

INFO 272. Qualitative Research Methods

Research Ethics


Fall 2014

CPHS @ Berkeley and the e-Protocol System

IRB - Soc-Behav-Ed Exempt Protocol ID: 2012-04-4191 (Jenna Burrell)

Protocol Title: A Work Practice Approach to Understanding Actors in Agricultural Markets: Revisiting the fishermen of Kerala, India ← Previous Next →

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Exempt Paragraph(s) 1-4 5 6 7 8 9

- Personnel Information
- Vulnerable Subject Checklist
- Study Sites
- General Checklist
- Funding
- Protocol Information
- Assurance
- Print View
- Event History
- Email History

5. Subject Population

a) **Describe proposed subject population, including criteria for study inclusion and exclusion (e.g., age, health status, language). If any inclusion/exclusion criteria are based on gender, race, or ethnicity, explain rationale for the restrictions.**

The proposed population for this research will be fishermen, fisherwomen, traders, representatives of fishing associations, bureaucrats in state fisheries departments and others associated with the Kerala fishing industry. Based on interviews, documentation and past research, we will identify two villages for detailed study. We will be observers of fishing related activity in that village and markets frequented by fisherfolk in that village. At each stage of this research, we will interview both men and women.

b) **State total (maximum) number of subjects planned for the study and how many must be recruited to obtain this sample size. Explain how number of subjects needed to answer the research question was determined.**

Since this is primarily a qualitative study, our focus will be on the richness of particular experiences than on statistical significance. We anticipate interviewing 50-60 people, including 3-5 bureaucrats, 5-10 fishing association members and traders, and 30-35 fishermen and women. With this number, we will obtain different viewpoints on why and how people use mobile phones in their work in the Kerala fishing industry. This will include different types of fish caught in the area which may involve different fishing practices. This will also include fishing-related activities such as smoking, drying, etc.

c) **Indicate whether any proposed subjects are children/minors, prisoners, pregnant women, those with physical or cognitive impairments, or others who are considered vulnerable to coercion or undue influence. State rationale for their involvement.**

No

Tuskegee Syphilis Study



[Source: University of Pittsburgh, Graduate School of Public Health, Minority Health Archive]

Failures of Informed Consent

1. Benefits of the research certainly did not outweigh risks to the participants
2. Not informed...
 - ❖ ...that they were participating in a study
 - ❖ ...about their health status
 - ❖ Deceived into believing they were receiving treatment
 - ❖ Not given the option to quit participation

Basic Ethical Principles

1. Respect for persons
2. Beneficence – maximize benefits and minimize possible harms
3. Justice



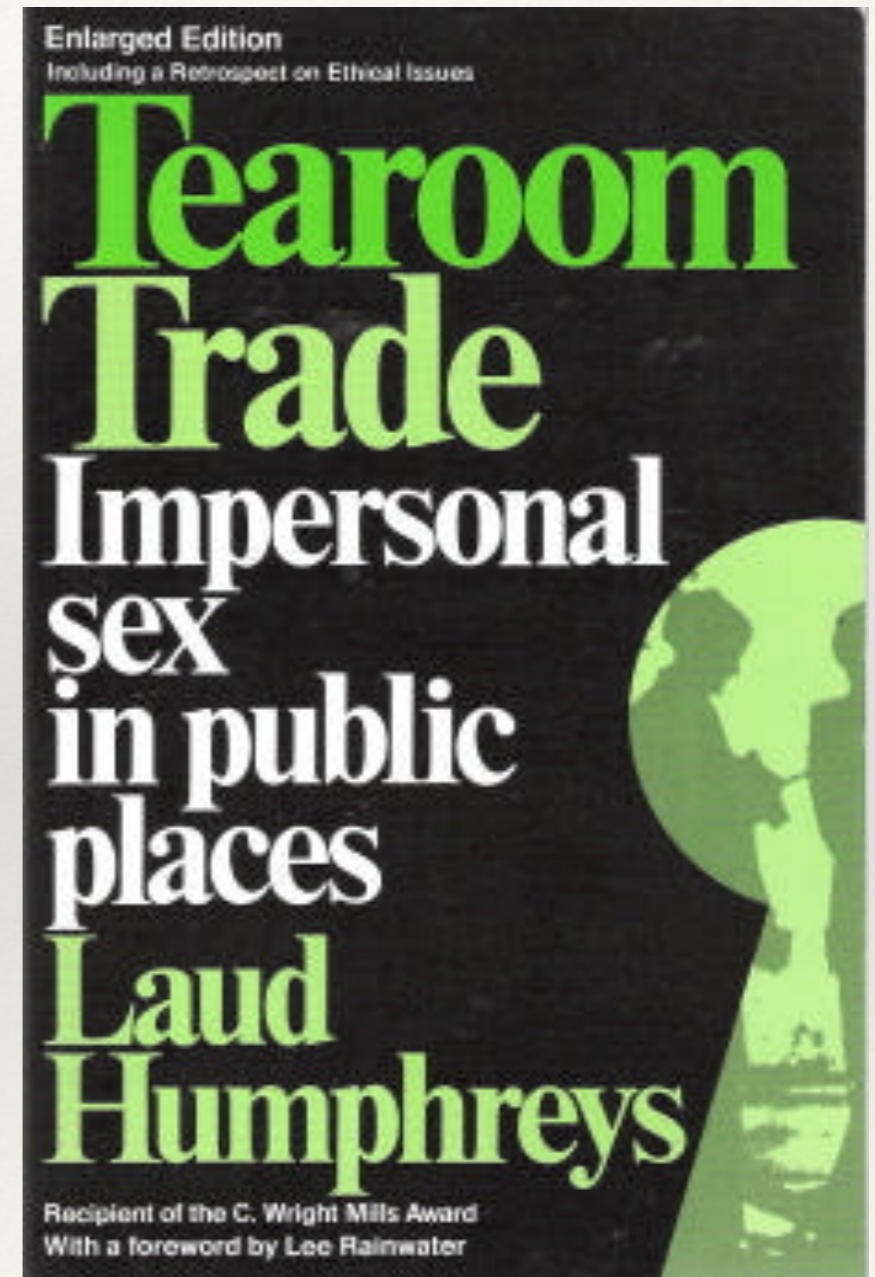
[source: USHMM]

Translating Principles into Practice

- ❖ **Informed consent**
 - ❖ describe the aims of the research project in understandable language
 - ❖ give the option not to participate or to quit at any time
 - ❖ give the option to decline to answer questions
- ❖ **Assessment of Risks and Benefits**
 - ❖ publication practices – using pseudonyms
- ❖ **Selection of Subjects**

The Tearoom Trade

1. The question of covert observation
2. Does the intentions the researcher has for the knowledge generated matter? (i.e. social justice goals)



Ethnography & Informed Consent

- ❖ **Field settings and...**
 - ❖ ...the impossibility of informing everyone in a natural setting
 - ❖ ...the intrusiveness of introducing a legalistic step into a field setting, unwelcome by researcher and participants alike
 - ❖ How voluntary could it be?
- ❖ **Long-term and participatory research:**
 - ❖ Developing relationships / friendship with those you are studying
 - ❖ Participants let down their guard, forget your role over time

Ethics in Online Research

- ❖ Is there a site policy?
- ❖ Who is the author of this online material?
- ❖ Can this site / chatroom be considered a public space?
- ❖ Unique capacity for lurking

See Bruckman article + AoIR online ethics guidelines
<http://ethics.aoir.org/>

Facebook Emotional Manipulation Study

- ❖ reality of widespread A / B testing
- ❖ commercial / academic collaborations
- ❖ emotion as a special domain

- ❖ related: de-anonymization (reverse engineering)

Allegiances and Funding

- ❖ Managing overlapping roles and relationships
 1. Colleagues and Professional Community
 2. Funding bodies
 3. Gatekeepers to the site
 4. Research participants
 5. The public
- ❖ Ethical dilemmas - No “right” decision, only a decision that is *more right*. Subject to debate and very possible to legitimately disagree.