## Working with an IRB

### Some of the Limitations to Masters’ Level Research

1. Over-ambition is always a problem in life. Recognize your SKILL LEVEL.  In these courses you are learning research.

1.1 In trying to bring the course up to the research standard of our partner schools that follow the British system and my own background in the British system, I have failed to limit your ambitions in these courses.  In the US system at Masters’ level you are learning research in a taught degree, whereas globally the Masters is seen as a research degree in itself.   Since we are partnered with schools where they work with the latter idea, there is a certain pressure to do as well as they do.  Limit your topic. Limit the amount of data.  Make sure your organization knows you only have a limited time capacity.

1.2 This is your area of passion, your ministry, so you want to go as deep as you can

1.3 Your organization you are working with wants to use you to the maximum, but don't realize you are still learning, so may for example ask you to do focus groups but don't realize that talking about abuse n a group context can release emotions that you are not a trained PhD in psychology, so are not able to deal with.

1.4 You want the best spread of data for validity's sake, so you go for a wider number of interviews.  With my background in anthropological method I have always been suspicious of sociology and its surveys. Given the participant approach of incarnational living may I suggest that the case study or story-telling methodologies we have worked on are often more likely to give you the Qualitative date you need.

2.  Limiting the people aspect with vulnerable populations, so as to not need to be able to apply for an exemption.

2.1 Certain approaches to the research are exempt.  Consider these.  They save you work and the IRB work.

e.g.1 An educational context with a before and after evaluation of learning or the design of a program are not human subject specific.

e.g. 2. The analysis of organizational structures or perhaps the history of an organization as we do in the Organizational Leadership course, or Omar's study of fundraising processes of organizations do not raise flags as to vulnerabilities, or coercion.  there may still be some confidentiality issues but these are somewhat easily identified and resolved in discussion with the organizational leadership (e.g. should you publish some figures if analyzing organizational finances etc.)

e.g. 3.  Consider looking at policy issues.  Bethel did an excellent analysis of land rights laws in Delhi and the violations.

3. Watching your wording.  Certain words are red flags to a committee who as academic researchers are worried about every word.  If you flag coercion but then your analysis is cursory or flippant, then this creates an obstacle for them.  If you rush through the proposal with quick answers because for you it is obvious, this can create red flags.  If you don't use their form but just pull out the questions you think are appropriate then this creates work for them, and red flags.

4. Care with questions:  Maryada and Slimbach's courses have given you significant training in surveys. But not all of you picked up on all of the issues.  Some ways of asking questions indicate presuppositions and biases at the outset.  Most of you had 15 questions when using a survey.  What on earth are you gong to do with all that data? even after I have asked you to reduce them down, they come back as far too many.  Sometimes, that is because the organization wants that much data.  You have to advise them to limit it to what is realistic.

5. Analyze your workload:  15 questions x 30 interviews =450 pieces of data.  In our proposal, I have several times requested that you analyze how much data and how much time to process the data, so that before you begin, you realize that 450 x 10 minutes per piece =4500 mins = 75 hours, plus 150 hours of translation.  You must get down to this level of detail in your proposals.