

Chapter 14: Critical ethical reflexivity: Reflections for practice and knowledge

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Abstract

Reflections on the preceding chapters are scaffolded by a previously published ethical appraisal framework referred to as the CERD framework (Stutchbury and Fox, 2009; Fox and Mitchell, 2019) which draws on four key traditions of Western ethical thinking. This framework is related to an ethical framework commonly used by Ethical Review Bodies in Global North Universities and to educational researchers' professional code of conduct in the UK, the British Educational Research Association Ethical Guidelines (2018). The reflections make links between ethical and methodological decision-making that authors have discussed in their chapters. In discussing the potential for studies to plan for positive consequences for a range of audiences, the chapter considers how consequential ethical thinking (see Chapter 1) can be reclaimed from merely avoiding negative consequences in research, such as causing harm. It also considers the various ecological spaces with which researchers have to engage to support inclusive educational research, the relationships they need to develop and the responsibilities researchers face with a deontological ethics of care, requiring them to resolve multiple obligations to research participants, gatekeepers, and society in general.

Socio-political contexts and the CERD framework

The studies in this book have been conducted in a range of national contexts but are united by the authors being situated in Global North University settings. These universities tend to assume that views of ethical research are based on a more or less accepted set of rational hypothetico-deductive principles, sometimes referred to as an Utilitarian Ethical Framework (UEF): Respect for persons, beneficence and non-maleficence, justice, research integrity and accountability, honesty and fairness (Busher and Fox, 2020). This framework expects researchers to gain prior informed consent from participants, take steps to avoid harm and ensure confidentiality when reporting research (Flinders, 1992). It is enforced through university Ethical Review Boards (ERBs) acting as 'disciplinary technologies' (Foucault, 1977) to protect participants in research project carried out under their auspices and universities' reputations. Non-compliant researchers can lose access to resources or even their jobs (Adler and Adler, 2016). However, this framework, originally intended for bio-medical studies has been extended to studies in other disciplines in Global North universities, such as the Social Sciences and Humanities, often inappropriately (Stark, 2012). This is especially a problem for critical research in educational spaces that are socially and politically distinct and fundamentally different ethically and culturally (Kara, 2018) from a Global North framework.

This book offers a step towards understanding how alternative ethical frameworks can be used to complement the UEF and justify a wider range of studies which, none the less maintain ethical integrity. The comprehensive CERD framework (Stutchbury and Fox, 2009, Fox and Mitchell, 2019), based on earlier work by Flinders (1992) and Seedhouse (2008), can reveal the key issues of ethics and methodologies facing any study. It offers four complementary lenses (Consequential, Ecological, Relational and Deontological) for thinking about ethical appraisal.

- The Consequential Ethical lens focuses on a researcher maximising the benefits of a study whilst minimising the possibilities of negative consequences from it. It respects the legal frameworks of a context and the rights of all those affected by the study.
- The Ecological Ethical lens illuminates the need for researchers to show awareness of the interconnectivity of all involved with and affected by a study. This is manifested as cultural sensitivity, avoidance of detachment and development of responsive communications (Flinders, 1992).
- The Relational Ethical lens emphasises researchers' relationship-building including respect for those affected by the study, including reporting back a study's findings to them. It requires researchers to avoid imposing on participants and recognise and respect the agendas of gatekeepers.
- The Deontological Ethical lens emphasises a researcher's obligations and duty of care for participants, such as how to create reciprocity with them and their gatekeepers, avoid acting in ways that would be considered 'wrong' by participants, and ensuring fairness in reporting outcomes.

The CERD lenses have an interesting relationship with the UEF used by many ERBs in the Global North. The UEF includes elements of the Consequential Ethical lens (risk assessment, benefits to researchers and participants), part of the Deontological Ethical lens (avoidance of harm) and aspects of the Relational Ethical lens (gaining informed consent). The CERD lenses also have a strong fit with the major professional code of conduct for educational researchers in the UK, the British Educational Research Association (BERA) Ethical Guidelines (BERA, 2018). Appendix One gives readers a weblink to see how these two codes map on to each other. For example, like the CERD Deontological lens the BERA ethical guidelines make clear that, 'all educational research should be conducted within an *ethic of respect* for: the person; knowledge; democratic values; the quality of educational research; and academic freedom' (BERA, 2018, p.5, italicisation as in the original). The BERA Guidelines (2018) also recognise the importance of the social dimension in research, the CERD Relational lens, and how the underpinning universality of ethical decision-making needs to be (re)calibrated to encompass the social dimension of human existence generally, and social research in particular. Herd (2006, p.125) argues that 'empirically before there can be respect for rights there must be a sense of social connectedness with those others whose rights are recognized'. The importance of social connectedness between researchers, participants and gatekeepers through empathy and shared concerns are seen as necessary for, rather than threatening to rational foundations for ethical behaviours. Social connectedness celebrates the importance of agency, supporting people to develop their identities and agendas through negotiation, and learning to resist merely being 'docile bodies' (Busher and Fox, 2020, p.3).

This book shows how there is a need for researchers to take control and be prepared, where relevant, to resist the hegemony within and outside institutions (Vidovich and Slee, 2001). It goes beyond researchers trying not to fall foul of the frameworks and principles embodied in their institutional ERBs. It requires them to be active in understanding the origins and currency of such hegemonies so that they can choose ethical and appropriate ways of entering and engaging with those in their chosen research context. To achieve the ability to make wise judgements on research projects and to show ethical practices, researchers need to 'balance research aspirations, societal concerns, institutional expectations and individual rights' (BERA, 2018, p.5) and to grow their expertise through consultation and collaboration (McNiff, 2013).

As well as becoming familiar with an understanding of ethical ways of engaging with those in the proposed research settings, researchers also need to engage in dialogue with their institutional ERB. A more collaborative approach to ethical regulation would allow researchers to work with ERBs in ways which encompass an iterative process of review and revision throughout the life of a project (Brady, 2012).

The following sections are related to the different CERD lenses to show how the authors in this book reflect on the socio-political situations they encountered in their research and how their methodological decisions were affected by the ethical stances they chose. The authors of the chapters in Section One created studies with and for children and young people. Children and young people are legal minors for whom adults have a duty of care, so are in a different category of relationships with researchers and other adults than are adult participants in research. The authors of the chapters in Section Two focus on adult learning and development in diverse settings - England, Ghana, Denmark, the Thai-Burmese border and online spaces and networks across Europe.

The Consequential Ethical lens

Some of the authors in Section One reflect on the socio-political situations they encountered in their research and how their ethical stances affected their methodological decisions. Capewell argues that a researcher's demonstration of careful risk assessment of a project, including its impact on participants and their contexts, will shorten the length of time taken to gain ethical approval. It reduces the potential questions that ERBs and parents/carers/gatekeepers might raise. She tailored her methods to try to ensure that participants gained maximum benefit from her project. McGregor and Frodsham recognise that focusing on the benefits of a study to its participants is important for gaining consent. They justified to their ERB their use of video and audio-recording of participants in the classroom by this means. Busher argues that teachers and researchers had to be satisfied that secondary school pupils would benefit from the project and this shaped how data was collected and the project carried out, not only in terms of the formal curriculum objectives that the pupils had to achieve but also in acknowledging the part that pupils played as participant researchers

In Section Two, Stutchbury, Jack, Busher and James argue that positive research outcomes depend to some degree on funders' views of wise spending, whether to boost their reputations as influencers in their field or in their own practice contexts. Researchers' responsibilities to aspire to gatekeepers preferred outcomes, however, were often in tension with researchers' aspirations to benefit participant groups (either within a project or beyond). Jack had to argue for a readjusted methodological approach with her ERB because she feared already marginalised groups might be further overlooked in her project. Christensen doubts whether funders will accept the challenges, including retraining staff that arise from her research into group pedagogy in Danish HEIs. This uncovered practices that were silencing students, damaging their self-efficacy and contributing to course drop-out.

The Ecological Ethical lens

Authors in Section One acknowledge the importance of cultural and social contexts for the successful development and implementation of their studies. Chamberlain, Buckler and Mkwanzani discuss taking account of local cultural contexts when working with children and young people in different countries in order to pursue inclusive education. Hanna acknowledges how different cultural frameworks inhibit children's development and make it problematic for researchers to work with marginalised children.

Several authors point out the importance of institutional settings on the outcomes of research projects. Busher discusses how their project negotiated with the Headteacher and Senior Management Team as well as with key teachers to implement research methods that minimised the impact on pupils preparing for public examinations and on the socio-cultural dynamics between staff of the school. McGregor and Frodsham recognise the power of Headteachers in their study, seeking their permission first before trying to gain the consent of other teachers, pupils and parents.

All the writers in Section One discuss how their projects had to be tuned to their institutions' ERB code of practice. Capewell acknowledges the power of ERBs, arguing that they are hesitant to approve unproven research methods with groups of participants labelled as 'vulnerable'. McGregor and Frodsham discuss how they were able to fit two of their chosen methods - a brief written questionnaire for pupils and interviewing a small focus group of pupils - within their ERB's code of practice because they could show that they had put in place mechanisms to gain participants' informed consent and to protect participants from harm. Capewell points out the range of legislation that researchers in a particular country need to take into account when pursuing research, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) as a moral framework.

The authors in Section Two question whether their efforts to counter the power imbalances on behalf of their participants do give their participants a 'voice', especially when the researchers, too, have a sense of disempowerment compared to the funders and policy decision-makers: interdependences are not necessarily ones of equal power. Jack highlights the interdependence of the multiple stakeholders in and hence multiple audiences for any one study. Fox *et al.* (2020) in Figure 14.1 show that power is reduced the closer to the centre of the web that people are located, with participants being the most disempowered. Busher and James, and Jack argue that increasing social justice was a key driver for those projects with identifiably disadvantaged groups of adults or, in the case of Fox *et al.*'s study in this book, with trainee teachers trying to diagnose and protect against vulnerabilities. This was more implicit in studies, such those of Emke and Christensen in which researchers thought themselves to be disenfranchised.

<Figure 14.1: An ecological web of stakeholders in studies centred on displaced people (reproduced with thanks to Wiley as Figure 1 from Fox et al, 2020, p833) *about here*>

Section Two researchers also discuss how they needed to challenge but adapt their studies to the constraints and opportunities of their studies' contexts, which became more apparent once

they were in the field. Emke came to understand how her participants perceived their data in social media virtual spaces. Jack gained an appreciation of the political realities of her participants' situation through seeing how agencies and mediators worked with them as displaced people. Adapting studies to context was ethically challenging for researchers whether they were insiders (Christensen) or insiders-outsiders (Stutchbury). Christensen wanted her research to challenge her peers to overcome what she refers to as 'the conspiracies of silence' (pp. xx). She reveals not only the abuses of power within the Problem-based Learning (PBL) groups and how these were ignored by the Universities, but also exposes herself as a whistle-blower and an academic implicit in such practices. Stutchbury, a teacher educator with extensive experience of teacher education in the UK, India and Sub-Saharan Africa, takes a critical approach to Ghanaian teacher education, offering the insights of an outsider to explain behaviours of which the individuals under study were not themselves fully aware. However, to create an empowering outcome meant having to make the study's findings speak to the local audience in Ghana, whilst also being respectful of the local practices and identities that had been unpacked during the study.

The Relational Ethical lens

Building supportive relationships with participants by researchers is important for allowing researchers to play an active role in helping others, aiming for positive consequences, rather than merely avoiding harm and a way of exhibiting an ethics of care (Held, 2006). All the researchers needed to consider and overcome any sense of making others feel vulnerable, whether this was by thinking about what a safe space would feel like for interviewing or how to make observations feel less threatening. To maintain trust, these reassurances also needed to be extended to reporting and dissemination behaviours. They needed to be evidenced in the planning for the studies to convince the gatekeepers and sponsors, as well as being made sincerely and credibly to the participants in the field. Building trust with participants was important because it established a moral compass through which the ethics of research informed researchers' practices throughout a project.

All the authors in Section One acknowledged the importance of developing supportive relationships with their participants and host institutions. As well as avoiding causing actual harm, physically, emotionally or mentally to their participants, they wanted to avoid giving their participants senses of discomfort or vulnerability while ensuring that participants' voices were heard. McGregor and Frodsham thought they had to 'remain vigilant of the ethical dilemmas and tensions that can implicate us, and our actions if we cause discomfort in learning situations' (pp. xx) There is also concern that gatekeepers might obscure the voices of other participants. Capewell discusses how she needed to get parental permission for the research but also wanted to allow children's voices to be heard when they disagreed with their parents. On the other hand, Hanna wanted to listen to the silences of participants as well as their voices when faced with particular situations in stories. She argues that silence is as much a part of a participant's communication as something expressed in other forms.

Some authors discuss the linkage between interest in students' voices and potential research methods. Hanna explains that interest in pupils' voices grew with the recognition that children had agency (Kellert, 2010; O'Neill, 2014) and so their opinions and views need collecting, particularly in health and education. Hanna chose methods which she hoped the

children would relate to personally. However, some images in her chosen storybook led to silences among participants, while others generated enthusiasm when they reflected participants' lived experiences. Capewell explains the linkages in children's voice research between ontology (what are children's voices), epistemology (how can their voices be understood) and methodology (how can their voices be collected) (pp. xx). McGregor and Frodsham argue that when listening to pupils' voices, researchers need to present their views in an unbiased way and balance their views with those of others.

Several authors discuss what constitutes informed consent by children, especially in cultures where they are not familiar with being part of research projects. Chamberlain, Buckler and Mkwanzani point out that although all the girls in their study gave permission for their stories to be shown to wider audiences, the researchers did not know what the girls, who lived in rural Zimbabwe, really understood by that permission. They wanted to ensure the girls' ownership of their stories, including withdrawing their permissions if they wished, and wondered how the girls might change their views as they grew older.

How trust was built with participants is shown in Section One by several authors. Busher discusses how their project tried to be clear to pupil participants about what they were being asked to do, how they were being asked to do it, what visual and interview methods were being used, and what they would gain from it (experience and the social artefacts they created). Further, repeated visits to participants' classrooms and ensuring the project met participants' learning and social needs helped to establish trust and collaboration with participants. Capewell wanted to demonstrate 'to the children that I was interested in their voice. Trying to empower them was to provide options for their choices, giving them some degree of control over the research process' (p. xx). She consulted a Young Persons Advisory Group to help her shape her research methods and questions so participants would feel at ease and provide their authentic answers. Hanna investigated migrant learners' responses to pictures in a book about migration which, she believed, would encourage them to express their views clearly. Chamberlain, Buckler and Mkwanzani recognise that one participant in their five day workshop played an important part in helping other girls to express themselves by verbalising her emotions and dramatizing breastfeeding her baby in a role play (pp. xx).

For several of the studies in Section Two, relational ethical thinking was particularly important when interviews were complemented by additional forms of data. The importance of clarifying the purpose of interviews is part of the initial trust building in a study through creating a safe space for interviews. Emke, in her post-humanist study of Twitter assemblages used collated Twitter Chat data in online interviews. Busher and James used mind diagrams in preparation for group interviews. Fox *et al.* began with socio-mapping diagrams started at home which were expanded upon in response to prompts in 1:1 trainee/researcher (year 1) or trainee/tutor (year 2) discussions. These actions increase the chances of the interview space having reflective benefits (DeMarrais, 2004), but such methodological decisions are also ethical ones.

The importance of the non-human in our online/ offline socially connected world has to be recognised by researchers. Emke acknowledges the inclusion of non-human actors (such as Twitter hashtags and algorithms) in her research as well as how her interventions affect

human-non-human interactions: she found her observations of social media contexts could not be 'withdrawn'. Her active participation either by connecting tweets around a hashtag or by retweeting affected the assemblages she was studying. It led her to negotiate with participant Twitter users how they felt about their tweets being considered data. Handing over control to potential participants about what is made available as data might limit the pool of available data for analysis and insights. However, it does create an ethical and practical approach to gaining voluntary informed consent.

Approaches to gaining informed consent varied between authors in Section Two. Stutchbury's approach led her to an interesting compromise that weighed the importance of context and research focus when observing trainee teachers in Ghana. They were not the primary participants in her study of the teacher educators, so she entered their space as a teacher educator more than a researcher. She explained how informed consent was not being sought for her observations to be considered as data collection opportunities. None the less, she tried to make them and their teacher educators feel that the research was being carried out respectfully by offering constructive feedback to the trainee teachers from which they could benefit.

Different authors' views on the importance of being detached observers in their research showed further complexity around relational ethics. Despite being an insider to the Danish HEI context Christensen was studying, she remarked in her field notes how she needed to take a more detached position in carrying out her observations. 'The "withdrawn" observer position was vital for the observations I made. As a teacher and supervisor, I had never noticed the little things the position as observer allowed me to identify' (Christensen, pp. xx). She reflects on the indirect and uncomfortable relationships her student participants revealed through their interviews as they 'othered' their peers in derogatory ways. None the less, she had to rely on and respect her interlocutors' perceptions of student activity and identity as a form of social reality. Further, to carry out her research successfully, she had to minimise the impact of her behaviours on some people whilst being attuned to the processes of subjectification of others in which she as an academic (educator and a researcher) was embroiled. This uncomfortable balancing act led her to reflect on Foucault's (1994, p.285) notion of ethos and ideas of avoiding 'appetites'. The last resonates with Aristotelian views on the 'doctrine of the mean' guiding virtuous behaviours and avoiding the vices of excess or deficit (Urmson, 1973).

Relational ethics also played an important part in Fox *et al.*'s project that is reported in this book on the social dimensions of trainee teachers' needs and support. Their methodology made use of personality trait self-assessment generated data, including the Cambridge Assessment's Cambridge Personal Styles Questionnaire (CPSQ) to evaluate, select and predict participants' behaviours. It was inspired by previous research such as that by McManus, Keeling and Pace (2004) and Salgado and Tauriz (2014). Fox *et al.*'s project sought to learn from an analysis of aggregated data which required as large a sample of the population as possible. While sharing individual's data with individual participants to help them engage with it might be expected ethical practice, if individual participants then shared this knowledge with other participants it would compromise the study. This posed an ethical dilemma for the researchers who decided to prioritise the potential for empowerment from the aggregated data by not sharing the individual data with participants but secure the

analysis of the aggregated data. It also ensured the support of tutors and mentors in making sense and use of the data. Although this decision actually resulted in higher participation in the study as a whole in its second year, that was not inevitable and it constructed an uncomfortable compromise between two competing ethical perspectives: sustaining the Relational ethical lens by respecting the rights of individuals compared with Consequential ethical lens to respect the powerful demands of gatekeepers .

The Deontological Ethical lens

A sense of moral responsibility for their participants' well-being runs throughout the narratives of the authors. In Section One, McGregor and Frodsham discuss how they had to demonstrate to their ERBs that they would ensure that their participants were protected from harm and given anonymity in the collection of data and the publication of research reports. Capewell speaks about keeping her participants safe from harm by 'protecting children from mistreatment, provision of safety and care (both physical and mental health) and taking action, where appropriate' (p.xx). However, part of this process involves explaining to participating children what information she (Capewell) can and cannot keep confidential. Conflicting moral choices have to be mediated by respect for the consequences of a researcher's actions or inactions and by the moral expectations of the contexts in which s/he is working. Both Busher and Capewell focus on treating participants fairly and equally in the light of the cultural and institutional contexts in which they worked.

Chamberlain, Buckler and Mkwanzani assert that reflecting on practice goes beyond 'ticking off the structural ethical and safeguarding principles that we often work under' (pp. xx). For them, taking moral responsibility for their work is related to their 'values and moral obligations as citizens of the world' (pp. xx). They consider that continuous critical reflection on their practice as researchers and how others affect their current and future actions helps them to transform their narratives and actions to confront social exclusion and bring about change. Hanna, too, expresses a sense of moral purpose in carrying out her research, wanting to achieve more than just avoid unacceptable risk to her participants whilst using less conventional qualitative research methods, the appropriateness of which some other researchers questioned, especially when used with groups that they perceived as 'marginalised'.

Authors in Section Two concluded that they needed to reflect continually and critically on themselves as people and researchers. Christensen recognises how she continued to research rather than try to alleviate the marginalisation revealed by those in her studies. She was left wondering whether she had shown (or could be accused of not showing) sufficient courage, respectfulness or sincerity. Aristotelian-derived criteria (Macfarlane, 2010; Carpenter, 2013) can be used by researchers to reflect on their practices as well as on the researchers' accounts in this book about how they tried to meet their obligations.

Stutchbury debates how research which involves a deep and critical analysis of context requires an anonymisation that does not feel fair to those whose voice is silenced as part of the research. She calls for the courage to design self-generated, participant-led critical realist research. Jack's study similarly recognised the limitations that an outsider researcher can have in revealing and representing the voices of the displaced, needing to avoid timidity but embody humility not

only in disseminating but also in framing future research. Busher and James reflect on the different ways in which participants can make their voices heard and how researchers need to facilitate this complexity, using multiple ethical lenses to construct socially useful, trustworthy collaborative studies.

Fox *et al.* (this book) think that, ultimately, their research instruments and data collection need to be re-imagined as part of a programme of staff development adopted by the gatekeepers in their project's setting. To achieve this, they need to avoid inflexibility in the development of their project and engage in a collective reflexivity on the most worthwhile way to support trainee teachers in the future. However, this is likely to require the research team to exhibit humility and withdraw. Provocatively, Emke calls on us to avoid our partiality to focus on only the human participants in research but to include non-human elements in our appreciation of who/what might be considered a research participant, as did Beach and Arrozola (2019). She invites us to think about new ways of engaging with ethics when researching in public, especially digital spaces by thinking how assemblages of human and non-human factors affect the way research can be carried out, drawing on the work of Latour (2007).

Stitching it together

Despite the dangers of never-ending ethical reflexivity (Abraham, 200), there are arguments for it being useful in evaluating a researcher's generation of both factual and value claims (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2006; 2008). When deciding on how well a researcher has met their obligations in carrying out their research with integrity, it may be useful to draw on Aristotelian criteria of what would be considered virtuous behaviours (Carpenter, 2018). In this book, the way researchers self-identified limitations to their studies offer some clues as to the realities of how their actions did not fully match their aspirations, in particular in not contributing as much as they would have hoped to empowering others.

A researcher's duties continue throughout each study, including through to reporting and disseminating its outcomes. However, arguments will always remain about the extent to which educational researchers can take responsibility for the use made of the knowledge generated by their studies after it has been disseminated (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2006, 2008; Hammersley, 2008). Some argue that knowledge production needs to be separated from knowledge use in order to have credibility and utility (Abraham, 2008). Others point to the reality that there are connections or 'entanglements' between these two processes which a researcher should be aware of and these might affect how they frame, explain and/or report their study (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2008, p.561).

By accepting the limitations of their studies, researchers create the possibility of an ethical perspective that helps them to strive to develop their practices through phronesis – wise thinking about their processes that lead them towards the 'perfect' or 'the eudaimonic' or virtuous. 'Ethical thought essentially includes an aspiration to be better than we are, to reach an ideal that is not already attained' (Annas, 2009, p. 523). Such thinking recognises that researchers often have to engage in compromises, suffering non-ideal balancing acts between the different demands of their participants and their contexts, the requirements of the ERBs and

their own core values. To compensate for our situated behaviours in conducting critical and ethical research, we need to incorporate explicit and reflexive ethical thinking.

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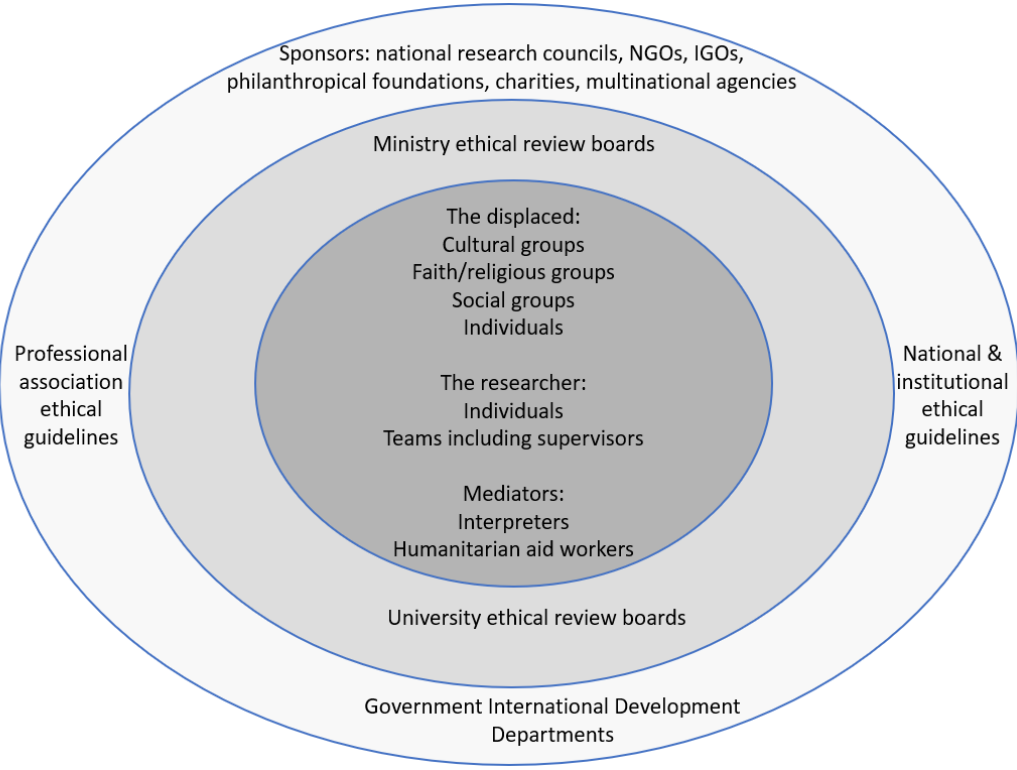
Appendix One

The Ethical Appraisal Framework mapped against BERA 2018 guidelines

This framework, mapped against the BERA ethical guidance, is offered as guidance for use in appraising research projects. It is recommended that approval for studies should be gained as locally appropriate for your study and, where relevant, considered by the appropriate research ethical review board and/or authority. It is based on the paper: Stutchbury, K., and Fox, A. (2009). Ethics in Educational Research: introducing a methodological tool for effective ethical

analysis. Cambridge Journal of Education, 39(4), 489-504 (<https://doi.org/10.1080/03057640903354396>) and subsequent developments to the framework with thanks to Sara Hennesy, the University of Cambridge. This document can be found at <https://www2.le.ac.uk/colleges/ssah/research/ethics/case-studies/education/cerd-ethical-grid-mapped-against-bera-2018-pdf> and is useable under creative commons licencing CC-BY-NC-SA (share alike with attribution for non-commercial use) <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

Beyond the field sites
Gatekeepers to the field
In the field



Chapter 14 Alt text for figure 14.1

An ecological representation of the web of potential relationships in educational research with the forcibly displaced, originally published in the British Educational Research Journal at: <https://bera-journals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/berj.3618>

This is a diagram made of concentric circles. The central circle relates to those in the field. The displaced made up of cultural groups, faith/religious groups, social groups and individuals. The researcher as individuals and teams including supervisors. Mediators such as interpreters and humanitarian aid workers. The second layer captures gatekeepers to the field. This includes Ministry ethical review boards and institutional ethical review boards. The outer circle covered those beyond the field sites such as sponsors such as national research councils, NGOs, IGOs, philanthropical foundations, charities, multinational agencies; professional association ethical guidelines, national and institutional ethical guidelines or government international development departments.