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Ethical learning from an educational ethnography: the application of an ethical framework in doctoral supervision

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Chapter 8: Ethical learning from an educational ethnography: the application of an ethical framework in doctoral supervision

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Abstract

Doctoral research entails ethical as well as methodological learning in relation to project planning, fieldwork and reporting. Ethical considerations can be especially complex with respect to ethnographic research in an international context. This empirical study explores the application and development of an ethical framework which was used to guide reflection and dialogue between a PhD researcher (Rafael) and supervisor (Alison) through a series of 'Ethical Discussions' outside formal supervision meetings. The chapter offers an account of the extended dialogue focusing on ethical reflexivity which occurred in these sessions, and the spaces around them.

Through thematic analysis of transcripts from these discussions and related documentary artefacts, we explore the explicit, meaningful and mutual ethical learning which occurred in relation to the ethnographic study of schools in Ethiopia, and the effective use of the 'CERD' framework to scaffold and support researcher development. Implications are drawn for doctoral research, ethical review boards, and researcher development more generally.

Keywords: Ethiopia; ethnographic research; international and comparative education research; researcher development; research ethics; sub-Saharan Africa

Introduction

This chapter operationalises Gewirtz and Cribb's (2006) call for an 'ethically reflexive sociology of education' (p.147) in the context of doctoral research at an Ethiopian school. The doctoral study (undertaken by Rafael) applied an ethical appraisal framework developed by Alison and a colleague (Stutchbury and Fox, 2009) for use in educational research. The framework is presented, through an empirical study, as a device to scaffold dialogic spaces within doctoral study for mutual learning through ethical reflexivity. This fills a gap in both the doctoral and ethical research bodies of literature. The chapter illustrates how a doctoral researcher and supervisor can learn together about what should constitute ethical ethnographic research in a particular context and with a particular researcher positionality.

The doctoral study was carried out in Tigray, Ethiopia, which saw both researchers exploring how this framework, developed from Western traditions of ethical thinking, could be applied to research in a sub-Saharan African setting. The purpose of the doctoral study was to develop knowledge-for-understanding (Wallace and Poulson, 2003) about the perspectives, interests and agendas of different actors in the school, and the priorities reflected in routine activities and school-level decisions (Mitchell, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c). Rafael had previously spent two years working in the education system in Tigray for Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) which allowed him to bring relevant local (Ethiopian) experience, knowledge and contacts to discussions with the supervisory team (Mustajoki and Mustajoki, 2017). Hence Rafael's positionality was not one of a total 'outsider' to the context (Milligan, 2016). Rafael led negotiations with those in the research setting during his probation period, using his growing situated knowledge to inform his case to the University's ERB. However, he came to recognise the limitations of his knowledge, having had no prior experience of conducting ethnography in Ethiopia, and remaining in many ways an 'outsider' (Milligan, 2016). The

fieldwork was carried out through two extended periods of ethnographic participant observation in the school.

The chapter presents joint reflections on how extended dialogue throughout the doctoral journey allowed both researchers, through application of the ethical framework, to apply their values and experiences towards changes in understanding. This led to a new conceptualisation of the relationship between dimensions of the CERD framework and a practical application of Aristotelian views of virtue ethics.

The ethically reflexive dialogue sees Alison guiding Rafael as a 'virtuous researcher' in terms of Aristotle's Doctrine of the Mean, enacting her vision to help Rafael consider his individual duty to follow a virtuous path between the vices of excess and deficit (Carpenter, 2013; Macfarlane 2010). See Figure 1.

Figure 1: Navigating an Aristotelian path of virtue, rather than vice, in ethical research
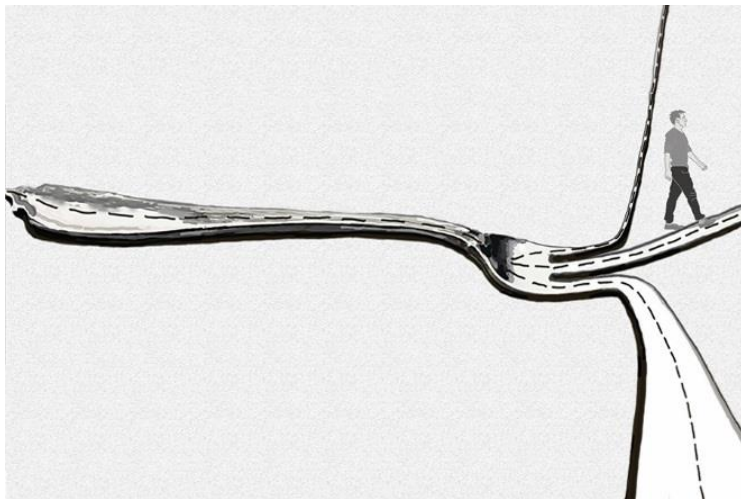
(Source, with permission: Alex Fox)

The framework at the heart of the approach presented offers four 'dimensions' of ethical thinking (Stutchbury and Fox 2009). Use of the framework since its first publication has

indicated that these dimensions can be usefully approached in a particular order reflected in the acronym 'CERD'.

Consequential thinking – the C of CERD – grew out of utilitarianism, with its aspiration for determining the best outcomes for society, into a moral philosophical way of thinking about the criteria for evaluating the benefits of one outcome over another (Scheffler, 1988; Driver, 2011). This relates to judging an act (in this case, related to research activites) by balancing its positive and negative consequences (Reynolds, 1979). Consequential thinking is useful as both a starting point (to identify potential or wished-for outcomes of a study), and as an end point (to evaluate a study against these aspirations from the perspective of increased knowledge gained through the course of the research). *Consequential thinking* starts the process of identifying the moral drivers behind the study, in terms of anticipated benefits and intentions to minimise harm, through *Ecological thinking*, which identifies all those associated with the study to whom Consequential thinking needs to be applied, to *Relational thinking*, as an application of the intentions to minimise harm and maximise benefits through showing respect and an 'ethic of care' (Gilligan, 2011; Noddings, 1984) to use *Deontological thinking*, to conclude a set of realisations as to the obligations a researcher feels they have, to whom and why.

Ecological thinking (Flinders, 1992[1]) – the E of CERD – relates to the web of rules and expectations which surround and impinge on a study due to its situated nature. It includes legal and professional codes as well as the concerns of relevant sponsors and institutions. In

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[1] Flinders (1992) analysis of four ethical traditions, which informed the Stutchbury and Fox ethical appraisal framework, is presented as Table 1.3 in Chapter 1.

Rafael's doctoral study there were two national contexts to consider due to the UK base of Rafael's University and the Ethiopian setting of the research site.

Relational thinking – the R of CERD – derives from feminist traditions and ethical thinking grounded in an 'ethic of care' (Gilligan, 2011; Noddings, 1984), in which the 'derivation and authority of moral behavior (sic) [comes] not in rules and obligations as such, but in our attachments and regard for others' (Flinders, 1992, 106). This view prioritises the development of relationships and mutual learning through listening and giving voice to those involved in research. The nature of interpersonal relationships reflect the credibility of a study, as 'trustworthiness should also be judged by how well the researcher got the Relational matters right' (Rossman and Rallis, 2010, 382).

Deontological thinking – the D of CERD – draws on ethical traditions relating to meeting obligations. 'Deontology', which derives from *deon* ('duty' in Ancient Greek), applies to thinking which views decisions from the perspective of the duties of a moral agent. These duties indicate what is morally required and permissible in a particular society and are usually normative to that society. In this study Rafael and Alison sought to understand 'to whom' and 'in what ways' Rafael had obligations, by reviewing and balancing competing norms. While some (e.g. Flinders, 1992) consider ethical traditions such as these to be alternative research stances, Seedhouse (1998), writing in a healthcare context, proposed that it is ethical to view a study through multiple lenses, recognising 'each idea is connected to others and it is difficult to be logical, consistent and sure that everything has been covered' (Stutchbury and Fox, 209, 503) without such scaffolding.

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Methodology

Spaces were created within a doctoral supervisor-supervisee relationship which enabled Alison and Rafael to focus on the ethical aspects of his study. Six discussions of between 10 and 75 minutes were held over a four year period during the probation, fieldwork and pre-viva periods in parallel to the usual tutorials/supervisions. This chapter is based on an analysis of the dialogue between Alison and Rafael, not only during these recorded discussions but also through the course of the collaborative analysis involved in drafting this chapter.

An interpretative analytical approach was applied to the dataset (see Table 8.1) as an iterative process. The analysis is presented according to the four dimensions of the CERD framework (Consequential, Ecological, Relational and Deontological ethical thinking) reflecting on the probation; fieldwork; writing-up and post-viva phases of the study. This is a form of 'constructive interpretation' (Chang, 2016): interpretation, as Rafael and Alison's personal values and perspectives were drawn on throughout; and constructive, acknowledging how they were transformed through the process. 'Autoethnographic writings interweave stories from the past with on-going self-discovery' (Chang, 2016, 140) and this chapter charts how Alison and Rafael have been affected by each other's journeys.

Table 8.1 Dataset on which this chapter is based

Data source	Dates	Notes
Ethical Discussion A	January 2013	Audio (58 min) & transcript
Ethical Discussion B	February 2013	Audio (79 min) & transcript
Ethical Discussion C	September 2013	Audio (10 min) & transcript
Ethical Discussion D	September 2014	Audio (75 min) & & transcript

Ethical Discussion E	January 2015	Audio (58 min) & transcript
Ethical Discussion F	February 2016	Audio (67 min) & transcript
Collaborative Word documents for ECER 2017 conference	March – July 2017	Analysis of Ethical Discussions A-F, fieldnotes, & synthesis leading to ECER 2017 conference paper
Collaborative Word documents	September 2017 – April 2018	Analysis of Ethical Discussions A-F, memos, comments, emails, & concept maps

The questions included in the original ethical appraisal framework (Stutchbury and Fox, 2009) were used by Rafael in preparation for the recorded sessions A-F and referred to during the discussions. The four dimensions of the framework therefore informed the process of data collection and were also deductively applied to the Ethical Discussion transcripts to identify and 'chunk' sections of dialogue for the analysis presented in this chapter. Separate documents were generated for each dimension, which were explored inductively using open coding. Through an iterative process, with either Alison or Rafael taking the lead, the codes for each dimension were conflated, refined or cut. Following agreement on a complete set of codes, conceptual connections were made between them. The codes were clustered and parent and sibling relationships agreed. The analysis was then reworked by reviewing each phase through the lens of the four dimensions.

The ethical reflexivity undertaken by Alison and Rafael, applied Gewirtz and Cribb's (2006) recommendations, paraphrased below:

1. Being explicit about the value assumptions and evaluative judgements that inform or are embedded in every stage of our research.

2. Being prepared to offer a defence of our assumptions and judgements, to the extent that they might not be shared by others.

3. Acknowledging, and where possible responding to, tensions between the various values that are embedded in our research.

4. Taking seriously the practical judgements and dilemmas of research participants.

5. Taking responsibility for the political and ethical implications of the research. (147-148)

It was the case that Alison presented Rafael with a particular framework for ethical appraisal, sets of questions to explore the framework, and created the spaces (in terms of time and location) in which to discuss the issues arising. The framework, however, is not a prescriptive tool and, as demonstrated, was subjected to critique by Rafael and further development. The recognition of Alison and Rafael's values, former experiences, and agendas – in essence the complex reification of different cultural experiences that both brought as individuals – became a vital resource for ethical reflexivity. This approach allowed the tensions and practical decision-making related to the doctoral study to be made explicit.

Key findings

The outcomes of the analytic process detailed below (Table 8.2) are presented across three main phases of the doctoral study: Probation; Fieldwork & Writing up; Post Viva. This analysis offers a window onto the shifting issues of significance along the doctoral journey, as well as unpacking the specific issues associated with ethical research in this particular research study: in Tigray, Ethiopia (as context) and by an outsider researcher with some prior experience of working in the Ethiopian school context (as positionality).

Table 8.2: Summary of key issues across the doctoral journey

	PROBATION	FIELDWORK & WRITING UP	POST-VIVA
Consequential	Anticipated impact on whom? Awareness of Consequential ethical thinking Developing reflexivity as a researcher Planning for quality as an ethical issue Who decides what is beneficial?	Avoid imposition External context to benefit Impact of the study on participants Reviewing aspirations Who decides what is beneficial	Impact on whom? Local understandings of research Planning for quality Post-study aspirations Reflexivity as a researcher Responsibilities for dissemination Views of reciprocity
Ecological	Cultural appropriateness Researcher positionality Researcher responsibility Role conflict	Awareness of Ecological thinking Honesty and openness Micropolitical sensitivity	Academic responsibilities Role conflict Role of gatekeeper
Relational	Awareness of Relational ethical thinking Developing contextual understanding Participants' desire to engage	Avoiding imposition Demands on the self Gaining trust Responsibilities to others in the setting	Avoiding imposition Giving people time Not taking sides Putting participants first Reciprocity
Deontological	Duties defined by Western organisations Individual notion of duty Approaches to consent Protecting participants Role ambiguity	Avoiding imposition Guided by participants Protecting participants	Duties defined by Western organisations Honesty and openness Individual notions of duty Put local values first

Consequential ethical thinking

Early in the probation period, thinking about who might be the beneficiaries of a study of an

Ethiopian school (CE) led us to the question of who decides what is beneficial? (CF). The

source of coded data is displayed in parentheses, e.g. (CR), where C refers to the dimension

and R to a particular Ethical Discussion 'chunk'. Dates refer to post-viva memos associated

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with a particular data chunk. In cross-cultural research it is important to air assumptions and beliefs about who is generating knowledge and for whom, as well as acknowledging differences between the perceived and actual value of a study (Hett and Hett, 2013). Returning to these issues after thinking ecologically helped Rafael to realise that planning for quality was an ethical issue. He concluded that Consequential ethical thinking is not value neutral, and requires a full appreciation of the study's context (CE), as consequences are always 'in the service of something else, such as perceived responsibilities' (CF). This therefore connects Consequential with Deontological thinking at the level of principles.

From an early stage Alison articulated concerns about the potential for and limitations of what can be anticipated, guiding talk to this issue at several points. An ability to anticipate and be attentive to the 'seen, unseen, and unforeseen' (Milner 2007, 388), is partly contingent on prior knowledge.

The post-viva space proved an important opportunity to develop reflexivity as a researcher by revisiting Rafael's earlier Consequential concerns that the study would by 'ephemeral and any findings might be irrelevant' (CC). Having experienced fieldwork as an ethnographer, he concluded 'I think that people can be of value merely for their presence, by taking an interest', thus offering local positive consequences (CL, CN). This reflection extended deliberations about how *reciprocity* might be shown in the field and how ethnography could be a viable and non-threatening research approach. This led Rafael to conclude that an unanticipated benefit of the study was increasing local understandings of research. Rafael felt that although 'all teachers are aware about ethnography in the sense of 'a white person going to stay with a tribe and studying the ways of life', there is, to all intents and purposes, no use of ethnography in education research in Ethiopia' (EF). By the end of the study he concluded

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that staff had a strong sense of what ethnography in education might look like, and it was viewed positively.

One aspect of the UK's Research Excellence Framework (REF) Higher Education Institution assessment process involves assessing a study's reach and significance. In UK Research Excellence Framework terms 'reach' and 'significance' have particular meanings in evaluating the impact of research. Rafael reflected that dissemination for 'reach' was considered the Western norm for doctoral research and sufficient.

Ecological ethical thinking

Rafael identified the value of Ecological ethical thinking in helping a researcher to identify different tiers of actors and expectations in relation to the research site (EC). Accordingly, Rafael specified his value position (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2006) as one which sought cultural appropriateness, giving priority to local norms over other principles/rules/laws/agreements including, if necessary, the ethical application to the University (EM).

One issue repeatedly revisited in discussions was the role of a 'significant other' in helping Rafael think reflexively. Micheal, with whom Rafael had formerly worked in Ethiopia was a 'critical friend, guide by the side' rather than occupying the role of a gatekeeper as presented in research literature; he helped anticipate issues and plan appropriate behaviour throughout the study, as he had done when they were colleagues (EB).

Rafael had considered action-oriented research as a methodological implication of some of the probation phase discussions and also seriously considered entering the field via another VSO placement, but had been told: 'You can volunteer with us but you'll have to actually

perform a role, you can't just be a researcher!' (EG) After debating potential role conflict as a

feature of probationary discussions, Rafael rejected both ideas and clarified his positionality

by making a value-led decision on how he wanted to enter the field and be viewed by those in

the school setting (EG). He chose an ethnographic study in which he attempted to take on an

unobtrusive stance. In doing so, Rafael came to appreciate how Ecological thinking was

related to "the road not taken" (EC).

Another aspect of Rafael's concerns about role conflict related to anxieties about his

academic responsibilities at the University, where he worked as a graduate teaching assistant

(EJ). He felt he might be 'cheating the university out of its due' (EJ) as a result of his

extended periods of fieldwork. In post-viva reflections, he concluded that the clear, firm rules

he had expected did not exist and the relationship between his graduate teaching role and the

doctoral study was 'kind of unofficial' (EJ).

In clarifying multiple constituencies, Ecological thinking can prepare a researcher for the

challenge that not everyone can be satisfied with the reporting of a study (EQ). To protect

oneself against such challenges, the virtuous path of ethical reporting entails being guided by

sincerity, rather than concealment or exaggeration, and humility, rather than boastfulness or

timidity (Macfarlane, 2010).

Relational ethical thinking

Respect is an Aristotelian virtue demonstrated by avoiding partiality (taking sides with one

party over another) (Macfarlane, 2010). However, this is more straightforward in principle

than in practice. Rafael felt that he gained acceptance within the school community by

seeking to build trust in his character. This involved giving people time to perceive him as

socially acceptable, not taking sides within micro-political situations, and putting participants first by trying to anticipate whether any specific action was perceived as an imposition. Actions associated with these principles were particularly evident in Rafael's early fieldnotes. 'I was worried about not just endangering myself but also others by any kind of reckless behaviour on my part…Saying the wrong thing to somebody can easily be done' (RG). This responsibility to others relates to Deontological ethics in terms of protecting participants (a 'duty of care'), whilst in Relational terms it signifies respect and pursuing participants' best interests. In this way the Artistotelian virtue of resoluteness could be an active choice, rather than the vice of laziness or, at the other extreme, a rigid adherence to prepared plans and the vice of inflexibility (Macfarlane, 2010).

Rafael was clear from the outset about his desire to 'minimise any kind of intrusion into what's going on, bothering people and…intervening' (RK). However, a developing contextual understanding led Rafael to appreciate that imposition and avoiding imposition are relative and that imposition is in any case unavoidable, given one's physical presence. He began to judge imposition against how much those in the context appeared to value or show an interest in the study, which related to his search for opportunities for *reciprocity*. For example, he accepted the invitation to award prizes to the Grade 8 students, as refusing to do so would be disrespectful; but he did not deliver on a request for staff training (RK 260218). Gaining the trust of the majority involved decisions about how to interact with more marginalised community members. Rafael noted with reference to his fieldnotes that "the first kind of key informant I really had in this school was somebody who…was undergoing disciplinary procedures for a whole string of alleged offences' (RJ). In the case of this and another staff member, Rafael was guided by tacit micropolitical (Ecological) expectations to

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engage with them cautiously. When one member of staff was rehabilitated, 'a couple of months later…I felt that it was fine to talk with him, which I did' (EO).

For Rafael, fairness and equity were part of his considerations about how to act relationally, whilst also maximising positive consequences. He concluded that the 'potential value is diminished by spreading oneself too thinly…The greater scale you work at the less involved with individual teachers and students but the more prestigious and influential the study' (CI 111217). This reflected an ongoing doubt about the study being 'ephemeral'. However, Rafael argued post-viva that 'working at a small scale was a moral decision based on Relational values – eschewing the easier, more prestigious, career-enhancing kinds of research – i.e. people over policy, think global act local etc. etc.' (CI).

Deontological ethical thinking

The Deontological aspect of ethicality caused considerable challenges in its practical application to this study, especially given its international context. Rafael questioned how to approach this as 'I don't think we live in that world anymore where there are kind of fixed views on [deontology]' (DR). Alison explained that she had come to the conclusion that this was a dimension to arrive at after considering the other three dimensions. Rafael challenged this by asking: if 'deontology is…normative ethics which suggests it is socially influenced, can it be an individual decision based on the balance of evidence as we have been discussing?' (DR 280218). Alison accepted that the framework does indeed prioritise *individual notions of duty* and advocates researcher agency.

It was appreciated that the British Educational Research Association (2011) and Economic Social Research Council (2010/12) ethical guidelines reflected Western philosophical

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traditions as well as 'the [UK] current political context: compliance, insurance, legalism, neo-liberalism' (DT). This led to a debate about whether or how to apply such guidelines internationally without imposing duties defined by Western organisations. Other texts more fully explore the problematics of using research methods developed in the Global North within the Global South (e.g. Chilisa, 2009; Connell, 2007; Halai and Wiliam, 2011; Hett and Hett, 2013; Tikly and Bond, 2013).

Rafael noted that the 'imperative to put democratic values at the heart of your action [i.e. BERA, 2011] …is not consistent with certain non-UK contexts' (DT). A solution was to reject a search for binary (Western/non-Western) thinking (Tikly and Bond, 2013) and develop a situated ethical appreciation, such that research is carried out *in* rather than *on* a context (Vithal, 2011). This principle matched Rafael's preferred way of researching and saw the continued use of the CERD framework.

Rafael wanted to adopt a more democratic approach than the usual application for Ministry approval, after which no further discussions of consent would be expected. He felt this would maximise the potential for benefitting, rather than imposing on, participants (EA). From early in the study he sought opportunities to learn from other researchers' experiences in the context, taking guidance in particular from the Young Lives project (Morrow, 2013) which advised about the inappropriateness of standard UK approaches to gaining signed, informed consent, in favour of regularly checking consent verbally and not requesting signatures (EG). The ERB considered Rafael's proposal favourably. The enabling characteristics of the ERB in this particular University were concluded to be a) opportunities for discussion with the board to make further justifications or consider different options, b) the inclusion of

supervisors in the same field on the board and c) the cross-disciplinary nature of the board; all points supported by Israel (2015).

In the field, whilst Rafael was guided by his obligations to the ERB, his stance was to 'put local values first' (DS). Not to do so would, he concluded, have bound him to foreign/external standards of conduct – a form of cultural imperialism (DS 04032018). This saw him adapting his schedule according to invitations in the field (DU). He concluded that his notion of duty prioritised patience, listening, showing empathy and compromise (at least in terms of time), underpinned by a desire to build relationships. Rafael prioritised Relational (contextualised) over Deontological (normative principled) thinking to create *individual notions of duty*. Whilst the outcome might be particular to Rafael, engagement with the CERD framework supported him in articulating and justifying this approach.

Conclusion

This concrete example of a doctoral journey allows more general discussion about reflection in, on, about and for research through an operationalisation of 'ethical reflexivity' (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2006; Abraham, 2008; Hammersley, 2008). The empirical study presented examined the sustained and mutual ethical exploration of issues associated with firstly, the doctoral researcher's positionality in relation to the research site; secondly, the non-Western setting for the study; and thirdly, the ethnographic methodology adopted. Whilst dialogic approaches have been presented for use in scaffolding ethical appraisal (e.g. Mustajoki and Mustajoki, 2017), this chapter contributes to a gap in the literature about the value, conceptualisation and operationalisation of such approaches within doctoral supervisory relationships.

In common with most studies, not only doctoral, some of the issues which were identified, examined and resolved could be anticipated, while others arose as the study progressed. Through the systematic analysis of dialogue in spaces created to support ethical decision-making, this chapter evidences that the CERD ethical appraisal framework can be used iteratively to apply four ethical lenses through the duration of a study. The Consequential and Deontological dimensions help researchers to reify principles to which they are committed; the Ecological and Relational dimensions provide opportunities to reflect on how these may apply in the particular context of study, and to clarify the researcher's positionality in relation to different constituencies within and beyond the study site. Instead of relying on actions based on normative principles alone which have been shown, when problematized, to be limited and reductive, researchers can be supported to make decisions and evaluate their actions in situ. This also ensures that a strong connection is made between methodological and ethical issues of quality. Such ethical work supports preparation for ERBs, fieldwork, reporting and dissemination. Explicit ethical reflexivity enables ethical learning to be made visible as changes in thinking, decision-making and action. This articulation is supported by current debates related to ethical reflexivity as recommended to researchers, whether working alone or in teams.

In particular, this study demonstrates how the repeated application of the framework helps exceed professional socialisation, if defined as 'adopt[ing] the values, skills, attitudes, norms and knowledge needed for membership in a given society, group or organisation (Golde, 1998 cited in Mawson and Abbott, 2017), by engaging with other researchers in discursive spaces. This could be as true for any researcher working in a team or collaborative setting as it was for Rafael as a doctoral researcher. It has been shown how it is possible for researchers (even those with differential status) to challenge and extend the values, skills and attitudes of

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both researchers involved in the ethical discussions, rather than a researcher simply adopting those of others. Rather than merely accessing a research culture (Deem and Brehony, 2000), researchers can contribute to it. This has been illustrated by Rafael as an early career researcher developing independence in thinking, in terms of ethicality.

An issue not anticipated in the original presentation of the framework (Stutchbury and Fox, 2009) is the value of engaging with the four dimensions in a particular order – giving rise to the CERD acronym. There is particular value in starting and ending with Consequential thinking, which helps to clarify to whom and how benefits might be maximised. Rafael found it insufficient to limit consideration of these issues to the planning stages of research, as the significance of such practical commitments are not necessarily apparent until the closing stages of thesis writing. Further, Rafael identifies this as an aspect of doctoral (specifically PhD) study not emphasised in local academic culture or doctoral assessment criteria. He, like other researchers such as Gewirtz and Cribb (2006), argues they should be.

The mutuality of learning which is possible between researchers has also been evidenced; in this case, between doctoral researcher and supervisor (Halse, 2011). This was shown by how the framework itself was developed conceptually, as well as its application to a particular study. Through working with Rafael, Alison learnt about the suitability of the framework in an international context with which she was unfamiliar. Rafael learnt how the framework might support comprehensive ethical analysis, and the development of an academically defensible case for undertaking the kind of research which he thought would be useful in the Ethiopian setting. Recognising the situated knowledge Rafael brought, Alison took the role of a peer in discussions of culturally appropriate ways of studying in Tigray, whilst she brought

into the spaces for discussion the framework as a tool to facilitate discussion and decision-making.

A key contribution of this chapter has been to propose a set of spaces in which to operationalise Gewirtz and Cribb's (2006) recommendations for ethical reflexivity, with the CERD framework offering a deliberative rather than prescriptive approach to supporting ethical appraisal.

Firstly, the scaffolded spaces enabled digging under the surface to 'be explicit, as far as is possible, about the value assumptions and evaluative judgements that inform or are embedded in every stage of [the] research' (Gewirtz and Cribb 2006, 147). The application of the CERD framework in spaces of mutual ethical exploration therefore makes a methodological contribution to revealing hidden agendas and tensions. Whilst there is evidence that this was possible in relation to the focus of the doctoral study, ethical issues related to the wider supervisory relationship (which impacted on the doctoral journey) had been inadvertently hidden (Deuchar, 2008; Halse, 2011; Watts, 2010). These included anxieties about the doctoral researchers' academic responsibilities and the impact of the supervisor's multiple roles. This challenges how fully self-reflexive both researchers were able to be during their formal engagement with one another. The implications of this are that a supervisor's application of the framework needs to be as open to self-reflexivity as that of the doctoral researcher, something which Alison was not able to fully achieve until the conclusion of the doctoral study. The spaces need to be safe enough and the relationship strong enough that such agendas and tensions can be voiced. In the case of this study, the power relationship of the supervisor to doctoral researcher roles pre-viva appears to have silenced Rafael's willingness to articulate certain concerns. How this imbalance can be

overcome is something for further work within such spaces. This need for safety, honesty and equality will also apply to research teams in which there are power differentials if individual values are to be revealed, challenged and applied to the project in question.

Related to this, secondly, the spaces showed both researchers were 'prepared to offer a defence of [their] assumptions and judgements [to] the extent that either they might not be shared by others or, conversely, that they are not sufficiently problematised by others.' (Gewirtz and Cribb, 147). This saw Alison shifting from initiating discussions by airing reflections on her own research (opening them up to challenge), to inviting Rafael to reflect on and present rationales for his own decisions. These justifications needed to be open to the inevitable problematization and critique by supervisors, the ERB, the *viva voce* committee and, as Rafael notes, also when publishing. The requirement to defending one's work is not unique to doctoral research, and is expected of all those presenting their work to the academic community. It has been shown how the CERD framework can be used to identify how a study might satisfy multiple audiences.

Thirdly, the use of the CERD framework to support dialogue has been shown to be useful in 'acknowledging, and where possible responding to, tensions between the various values that are embedded in our research.' (Gewirtz and Cribb 2006, 147). The dimensions of the framework, drawn from four traditions of ethical thinking (Flinders, 1992), offer alternative lenses through which to identify, examine and resolve issues and tensions.

Finally, using the CERD framework as a deliberative rather than prescriptive tool opened it up to further development and allowed insightful discussions about the appropriateness of applying the framework to a non-Western, in this case, Tigrayan school setting. This allowed

both researchers to 'take seriously the practical judgements and dilemmas of the people we are researching' (Gewirtz and Cribb 2006, 148). Drawing on his own experiences, a review of methodological and substantive literature, and his relationships with Micheal, others in the school community, and a growing network of researchers working in the Global South, Rafael became increasingly aware of local practical considerations. Some issues he was able to anticipate, and others had to be addressed when encountered in the field. This chapter adds to others in this book in showing how ethical reflexivity needs to support culturally appropriate, situated ethical ethnographic study.

Implications for theory building about ethical reflexivity in doctoral study

Using the CERD framework as part of doctoral supervision allows a response to Gewirtz and Cribb (2006)'s three key challenges to ethical reflexivity and leads towards a set of recommendations. Firstly, they note the need to deal with the apparent boundlessness of ethical reflexivity. Rafael noted this as a challenge for doctoral studies, stimulated by Alison repeatedly raising the agenda of impact in terms of reach and significance when reviewing how positive consequences might be maximised for multiple audiences. In terms of obligations, Rafael was clear that he had satisfied the University ERB, his doctoral examiners and continues to satisfy academic journal editors on ethical grounds as he publishes from his thesis. However, as a result of ethical reflections, he is now not fully satisfied in terms of dissemination to the local context itself. Such dissatisfactions can be a powerful driver for further research (and development) work, motivating researchers to make a difference with their research. Rafael is now a postdoctoral researcher focusing on education in Africa, and is in a position to build on and share his knowledge of culturally sensitive practice in such settings. Ethical learning as an ongoing process can fuel further study and possible future benefits.

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Secondly, Gewirtz and Cribb (2006) noted the challenge of handling the resolution of abstract dilemmas with practical solutions. Rafael's emergent principle of observing the 'status quo' and putting 'local values first' foregrounded his practical decision-making and also shaped both researchers' joint understanding of what cultural appropriateness might look like as ethical practice. This involved an ethical education for Alison, as supervisor, as it did for the ERB, as to what was reasonable to expect in terms of adapting UK/Western norms to a Tigrayan setting. Review boards need to be open to such reflexivity (Israel, 2015). This raises the question about how the outcomes of ethical reflexivity born out of fieldwork can be cascaded for the benefit of future researchers. Are there spaces in our institutions for ERBs to learn about the realities of culturally-appropriate fieldwork beyond the early engagement they have with researchers in authorising data collection?

Gewirtz and Cribb's final challenge to ethical reflexivity relates to 'balancing ethicality and methodological rigour when reporting' (2006, 148). Building on the point above, such decision-making supports the need for ongoing discussions about the ethicality of a study at all stages of its progression. Unanticipated ethical issues can arise when reporting, as well as during fieldwork. What part can our ERBs play in supporting researchers? There is talk in the UK of ERBs playing a monitoring role in studies (BERA 2018). If this involves touching base and supporting decision-making for issues which have arisen post-approval, this will be a new and useful space for ethical reflexivity. However, if this becomes a prescriptive monitoring process checking that studies have been carried out as previously planned and/or threatening to derail studies which have deviated from this plan, then an opportunity for ethical reflexivity and learning will be missed.

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