why is it necessary to teach university students ethical practice in the social sciences? It is often assumed that ethics will be absorbed along the way during training in the social sciences. I argue here that it is vital to the training of social scientists to make explicit the discussion of ethics in research and to make it clear to students that they have ethical rights and responsibilities as social scientists during their undergraduate and postgraduate training. Teaching ethics in the context of social science research is not a matter of providing a list of what to do and what to avoid in specific situations; rather, it is a process of engaging students in a commitment to respect those with whom they do research and to continually ask questions about the ethics of research practice so they are prepared to go on asking those questions, individually and collaboratively, throughout their careers.

By ethics, here, I do not simply invoke the Western philosophical tradition. For many centuries, most cultural traditions have had the practice of rendering transparent, through reflexive thought and discussion, the decision-making that guides traditions and individual action (cf. Clarke 1996:308). Calling such a discussion "ethical" has the potential to impose, once again, colonial and neo-colonial logic (including legal frameworks) on the discourse. There is no universal sense of social justice, for example; it is an historical category that may refer to decision-making about equitable distribution, or merit, or property rights, depending on one's vantage point (Rizvi 1998:47). Debates about ethical practice and social justice are not just abstract, but lived experiences, as Rizvi points out:

> Those who are hungry or poor or homeless or physically impaired do not need abstract definitions in order to be able to recognize their plight or indeed the inequities they might confront. If this is so, then the idea of social justice has practical significance. It needs therefore to be articulated in terms of particular values, which, while not fixed across time and space, nevertheless have to be given specific content in particular struggles for reform. (Rizvi 1998:47)

How can social scientists, including students, better take into account the possibilities of our research as going beyond the legal definition of "doing the least harm" to people who collaborate with us? If we take ethics to be reflexivity about

decision-making and research ethics to mean that reflexivity brought to bear on the decision-making about the framing, doing, and dissemination of research, then how can that research process include the complex and sometimes contradictory set of interests and values of the researcher(s) and those participating in the research? There are international agreements setting out ethical rules for research practice, and institutional guidelines in many nations which govern research funding. These are largely guided by scenarios arising from medical research, as in the protection of human subjects from undue harm caused by physically invasive research methods or the disclosure of personal information, such as HIV status. It is important to challenge ourselves as students and other professionals to do more than follow these guidelines, since they cannot anticipate every circumstance or what communities researched might deem "socially just" in the research process.

In this article, I will discuss – from the vantage point of the discipline of anthropology – topics and teaching methods in the training of social science students in ethical practice. These thoughts are situated within an ongoing discussion among teaching staff in the Arts Faculty at the University of Peradeniya on the teaching of ethics in social science research. My argument is not that our goal should be to train students to "be ethical" in some static, diplomate sense, but that it is possible to train students, as we continually train ourselves as instructors and researchers, to ask questions about ethical engagement in the human relationships that comprise our professional lives as fieldworkers, teachers, and social documentarians.

Topics

In creating a course or a discussion group for training students in the ethics of social science research, I suggest that there are a number of topics that are useful to include. These are discussed in this section, along with references that can be used to stimulate discussion with students. This is only a partial list of useful topics, of course, and other topics would be more relevant in other fields.

In teaching a required postgraduate course on ethics at the University of South Carolina for three years, I found it useful to begin with a history of ethical conversations, controversies, and policies in the discipline of anthropology. One such controversy, in the U.S.A., was the participation of professional anthropologists in military intelligence activities during World War II. Walter Goldschmidt (1979) has written about this debate in the discipline of anthropology, which resulted in the drafting of the nation's first code of ethics in the field, that of the Society for Applied Anthropology in 1949. A similar debate came up several

decades later in the U.S.A. when professional anthropologists were accused of carrying out espionage activities during the Vietnam War and to support the United States' backing of the Pinochet government in Chile. As had been the case at the beginning of the twentieth century in World War I, the "whistleblowers" in the discipline, or those who drew attention to the possible espionage activities of colleagues, were as disciplined or more so than those collaborating with the government. Such historical debates in the discipline can be used to raise questions with students about the ethics of professional affiliation – either through receiving grant money or through direct employment – with governments and other agencies. Who controls the information produced by social science research under such conditions? How might it be used? What effect on relationships of trust do such affiliations by even one social scientist have? Is covert research ever acceptable as social science? These and other questions are important to raise with students, especially in an environment of high unemployment when the fact of having a job might outweigh considerations of the ethics of the process and effects of research carried out as part of that employment. Conflicts in accountability comprise, more broadly, an area to discuss with students. If a student has an internship with a nongovernmental organization while carrying out dissertation research, for example, does the NGO have the right to determine the research agenda or to control the publication of results? What if service recipients are critical of a service provider that is employing the student researcher? Anticipating such conflicts, in classroom discussions, can help students make decisions later about combining research interests and employment opportunities.

The history of codes of ethics in various disciplines is useful for students to study. What were the specific experiences and controversies that led to particular statements? How have they changed over time? Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban (2003a) has reviewed, for the discipline of anthropology, the crises in the field that led to the formulation of organizational policies and ethical guidelines between the years 1890 and 2000. She argues, "the development of the profession – its real political history – is intimately associated with coming to terms with the ethical issues that have been raised periodically within the discipline" (Fluehr-Lobban 2003a:1). The codes of ethical conduct in anthropology have shifted to accommodate different priorities over the decades. The latest code, for example, includes sections on animal rights, reflecting a wider social debate on that topic.

From the first day of every course I teach in the discipline, I give students information about their rights and responsibilities as students/researchers in the field of anthropology. The American Anthropological Association's most recent Code of Ethics (revised in 1998) may be found on the Internet at www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethcode.htm. In that code, there is a section on

teachers' responsibilities to students. The Code of Ethics is not legally binding, so it cannot be the basis of a legal grievance or the ousting of a professional anthropologist for its violation, but it is a set of guidelines that nonetheless can be used to empower -- by its existence as a professional document -- those who are in oppressive academic relationships, which can happen to students in many ways. The AAA Code of Ethics stipulates that anthropologists are not to discriminate "on the basis of sex, marital status, 'race,' social class, political convictions, disability, religion, ethnic background, national origin, sexual orientation, age, or other criteria irrelevant to academic performance." It also condemns sexual harassment (regarding which most institutions of higher learning in the U.S.A. *do* have legally enforceable proscriptions). Additionally, the AAA Code of Ethics includes among the ethical responsibilities of professional anthropologists the giving of fair credit and compensation to students involved in their research and teaching; availability to students for consultation; and the responsibility to prepare students for, and assist them in entering, the realm of employment beyond the University. These, then, are some of the rights students have under the Code of Ethics in the discipline of anthropology in the U.S.A. Providing them with that information from the outset in their educational careers can be useful to students in increasing their agency – and, as part of that, their own consideration of ethical decision-making.

Internationally, students' attention can be brought to the responsibilities of social scientists as citizens of nations signatory to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, signed in 1948. That document (available, for example, in May, et al., 1998) can serve as a helpful basis of discussion with students about human rights generally, and the role of social scientists in respecting the rights of others in their research. Some relevant passages of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for example, follow. Article 12 states:

> No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Social science research would not in most circumstances constitute such an attack, but this raises questions about private and public space and human rights therein for students to consider. A different discussion, on the importance of the involvement of communities in social science research design, might be raised by considering Article 27 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

1. Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

2. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Other articles of this declaration might be used by students to shape the general framework of respect for, and promotion of, human rights through which they formulate their research questions for individual and group projects. I note here with others, however, that human rights discourse is also shaped by culturally and politically based forms of logic, so notions of human rights proposed as "universal" comprise another area for student discussion.

Most social scientists do work involving "human subjects," or those participating in social science research, called variously research subjects, participants, or collaborators, depending on the researcher's epistemological orientation. In some nations, like the U.S.A., there is a lengthy training and review process related to research involving "human subjects" that has largely been shaped by the exigencies of medical research. There are federal guidelines that establish Institutional Review Boards, groups of professionals situated inside and outside academic contexts, whose task it is to review proposed research and make judgments about potential harm to research subjects. The human subjects review applications must always include provisions for informed consent. Students need to discuss the process of informed consent and what constitutes informed consent. In some cases, written consent forms are not appropriate. Cassandra Loftlin, a student in a postgraduate ethics course I taught at the University of South Carolina, writes (in Kingsolver, et al., 2003:216) about her fieldwork dilemma regarding informed consent, for example:

> Through the use of dynamic and continuous informed consent, anthropologists can ensure that they ethically represent the participants in their research because they are in constant dialogue with their research communities regarding the development and use of, and access to, printed and recorded material. In my own research, it is difficult to obtain written consent. Due to the negative historical results of signing legal documents, which led to the mistreatment or exploitation of some African-Americans in the region, some participants in my research project are reluctant to sign written documents.

> How can anthropologists be certain that their participants completely understand the project and its implications without express written consent? How can anthropologists be certain that participants are comfortable with the procedures, methods, and purpose of research? Informed consent begins with project planning and extends beyond project documentation. Anthropologists must design and offer means by which participants have a manner of owning or controlling access to the research information. Creative means of documenting ongoing negotiation of permission to do research, as in video-documentation, should be discussed. Throughout the process of informed consent, there must be ongoing discussions regarding the possible implications of participating in the research project. It is this continuous and dynamic quality of informed consent – more than a particular signed document or recording of consent, which is also necessary – that provides a foundation on which anthropologists can build ethical relationships with research participants.

As Loftlin argues, informed consent is not simply a matter of telling a research collaborator about the aims of a project and getting a signed or taped permission at the outset, but of establishing a process of ongoing communication about the project and participation in it that will extend even beyond the publication of results. In this ongoing conversation constituting informed consent, it should be possible for the research design to be flexible to accommodate the interests, needs, and suggestions of participants and there should be some provision for participation to be changed or withdrawn as the research unfolds. In film projects, for example, the collaborator might be shown the social scientist's video and be given a specific amount of time, say one month, to decide whether to allow the material to be distributed. Whether or not informed consent is nationally and institutionally required, it may be discussed with students and they can practice drafting plans for informing research participants about their projects, and discuss appropriate ways to document consent for those whose images are used in research and to define their control of how those images are used. A discussion of the ongoing process of informed consent can bring up issues about community involvement in research design that might not otherwise be anticipated by students planning to do research.

Some social scientists may have issues to discuss regarding cultural property. In the U.S.A., the discipline of anthropology includes archaeology, cultural anthropology, linguistic anthropology, and biological anthropology. While biological anthropologists might have concerns about laboratory procedures and informed consent more akin to medical researchers, archaeologists and cultural anthropologists focusing on museum studies have strong ethical questions to engage

that relate to cultural property. There is a federal law, for example, called the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act which has required the turning over of skeletal and cultural materials to Native American nations from academic collections and museums, and determines what procedures should be followed if archaeologists disturb a human burial deemed Native American in the course of their excavations. This has brought up broader debates on collecting in general, and whether retaining collections may ever be justified in the interests of research. Internationally, there are many questions for students to discuss about the trade in cultural property (on the Internet, for example). Recently, customs officers in Sri Lanka stopped a shipment of centuries-old cultural artefacts that were about to leave the country in the hands of a private collector. Students can discuss questions like what constitutes common cultural ownership, who is responsible for stewardship of cultural property, and what are ethical issues that go even further than the legalities of cultural ownership. Additional questions to consider include the very framing of the terms of debate over cultural property. Karen Warren (1989) makes the point that cultural property is often discussed in terms of a dominant paradigm featuring ownership and a win/lose model emerging from legal discourse. She suggests taking thought styles into account cross-culturally and focusing on the preservation of cultural heritage (rather than property) and on conflict resolution that may take other forms than the win/lose legalistic framework. David Sassoon (1989:70), in a parallel argument to the problem with professional ethical codes themselves, states that:

> The basic problem with all these treaties and laws enacted by nations individually as well as internationally is that they proceed from a negative point of departure: that is, they seek to prevent lucrative activity without any real authority, and capture malefactors without the ability to punish. While the efforts to initiate such mechanisms are necessary, they should go hand-in-hand with exploring ways of encouraging behaviour in a positive direction.

Sassoon's discussion of cultural property treaties and laws was based on his experience of seeing religious relics he recognized from Nepal turn up (decontextualized from their sacred milieu) in art galleries in New York City. Social science students might look for articles about current controversies regarding cultural property and discuss their role in defining and protecting cultural property, whether symbolic or material.

Related to discussions of cultural property are discussions of biological and

intellectual property. For social scientists who do medical research, debates about such biological property as individuals' DNA might be relevant. Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban (2003b:239) discusses this recent issue from the perspective of anthropologists:

> ...the ethics of the collection and control of the valuable biological samples, especially from the relatively isolated and genetically homogenous samples taken from indigenous people in the Human Genome Diversity Project, is an issue that has attracted the interest of aboriginal and human rights groups from around the globe. Cell lines that can be created from genetic material appear, in U.S. law if not elsewhere, to be claimed as the property of the pharmaceutical or biological resource companies that own the technology capable of creating the cell lines....
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> Many indigenous peoples believe that owning, privatising, and capitalizing on living organisms or cells is wrong and anathema to their cultural views of life. As a clear outgrowth of informed consent, the right to decline to participate in biological research or experimentation is protected as some indigenous groups have declared a moratorium on the collection of samples (Declaration of Indigenous Peoples of the Western Hemisphere regarding the Human Genome Diversity Project 1995).

Members of indigenous nations have also been active in writing policies pertaining to intellectual property; one common problem is that their knowledge of plant uses have been used without due compensation by pharmaceutical companies in profitable drug development. Students can visit the Internet site http://www.wipo.int/documents/en/meetings/1998/indip/index.htm to see a number of documents prepared by specific communities regarding the protection of indigenous knowledge for the WIPO 1998 Roundtable on Intellectual Property and Indigenous Peoples. Brush and Stabinsky (1996) have edited a volume on the intellectual property rights of indigenous people, and M. Chapin (1991) discusses an example of the Kuna setting the rules for interaction with scientists which might be of interest to students engaging this topic. There are many other examples of intellectual property discussions to raise with students (e.g., who owns their interview tapes and would they have to surrender them to a requesting investigatory body if their research involved sensitive political issues or participants doing some kind of illegal activity), but there is a new and growing literature on protection of intellectual property rights by communities that students might find of interest as a way to enter this discussion.

Some students may be planning to do social science research in their own

communities, and others may be planning to do research among those whose experiences and identities are quite different from their own. There are a number of ethical issues to discuss in relation to insider/outsider research. I did my Ph.D. thesis research in my hometown, a rural community in the state of Kentucky in the U.S.A., in part because I thought being an insider would somehow hold me more accountable to the community and even out power relations in the research process. What I learned from years of doing "insider" research is that we, as social scientists, are more likely to be to some degree both "insiders" and "outsiders," depending on the context (e.g., by age, language, gender, class, ethnicity, region, etc.), than strictly one or the other. There are a number of ethical issues for students to consider regarding insider and outsider vantage points in social science research. Does, for example, an "insider" have more of a responsibility to remind people of what he or she is doing because of already being a member of the community and being accepted into social situations that he or she might now be "studying"? Does an "outsider" need to be careful about who he or she comes to depend on as a "gatekeeper" for entry into social contexts because of becoming identified with a particular political faction, etc.? An early discussion of these issues in anthropology was put forward by Aguilar (1981). At that time, it was considered dubious practice for a U.S. cultural anthropologist to study "at home" in North America rather than doing ethnographic fieldwork in another country. Students in Sri Lanka could read this article and talk about the ethical issues related to being an "insider" or "outsider" doing research in, for example, Sinhala or Tamil, and Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim or Christian communities.

Many of us who have done both "insider" and "outsider" research in our careers have concluded that an interesting way to address the ethical issues arising from either status is to do team research including members who are in some way "insiders" and "outsiders" in the research context. Ethical questions related to team research constitute an interesting topic to discuss with students. How are decisions made about the research agenda? Whose interests are accommodated most and least? If students and professors are working together, how are questions of voice and potential abuses of power mediated? If a student sees a problem with a research project, e.g., that it furthers an ethnic chauvinist agenda, can he or she speak up in disagreement? Are students adequately compensated for their work? Are they given credit for their part in designing the research and authorship on publications? Another way to conceive of a social science research team is to include the researchers and the participants, or collaborators, in the team; the above questions can also be asked in relation to this model of research collaboration.

Accountability to communities and individuals in the design of social science research has been discussed from many dimensions. One way to address

power relations between the researchers and the researched – an issue which may be of great interest to students–is through employing participatory research techniques. The authors collected in Park, et al. (1993) discuss the possibilities, and their experiences, of participatory research in the social sciences. In participatory research, the researchers are often invited into a community to help facilitate a research process, but the central research question or problem is defined either by the community or collaboratively by the community and the trained researcher(s). A postgraduate student writing for the collection, Patricia Maguire (1993), discusses her difficulties in completing Ph.D. research, with its emphasis on individual authorship and knowledge, using participatory research methods, since the community's timeframe for the project was so different from her institution's schedule for completing the academic degree. Reading about participatory research methods can raise questions for students about control of the research process and about the collaboration between those inside and outside academic contexts in carrying out social science research. What are the ethics of constructing "expert" knowledge? Do students see relevance as an important factor in research design?

Abuse of power is an issue for students to discuss not only in relation to research teams but also in relation to classroom equity. Is there preference accorded to students by nationality, racialized identity, ethnicity, first language, age, or gender in the classroom? Do students know of mechanisms for addressing such problems? Do these result in differential research and employment opportunities? Smidchens and Walls (1990) discuss ethical questions specific to the student researcher, and Swazey, et al. (1987) have laid out some of the ethical problems in academic contexts that students would still find relevant. For the bigger picture, regarding inequalities in the global academic community, students might find it exciting to discuss the collection edited by Faye Harrison (1997) on "decolonizing anthropology." The ethics of access to funding, conferences, publication, and to setting research agendas across the global North and South can be discussed in relation to the volume edited by Harrison.

The ethical issues related to writing provide much to discuss with students. From the conceptualisation of a research project to the dissemination of results, social scientists – whether students, academics, or independent researchers – need to make a number of ethical decisions about what we write. In a proposal, for instance, is collaboration fully acknowledged? Does the person proposing the research actually plan to complete the project as it is represented, if possible? In final reports and publications, besides issues of authorship to consider, there are a number of aspects of representation of those who participated in the research for the author(s) to think about. Should pseudonyms be used for individuals or place names? Was this writing practice discussed with those who participated in the research, and were

their preferences followed? Are there different expectations of the publication of results coming from funding agencies, academic institutions, and participant communities? Should the researcher(s) be considering publication of results in different forms (e.g., a scientific journal article and a newspaper article, or a film to be used in schools) to meet obligations to different constituencies involved in the research? In the Sri Lankan context, in what language(s) should project results be published? Should publication be in multiple languages (e.g., Sinhala, Tamil, and English) to ensure that results are accessible to all of those who participated in the research? A further question about the ethics of social science writing concerns whether attribution is clearly made for all information used, whether it is archival material, interview material, or other sources. Students should be familiar with the definition of plagiarism (most consider the use of more than four consecutive words from a source as requiring a citation) and ethical dilemmas related to academic publishing (cf. LaFollette 1992). Beyond the more obvious issues like plagiarism are more subtle issues of representation. How, for example, are statistical and spatial data being represented in the dissemination of research results? Has the sample been "stretched" to look larger, or more representative, than it actually is? Does the scale of data maps mislead the reader about the sample? An excellent source for discussing such issues with students is Monmonier's (1996) book, *How to Lie With Maps*. A recent ethical issue, having to do with citation practices but more generally with what constitutes "reliability" of sources, is the use of the Internet – from reference material to studying web sites themselves to viewing electronic correspondence as "interview" material.

Written representation of those involved in social science research projects, then, presents one set of ethical issues. Visual representation presents another. Is informed consent obtained for visual material incorporated into publications stemming from research projects? Is it possible to obtain informed consent for large group photographs (e.g., at a political event)? In order to use archived photographs, should descendants be consulted before use by social scientists? Whose "property" is an image that was taken and used in a newspaper and then reused in social science research? Should secondary visual material be used without the informed consent of the actual subject of the photograph or film footage? What about attribution to the original photographer? Visual anthropologists are still debating lots of ethical issues, and this is an area for which ethical guidelines are still being written. For students planning to incorporate photography or videography into their research, it is vital to consider the ethical dimensions of visual media. An early source on this topic was Gross, Katz, and Ruby (1987). Students might search for more recent sources on the Internet through the site of the Society for Visual Anthropology in the U.S.A., for example, or training programs around the world in visual documentation.

Since students cannot anticipate every ethical dilemma they might face in doing social science research, it might be useful for them to collect examples from faculty members of their own challenging experiences with ethical decision-making in research, and to consult published collections of case examples of ethical dilemmas (cf. Appell 1978). There is a need for new sources in this area, and students in a course on ethics in the social sciences could take this on as a publication project themselves. Two recent examples of case studies in social science ethics may be found on the American Anthropological Association's Web site, at this address: http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethical_currents.htm. Finally, a general question for students to debate is whether involving research participants in research design, implementation, and documentation as full collaborators would help to address many of the ethical dilemmas arising in social science research, and what others might be introduced through participatory research frameworks.

Teaching Techniques

Teaching ethical practice in social science research is not conducive to lecture courses. Because students need to learn a *process* of ethical decision-making, considering various constituencies and vantage points, they can learn this best through discussing readings and current debates in their field. In anthropology, for example, a journalist (Tierney 2000) recently raised ethical concerns about a generation of ethnographers working in Venezuela among the Yanomami. These charges resulted not only in legal action but also in a very productive dialogue among representatives of indigenous nations and academic departments in Venezuela that yielded new, firm guidelines for the conditions under which communities would be willing to collaborate with social scientists.

If there has been a sea change in the ethics of social science within the last decade or two, I would say that would be it: that social scientists increasingly recognize that research is *always* a collaborative endeavour with participants, and much more agency is being expressed by those who contribute the stuff of their lives as "data" to social science research projects. Postgraduate students in a seminar on anthropological ethics I was teaching in 2000, for example, decided after doing reading on participatory research methods from the perspective of ethical decision-making, that they wanted to ask representatives of often-studied communities how they would like to be approached by / work with social scientists. They organized a

state-wide panel discussion on this topic, and then took what they learned from that conversation, "Communities, Anthropology, and Ethics: A Critical Dialogue for the Future," to a national forum to try to influence ethnographic research practice in a more participatory and collaborative direction (see Kingsolver, et al. 2003). Advice they received from the panellists included this remark from Terence Little Water, then Director of the American Indian Center of South Carolina:

> If you want to know something about a person, ask. Sit down and listen. If you [as researchers] allow people to be themselves, not taking them as a caricature that you might have been taught that they are or were, then people will be open to that effort. This is very important for all of us. (Little Water, in Kingsolver, et al. 2003)

The students in that course participated in the direction of the course, by organizing the panel and its documentation, practicing the way they might carry out a participatory research project. Whenever possible, I suggest that students will best learn ethical engagement through active course projects. Examples include collecting ethical dilemmas in the social sciences for discussion by future students; assembling a resource sheet on ethics in social science education for distribution to all students in the department; reviewing existing ethical codes internationally to comprise a basis for thinking about their own research practice; and organizing a workshop with social science alumni from their institution to discuss how their process of ethical engagement has extended into their work lives beyond their training as students.

Students in a course on ethics in the social sciences in Sri Lanka could organize a discussion between campuses on the topic of ethical practice interdisciplinarily and inside and outside the academy. They could discuss how ethical reasoning in various religious traditions might pertain to social science research contexts in Sri Lanka. Students could invite a member of the Sri Lanka Academy for the Advancement of Science to class to talk about the seminar "Ethics in the Practice of Science" that was sponsored by that organization, perhaps in association with an inter-faculty discussion of the social science aspects of medical ethics. Other possible projects for students in a Sri Lankan university course on ethics would be to design a website with resources on social science ethics; design sections of their dissertation proposals having to do with ethical practice; and participate with staff in organizing active ethical review and consultation committees across faculties to enliven consideration of the ethics of social science research throughout the life of a project, not just at the proposal stage. Of course,

these suggestions regarding pedagogical attention to ethics in the social sciences may already be in practice in Sri Lankan educational contexts or may not be relevant in the way that I have framed them.

In conclusion, students are colleagues from whom we as staff can learn much in conversations about ethical engagement in the social sciences. It is never a topic that is "finished," but instead one which invites ongoing discussion as student researchers become the next generation of activists and scholars in social documentation. Conversations about ethics may provide another way to discuss transnational and local politics of knowledge construction and research funding and organization, for example. By offering U.S.A.-based examples from teaching ethics in social science research, I do not mean to imply that there should be any national models imposed on this discussion. In a conversation among staff members on this topic at the University of Peradeniya, for example, it was pointed out that there are both advantages and disadvantages to having a formal human subjects review process in which detailed information about researchers and "researched" individuals and communities are formally registered with state institutions. Students speaking across the contexts of disciplines, nationalities, and other identities and experiences have much to add to this discussion, and I suggest that their contributions should be encouraged.

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