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CONSIDERING ETHICS

ENABLING PARTICIPATORY KNOWLEDGE SHARING

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ABSTRACT

Participatory knowledge sharing between the third sector and higher education institutions is recognised as a means to transform the academy and society for the betterment of both. Participation between different sectors, however, presents role-players with various challenges. Ethical dilemmas present one such challenge. Both higher education institutions and the third sector often lack frameworks for ethical engagement. Such frameworks might be accommodated in partnership agreements. However, partnership agreements themselves are often lacking, and in cases where they do exist, ethics are often not fully considered. Where ethics does come into play it relates to engagement with communities specifically, and not engagement between higher education institutions and the third sector. In such cases ethics is often regarded as an impediment to knowledge sharing. Proposals by academics referring to community-based participatory research and other participatory research methods are often rejected by institutional ethics committees because of epistemological preferences and the lack of ethics guidelines to accommodate such research. The third sector, again, is pressurised by donor expectations and requirements to deliver output against objectives within fixed time frames and against tight budgets. Few third sector partners negotiate ethics considerations with donors in the budgeting process. Accountability to communities is often neglected as a result. The purpose of this conceptual chapter is to synergise the accountability considerations of the third sector with ethics considerations for participatory research and ethics challenges encountered by both sectors in partnerships. The aim of this exercise is to propose an ethics framework to speak to the nexus between higher education institutions, the third sector and communities in engagement. Such a guiding framework might enable participatory knowledge sharing between the third sector and higher education institutions.

1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions (HEIs) that regard themselves as the sole producers and repositories of expert and legitimate knowledge may contribute to the disenfranchisement of poor, marginalised and indigenous communities by excluding their voices in knowledge making to solve social problems. The marginalised are dominated by the elite through the polarisation of control over the means of material and knowledge production. Without closing the knowledge and resource gap marginalised and poor people cannot be empowered to control their own lives (Rahman 1991). Serious structural challenges associated with poverty, inequality and unemployment will surely prevail for as long as the voices of those living this reality are excluded, and for as long as knowledge production is regarded as the privilege of a select few. Participatory knowledge sharing gives legitimacy to all knowledge. By legitimising the voices of the marginalised it alters the politics of power relations in knowledge making.

The role of education and training as a contributor to inclusive growth and employment generation is increasingly recognised in policy documents such as the National Development Plan (RSA NPC 2011) and the New Growth Path (RSA 2010). The *White paper for post-school education and training* of 2013 makes reference to community engagement in its various forms as a core function of the university. It refers to “partnerships with civil society organisations” (RSA DHET 2013:39) as a particular form of engagement. Such partnerships can take many shapes and forms. It can facilitate in-service learning and work-integrated learning programmes, collaborative and participatory research, and volunteerism, among other things. Community engagement is therefore a vehicle for participatory knowledge sharing and production in that it facilitates partnerships with the third sector, communities and other stakeholders.

The general understanding is that engagement through partnerships with civil society – or in any other form or shape – should be based on scholarship. Scholarship is defined by Michigan State University Outreach and Engagement (2009:2) as follows:

[Scholarship] is the thoughtful creation, interpretation, communication, or use of knowledge that is based in the ideas and methods of recognized disciplines, professions, and interdisciplinary fields. What qualifies an activity as ‘scholarship’ is that it is deeply informed by accumulating knowledge in some field; that the knowledge is skillfully interpreted and deployed for a particular setting; that the activity is carried out with intelligent openness to new information, debate, and criticism.

Partnerships between universities and the third sector is part of a bigger global trend towards broader participation of all stakeholders in policy making, programme planning

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and other forms of knowledge making. The basic premise behind collaboration is that individuals and organisations can achieve a better outcome by working together than they can by working individually (Dhillon 2009). It is also assumed that “major advances in knowledge tend to occur when human beings consciously work to solve the central problems confronting their society” (Gibson 2006:2). The social sciences increasingly recognise that the ultimate role of scientific inquiry is to address pressing human problems. This can partly be done by engaging individuals and communities in a research process premised on facilitating positive social change (Lerner, Fisher & Weinberg 2000). These engagements take the form of multistakeholder partnerships and multidisciplinary research.

Collaborations and partnerships are lauded for enabling more efficient, effective and equitable outcomes. However, they are neither the panacea for all problems nor without shortcomings. Critics warn, among other things, about the increased costs associated with participation, and, more importantly, about the possibility of overlooking power imbalances, thereby entrenching and replicating inequalities even further (Cleaver 1999; Cooke & Kothar 2001; Cornwall 2008).

Although partnerships between HEIs and the third sector can enable participatory knowledge sharing, they can also contribute to and even entrench power imbalances, thereby defeating the very purpose of participatory knowledge sharing, which is to give legitimacy to all voices. This introduces certain ethical challenges to the partners. Although both HEIs and civil society organisations aim to achieve the same outcome of empowerment of the marginalised, individually they face their own distinct challenges.

The third sector is facing increasing financial pressures, even though the demand for their services has not changed or is even on the increase. They scramble to deliver the same services with a shrinking staff contingent and a much smaller budget in an attempt to maintain legitimacy and accountability with their constituencies. Some organisations venture into unfamiliar territory because of donor demands, delivering services in areas where they lack prior knowledge and experience. Donors expect increased value for their money and demand more and higher quality outcomes with a smaller budget against tighter time frames. They may therefore compromise on quality and sound labour practices to keep up with the demand. Governance requirements for civil society organisations have also become more stringent following the global financial meltdown of 2007/8 and organisations lack the resources to comply. It is therefore not surprising that third sector organisations could compromise on accountability to communities and sacrifice legitimacy in this scramble for resources. A loss of legitimacy threatens the very sustainability

of the third sector. Although more sophisticated organisations might take ethical considerations into account in choosing whom to partner with for development, they do not necessarily have a set of ethical guidelines that can be embedded in partnership agreements to guide the relationship.

HEIs on the other hand are confronted with challenges of a different kind relating to engagement. Few ethics policies consider the particular challenges presented by community engagement/engaged scholarship, despite the fact that community-based participatory research has evolved in response to traditional research approaches that stigmatise and marginalise vulnerable communities. Flicker, Travers, Guta, McDonald and Meagher (2007:1) state that “community-based participatory research (CBPR) has evolved as an effective new research paradigm that attempts to make research a more inclusive and democratic process by fostering the development of partnerships”. This approach attempts to address ethical dilemmas that emerged out of more traditional paradigms to make research more inclusive and democratic. Flicker *et al* (2007) conducted a study in the United States of America and Canada and found that ethical review forms and guidelines operate overwhelmingly in a biomedical framework. Such a framework does not take CBPR experience into account. Such frameworks typically focus on specifically assessing risk to the institution and the individual researchers instead of the communities. These frameworks also perpetuate the notion that knowledge production is the sole right of academic researchers. This poses a dilemma in that communities are placed at risk by using procedures that are inappropriate or unsuitable for CBPR.

Participatory research methods such as CBPR, which are designed to increasingly shift the power and control of decision making into the hands of the community, are often not recognised as being scientific enough because of epistemological differences among members of institutional review boards. The decisions taken by members of institutional ethical review boards may mainly reflect the epistemological views of rationalist theorists. Fundamentally, scholars differ about the appropriate foundation for the study of society. Discussions often centre on comparisons of qualitative and quantitative research methods and rationalist and postmodernist theoretical underpinnings. Participatory and community-based researchers subscribe to postmodernist theories and paradigms and qualitative research methods. Many scholars still regard social research that applies a positivistic, empiricist, natural science approach to social phenomena as more ‘scientific’ in contrast to qualitative methods. This point is illustrated in the ethics policy guidelines for institutional research three decades ago by Giddens (1984:77):

... concepts can be operationalized; objectivity is maintained by the distance between observer and observed along with the possibility of

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external checks upon one's questionnaire; replication can be carried out by employing the same research instrument in another context; and the problem of causality has been eased by the emergence of path analysis and related regression techniques to which surveys are well suited.

Even today policies often do not make provision for methodology where the *sine qua non* is the commitment to see the social world through the eyes of the research participant which requires close involvement with research participants, consideration of contexts, emergent research designs and fluidity. This research approach is in sharp contrast with quantitative research design which emphasises hypothesis and testing and short periods of fieldwork involvement. The phenomenology of qualitative research takes the participants' point of view as the empirical point of departure against positivist approaches which view events from the outside with little reference to the 'insider's' perspective. Most research ethics committees do not make provision for guidelines to cover these studies. Submissions to ethics review committees of participatory research projects are therefore often rejected (Flicker *et al* 2007). The fact that academics from positivist traditions increasingly venture into community engaged research through the application of mixed methods and interdisciplinary research methods, as well as the application of community-engaged theory challenges the decisions of institutional ethics review boards that lean towards the acceptance of more positivist research applications.

Another challenge encountered by HEIs relates to the resource requirements for community engagement. Apart from staff costs, universities in general invest few resources in engagement, specifically because of the low financial return on investment (the social return is not being taken into account). Few universities in South Africa commit substantial resources to community engagement projects that translate into long-term partnerships. Engaged scholars thereby face similar challenges to third sector organisations in that they also have to scramble for donor funding for their engagement projects and activities.

Collectively and separately the third sector and higher education are confronted with significant ethical challenges in their efforts to empower communities. Scholars may have no choice but to abandon engagement when their applications are rejected by ethics review committees. Third sector organisations might risk losing their legitimacy in communities or might even face legal action as a consequence of unethical behaviour towards project beneficiaries and participants. Universities might suffer the same fate. However, a set of ethics guidelines for engagement between HEIs, communities and the third sector might address some of the challenges that impede knowledge sharing. Such a framework can guide negotiations for engagement partnership agreements.

In this chapter I will first provide an overview of the particular ethical dilemmas encountered by the third sector and HEIs in their engagement with communities. I will then consider the particular ethical challenges encountered in partnerships from a higher education perspective. Subsequently I will identify measures and solutions offered by literature and academic institutions to address some of the challenges. Drawing on the challenges and proposed solutions, I will attempt to present an ethics framework for the nexus between HEIs, the third sector and communities. This framework can potentially guide partnership agreements. The chapter will conclude with some reflections and considerations for further conceptualisation and research on ethical considerations in participatory knowledge sharing.

2. ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN ENGAGEMENT

The ethical dilemmas encountered by the third sector are presented in this section, as this issue relates to matters of accountability and legitimacy. Challenges in community-based participatory research in particular will guide the discussion on ethical dilemmas encountered by universities in the process of engagement.

2.1 Third sector ethics and the accountability challenge

The third sector generally aims to strengthen civil society and local governance with the objective of lifting marginalised communities out of poverty, especially in developing countries. As is the case with HEIs, this involves empowering marginalised communities to overcome structural and socio-economic disadvantages by expanding their choice, influence and actions (Giddens 1984; Kabeer 1999; Lukes 1974). It follows that empowerment results in greater participation of the marginalised in economic, social and civic domains and therefore in gaining access to resources (AusAID 2001; Narayan 2000). Although this generic aim is shared by third sector organisations and HEIs in their engagement efforts, the methodologies for achieving this aim, and the specific objectives to pave the way, might be very different. I will expand more on these diverging and converging interests.

According to scholars such as Lissner (1997), the third sector is essentially value driven. Kilby (2006) argues that third sector organisations and public benefit agents are therefore primarily accountable to the beneficiaries of their work. For accountability of the voluntary sector to be empowering, it should have sufficient openness to be scrutinised and to be controlled to some extent by beneficiaries and constituents (Conger & Kanungo 1988; Murthy 2001; Peters & Pierre 2000). Downward accountability to beneficiaries is therefore of paramount importance as empowerment is the ultimate aim of this sector. In a study titled "Accountability for empowerment" Kilby (2006) found that more structural (formal) links with

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beneficiaries deliver stronger empowerment outcomes. This study also found that it is generally those non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with values that reflect a strong sense of solidarity with the poor and marginalised that have strong outcomes with their constituents. Despite these findings, which might provide some incentive for downward accountability, there are few other incentives for third sector players to implement and demonstrate accountability to beneficiaries.

Third sector organisations have to respond to multiple, complex and diffused accountabilities (McDonald 1999). The constituencies might consist of partners, agencies, donors and governments on all levels – from local governments to international business to multilateral development agencies. Third sector organisations might invest most of their time and their limited resources in demonstrating accountability to one particular group of stakeholders such as a multilateral donor or government agencies. The reporting requirements and delivery expectations of donor agencies might also exceed the investment in resources to be compliant. Governments sometimes outsource the delivery of government programmes to third sector organisations, as is the case with the delivery of services on the National HIV/Aids Strategic Plan of the South African National Aids Council. Balancing upward accountability to donors and stakeholders with downward accountability to beneficiaries/participants presents the third sector with a big challenge with ethical implications.

All these requirements and expectations can move the locus of accountability away from the very beneficiaries of the empowerment programmes of the third sector (Edwards & Hulme 1996; Elliot 1987; Fisher 1994; Foley & Edwards 1998; Fox & Brown 1998; Najam 1996; Robinson 1995; Zaidi 1999). Although mechanisms for downward accountability and participation such as regular meetings, involvement in programming, monitoring and evaluation, and community advisory boards theoretically exist, the tools for the enforcement of accountability to the beneficiaries are rather limited (Ferejohn 1999).

The demands of these many and varied accountabilities and the resultant loss of focus of accountability first and foremost to the beneficiaries of the programmes create a particular ethical dilemma for the voluntary sector. They might lose their legitimacy in the community in that they might default on the overall aim to empower marginalised communities.

2.2. Power-based, rights-based and interest-based considerations for ethical partnerships

HEIs participate in partnerships for social change in various forms. Some scholars view partnerships between HEIs and the community as a “special case of PAR

[participatory action research], where PAR's collaborative ideals are embedded in formalised relations between organised groups of university researchers and community constituencies" (Williams, Labonte, Randall & Muhajarine 2005:292). Other partnerships are confined to participatory research where commitments to future actions are not explicitly made, yet change is affected by using certain methods. In yet other instances universities are invited to participate in multistakeholder partnerships involving third sector organisations and/or government and business to address particular social issues. No matter what form the partnership takes or for what purpose it is established, HEIs are confronted with certain generic ethical dilemmas when they partner with stakeholders such as third sector organisations. Lytle, Brett and Shapiro (1999) suggest power-based, rights-based and interest-based negotiations as a framework for dispute resolution. This framework proves to be particularly useful in identifying ethical dilemmas between HEIs and the third sector in engagement.

Partners to partnerships are hardly ever "relatively equal in their power and access to resources" (Banerjee 2000:45) and therefore rarely negotiate on equal footing. The first dilemma therefore relates to the balancing of power asymmetries. Whoever is responsible for providing the biggest financial contribution to the partnership tends to be the more powerful partner in the arrangement. This partner often dictates the terms and conditions of the engagement. Donor agencies, research agencies and funders frequently initiate and fund university-third sector partnerships. As is the case with third sector organisations, HEIs are also often eager to participate in these partnerships, mainly because of limited resources for community engagement activities and competition among institutions for access. In the rush for funding, partners might neglect to consider and assess all the risks and ethical implications of the terms and conditions of the partnership, especially for the communities with which they engage. If not carefully negotiated and considered, partnerships can thereby easily bring "unequal players" to an uneven table to participate in difficult, predetermined decision making (Roe, Berenstein, Goette & Roe 1999), thereby entrenching the very power dynamics they are trying to overcome.

The second dilemma relates to the conflicting and converging interests of partners. Scholars can easily sacrifice their scholarly independence by adhering to terms and conditions that contradict or contravene their own ethical principles of engagement and sound research methods. Universities can also be used as tokens to validate the scientific merit of the partnership to mobilise more resources or to lobby policy changes for political motives. The desire of scholars to apply scholarly rigour might, as an example, often conflict with the urgency for action of the third sector. Universities can easily sacrifice scientific rigour and validity when pressurised explicitly

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or psychologically to address the immediate needs of the community. The third sector might again transpose the risk for delivery onto university partners to sustain their own legitimacy with the community. This relates to Cortes's (1998) argument for the three university-based factors that can undermine community collaborations, one being the limited financial resources in the civic sector. The third sector might also harbour expectations that the university partners have the financial resources and the knowledge to solve dilemmas such as poverty and unemployment in an instant or that they themselves are really donors for the programmes of third sector partners. Conflicting interests might therefore present particular challenges to the partners.

Even if common interests should be identified, the culture of the different partners, their working methods and their organisational objectives are also often very different. Third sector organisations and universities often do not understand what the other party has to offer to the partnership and depart from an implicit understanding that the organisations share the same values and purpose. A lack of creative solutions to respond to underlying interests might threaten partnership success with unintended negative consequences for the community. When converging and conflicting interests are not made explicit by the negotiating parties to identify options for mutual gain and for better understanding of each other, partnerships can easily fail. Roles and responsibilities are dynamic and change with the engagement with community. If partnership conditions are too rigid and roles and responsibilities are fixed, not only will the partners bear the consequences but the community might suffer in the process.

Finally, the critical rights of universities, third sector organisations and communities are often not acknowledged by all partners. This dilemma comes into play particularly concerning the rights around the production and commercialisation of knowledge. The ownership of knowledge is regulated internationally by the Convention on Biological Diversity and nationally by the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (RSA 1996), the *National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998* (RSA 1998), the *National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004* (RSA 2004) and *South Africa's bioprospecting, access and benefit-sharing regulatory framework: Guidelines for providers, users and regulators* (RSA DEA 2012). Not only statutory and legal rights come into play, but parties to partnerships that do not agree on a set of norms and standards for process (procedural rights) and outcomes (substantive rights) might come into considerable conflict with each other.

2.3 Ethical considerations in community-based participatory research

CBPR includes notions such as 'community-based action research', 'participatory action research', 'co-inquiry' or 'co-production', although proponents of each might

argue for the recognition of more distinct differences. CBPR includes the active involvement of the community and a range of community stakeholders in the entire research process, from the research design, the implementation of the research process to the dissemination of the research results and in many instances also the execution of programmes flowing from the research process. Essentially, CBPR, as a form of community engagement, is all about relationships between and among researchers, universities and communities. The question is: how do we ensure that we conduct these relationships ethically? Where debates about ethics of clinical research have been prevalent for some time (Emmanuel, Wendler & Grady 2000), community-based participatory research in its many forms raises additional questions and challenges.

The Durham Community Research Team at the Centre for Social Justice and Community Action at Durham University (Connected Communities 2011:2) has succinctly identified the many ethical challenges in CBPR from existing literature. They assert these challenges to be similar to issues experienced in qualitative research generally. Such issues relate to

partnership, collaboration and power, community rights, conflict and representation; ownership and dissemination of data, findings and publications; anonymity, privacy and confidentiality; institutional ethical review processes; and blurred boundaries between researcher and researched, academic and activist.

What this group of researchers find distinct to CBPR is “the openness, fluidity and unpredictability of the research process” (Connected Communities 2011:2). They subsequently recommend the adoption of specific CBPR ethics guidelines for United Kingdom researchers, funders and sponsors.

Yale University’s Centre for Clinical Investigation (2009) also developed an expanded set of principles for ethical engagement. The Ethical Principles of Engagement Committee of the Centre’s Community Alliance for Research and Engagement (CARE) is of the view that ethical review applies to interactions between research partners and not only to individual research subjects.

Following on the work of the Durham Research Team and the view of CARE, I wish to suggest that we expand the ethical guidelines/principles of engagement to include the third sector exactly because of their multiple accountabilities that pose specific ethical dilemmas for their engagement with community beneficiaries. I also suggest that ethics issues relating specifically to the partnerships between HEIs and the third sector be considered because of the increasing recognition of the importance of partnerships for sustained social change. I have already referred to these particular challenges in the sections above.

CHAPTER 3 • PIENAAR**3. AN ETHICS FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH**

As a result of the many challenges encountered by community-engaged researchers in doing engaged research, and because of the difficulties encountered when approaching research ethics review committees for ethics clearance of their research, the University of South Africa (Unisa) decided to develop ethics guidelines for community-engaged research to be included into the existing research ethics policy. These guidelines guide community-based researchers and ethics review committees in CBPR and related decisions. This is necessary given the fact that studies demonstrate that institutional review structures, such as research ethics review committees, are reluctant to incorporate principles of CBPR into their considerations for ethics approval (Flicker *et al* 2007).

The guidelines developed by Unisa took cognisance of the ethical challenges of CBPR presented in the literature and experiences with community-engaged research projects. It also considered the work of Schopper *et al* (2009) as it relates to ethics in the third sector. Although it does not expand on ethics challenges encountered in partnerships, it does refer briefly to partnership challenges. The guidelines consider the following seven aspects relating to ethical dilemmas in community-based research:

1. knowledge production;
2. social and scientific value;
3. scientific validity and ethical merit;
4. fair subject selection;
5. the nature of participation;
6. informed consent; and
7. community involvement in the research.

The proposed guidelines acknowledge that academics share the privileged domain of 'knowledge production' with community members and other partners. Knowledge production is recognised as a blend of more traditional forms of knowledge production with 'lived experience'. It also recognises that community-engaged research emanates from partnerships and is oriented towards action and social change which is an integral part of the knowledge production process.

Secondly, the guidelines make provision for scholars to engage in a community or with a partner without a clearly formulated research question and without clearly defined and readily developed research tools and methods. This permits full participation of communities and stakeholders from the inception of the research

and allows for the unfolding of the research. This provision does not exonerate researchers from mapping the process that they plan to follow to ensure full participation of the community and partners in the specific issue to be researched. Researchers also need to demonstrate how they will enable community members to contribute their resources, such as local and indigenous knowledges and other pragmatic considerations, to the research. The guidelines also make reference to intellectual property rights that will have to be negotiated and safeguarded. Training with the community needs to be considered with the aim of empowering members to participate in the research. These steps are to be taken to demonstrate the social and scientific value of the research. Researchers are accommodated in seeking ethical approval when embarking on the various cycles of the research process should the research be of moderate or high risk. This provision allows for members of the review committee to determine the scientific validity and ethical merit of the evolving research.

Fair subject selection and the nature of participation are emphasised. Participants are to be selected not only on the basis of their contribution towards achieving the research goals but also for the ways in which they will benefit from the research. To enable participation, barriers such as transport costs need to be removed. A favourable risk-benefit ratio must guide participation. In this regard the researcher should also consider how to mitigate the politics of power. The guidelines further refer to particular issues regarding informed consent, notably clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of participants and stakeholders in the project. In this regard the guidelines stress the importance of agreements to guide interpretation and the ownership of data, authorship, dissemination of findings and financial accountability. This guideline allows for various methods to obtain consent such as digital recordings of verbal consent, written records that participants have been duly informed and consent from respected, traditional or elected community leaders.

The final section of the guidelines refers to the nature and structure of community involvement in the research. It requires a community body such as an advisory board or a community committee to be consulted on the planning of the research, the execution of the research and the dissemination of the research results.

4. PROPOSING AN ETHICS FRAMEWORK FOR PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND THE THIRD SECTOR

The proposed Unisa framework is arguably a good attempt to provide guidelines for CBPR for academics and ethics review committees. It goes beyond what ethics review committees would traditionally have considered. The guidelines even refer to

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partnerships and certain issues equally applicable to third sector organisations. The intention of these guidelines was not to develop comprehensive ethics guidelines for the intersection between HEIs, communities and the third sector, but rather to integrate community-based research ethics into the existing research ethics policy of the university.

In this chapter I have proposed an accountability framework for the consideration of third sector ethics and a power-, rights- and interest-based framework for partnership ethics. I subsequently propose that the integration of these two frameworks' principles into the existing Unisa ethics guidelines provides a framework for ethical engagement for all HEIs, communities and the third sector.

I have attempted this integration by virtue of firstly adding to the existing elements of the seven considerations proposed in Unisa's policy on research ethics (Unisa 2007). I have merged considerations 4 and 5 into one consideration given the additional elements that relate closely to both. I have subsequently aligned convergent elements with elements of the existing guidelines and finally added ethical considerations that cannot be logically synthesised with the existing ones. These additions and emphasis are presented in bold in Table 3.1.

TABLE 3.1 An ethics framework for knowledge sharing between higher education institutions and the third sector

Ethics guidelines for higher education institutions' community-based research (Unisa)	Elements of the seven guidelines (4 and 5 merged into one)	Partnerships, power, interest and rights-based framework	Third sector accountability framework	Practical application
1. Knowledge production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Blends traditional forms of knowledge production with 'lived experience' ▪ Recognises that community engaged research emanates from partnerships ▪ Oriented towards action and social change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rights of various parties in knowledge production, ownership and dissemination must be explicitly acknowledged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognise sideways accountability of all parties in the partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community engaged research projects should be governed by a committee representative of the managers and decision makers of the different sectors. All decisions regarding knowledge production, ownership and dissemination should be made by this collective governance structure.

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Ethics guidelines for higher education institutions/ community-based research (Unisa)	Elements of the seven guidelines (4 and 5 merged into one)	Partnerships, power, interest and rights-based framework	Third sector accountability framework	Practical application
2. Social and scientific value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open engagement with the community without clearly formulated research questions, tools and methods Mapping the research process – Contribution of knowledges and resources spelt out Negotiate and safeguard intellectual property rights Training of community members in aspects of community engaged research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergent research designs Beneficiaries full partners to partnership HEIs and third sector partners to demonstrate extent of control by beneficiaries and constituents Relationships used as tool to negotiate power and interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Values of the third sector dictate downward accountability to beneficiaries Third sector and HEIs open for scrutiny by beneficiaries Demonstrate how upward and downward accountabilities are to be balanced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A mechanism should be established from the outset to allow for the flow of information from and to the beneficiaries, such as regular focus group discussions. Narrative reports should be co-authored by beneficiaries. Financial reports should be availed to the beneficiaries in a format and language that they can understand and interrogate. Budgets should make provision for interpreters, translators, time and space to allow beneficiaries to critically engage with the reports.
3. Scientific validity and ethical merit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethical approval from ethics review committees on various cycles of the research instead of once-off approval 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethical approval from beneficiaries negotiated through relationship, and legitimacy of partner and partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethical approval obtained from beneficiaries through downward accountability mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficiaries should be trained in ethics. Approval can be in writing, audio recorded or minuted.
4. Fair participant selection and nature of participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider risk-benefit ratio to participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interests and rights of all partners to be considered in selection and nature of participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community to co-select participants based on jointly agreed upon criteria Participants/ community beneficiaries to control the research process and action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selection criteria should be workshopped with community leadership. Community leadership should identify and refer participants. Regular focus group discussions should accommodate inputs from participants in the research process.

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Ethics guidelines for higher education institutions' community-based research (Unisa)	Elements of the seven guidelines (4 and 5 merged into one)	Partnerships, power, interest and rights-based framework	Third sector accountability framework	Practical application
5. Informed consent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agreements to guide interpretation and the ownership of data, authorship, dissemination of findings and financial accountability ▪ Allow for various methods to obtain consent such as digital recordings of verbal consent, written records that participants have been duly informed and consent from respected, traditional or elected community leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Informed consent obtained through relationships with beneficiaries and partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sufficient information and training of all partners and beneficiaries on issues relating to informed consent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Budgets should make provision for translation of information and engagement sessions with beneficiaries to obtain informed consent. ▪ The medium for obtaining consent (digital recordings, verbal consent, minutes) should be the choice of participants and in some instances community leaders. ▪ Informed consent should be revisited regularly during focus group discussions with participants.
6. Community involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community body, that is an advisory board or a community committee, to be consulted on the planning and execution of research and the dissemination of the research results 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participants allowed to access and scrutinise data and institutional/third sector/government/donor information ▪ Budgets to be allocated to allow for time and processes to facilitate structured community engagement by all partners ▪ Methods for structured accountability to be explicit ▪ Donors to programme with third sector organisations to ensure optimal downward accountability and prevent overregulation and stringent upward accountability ▪ Beneficiaries/ participants to participate in programming and budgeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Every participatory research project should establish an advisory board or community committee to advise the project and to ensure community voices are heard and community leadership is acknowledged. ▪ The committee should meet as often as required by community stakeholders.

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Ethics guidelines for higher education institutions' community-based research (Unisa)	Elements of the seven guidelines (4 and 5 merged into one)	Partnerships, power, interest and rights-based framework	Third sector accountability framework	Practical application
7. Balancing power asymmetries		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Negotiate and spell out terms and conditions of the engagement ▪ Ongoing negotiation of power for equal decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mechanisms designed for participation of beneficiaries/ participants on all levels of decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Beneficiaries should be represented in the project governance structure, the community committee/ advisory team and the focus groups.
8. Negotiating interests		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Negotiate and spell out interests, roles and responsibilities of all partners ▪ Explicit recognition of conflicting interests ▪ Frequently consider changing roles and responsibilities and renegotiate ▪ Ongoing conversation and negotiation to balance scholarly rigour with urgency for change ▪ Spell out financial and human resource contributions ▪ Be explicit about working methods, organisational culture and organisational objectives of all parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Design of mechanisms to respond to underlying interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interests are disclosed and negotiated over time and through building trust. This process can neither be hurried nor is it a once-off event. ▪ Partnership agreements and funding should be flexible enough to accommodate emerging interests over time.

CHAPTER 3 • PIENAAR**5. CONCLUSION**

In this chapter I have proposed a conceptual framework for community engaged ethics that can be applied by higher education institutions, the third sector and other stakeholders when they embark collectively on projects of social change in communities. I have specifically considered the accountability challenges of the third sector, the ethics challenges encountered by partnerships, deploying a power-, interest- and rights-based framework and the particular ethics challenges encountered in community-engaged research as described by current scholars. The guidelines for community-engaged research developed from existing literature and experience in community engagement by Unisa were used as a basis to develop a comprehensive framework for all stakeholders.

This outline has been informed by certain choices of the author regarding specific elements that informed the development of the comprehensive ethics framework. Fellow researchers might approach the development of such guidelines from other perspectives and use different frameworks as reference. It would be of scientific value to determine whether other approaches to developing such frameworks yield similar results. More studies to develop comprehensive ethics frameworks for community-based research should be encouraged to enrich the one proposed here.

It is also hoped that universities can use this framework to include ethical considerations in partnership agreements. Ultimately, the ideal is that this guiding framework might enable more participatory knowledge sharing between the third sector and higher education institutions.

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