Make Research Ethicists Your New Best Friend*
Social Science Horizon 2020
Example from Jena


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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
I. Example of Social Science Project Proposal from Friedrich Schiller University, Jena

- Cultural Heritage of War and Reconciliation
- WH&R (acronym 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 Example

- Key Issue for Ethics: Research Involves Human Subjects
  - Primarily “Social Psychology” Methods Relevant for Ethical Part of Project Proposal
- Research Disciplines: Interdisciplinary
  - Social Scientists,
  - Historians,
  - Pedagogical (academic, textbook publishers),
  - and Reconciliation Studies
II. Ethics as 1) Compliance and 2) Doing Good

- Reviewers’ Recommendation:
  - Good overall review, high marks
  - The ethics section was also fine,
  - Yet, the reviewers wanted to see the ethics issues integrated into the whole project proposal

- Raises Question: What is Ethics for Reviewers?
  - 1) Compliance (Break No Rules)
  - 2) Doing Good…

- “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 unproblematic in controlled/laboratory settings
  - Yet most interesting studies involve persons affected by war, 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)
- Problematic: “Belfast Project” Boston College
II. Ethics (Grey Areas?)

- **Human Subjects Principles**: (US National Institute of Justice 2010)
- “Aspirational” nature of 7/8 ethics principles:
  - #1 = clear and non-negotiable;
  - #2→#8 require ‘best-practice’ standards, judgment, and discussion for research involving ethical grey areas
  1. The right to end participation in research at any time
  2. **Voluntary**, informed consent
  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
Kaiser/Carr (2013) Key Insight:
- Bring in ethicists at early stage of proposal drafting
- Especially relevant for social sciences
  - 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”
Synthetic Biology and J. Craig Venter
- Venter included ethical deliberation of the science from the very beginning
- Foresaw and effectively addressed legitimate public concern
  - *Der Stand Der Ethischen Diskussionen Um Sythetische Biologie*, Johannes Achatz, Martin O'Malley, and Peter Kunzmann
Learning for next Horizon2020 proposal:

- **End in Mind – From the Start… with Ethicists**
- **Spirit of “Human Subjects” principles not just protected (compliance), but supported as part of Impact**

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
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