

Ethics in sociology

Sociology



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Question-1: How might sociologists research culture?

Culture refers to the “ patterns of human groups” and their specific behaviors regulated by traditional practices and norms prevalent in a particular society (Brislin, 1976, p. 216). Culture, in the modern day, has become an “ important theoretical construct” for incorporating in the models of human behavior as well as a significant variable in psychological research (Matsumoto & Yoo, 2006, p. 245). In the present day, theories relating to culture have become “ more complex” and to remain in tandem with these developments, the methodologies for cultural research also will have to evolve accordingly (p. 245). Due to this complexity of culture and difficulties in the understanding of this phenomenon, researchers must not explore “ everything in every study” and focus on individual aspects of culture and the psychological element in specific studies (p. 245). In this manner they will be able to acquire adequate and in depth knowledge about each aspect of the specific culture and learn its intricacies.

Question-2: What are some ethical concerns of sociological research? Why do sociologists need to follow a code of ethics?

The American Sociological Association, through their Code of Ethics (1999), stipulates a wide range of ethical practices while conducting sociological research, of which the following are very important:

1. The researchers must have adequate competence
2. They should not misuse or misrepresent their expertise
3. Informed consent must be obtained from participants in the research

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4. They should not discriminate among, exploit or harass the participants
5. They should respect the confidentiality of the participants

Sociologists, by virtue of their role as social welfare professionals, need to work for the betterment of the society and must keep human and social interests as their top priority. Hence, they need to abide by all the ethical principles which form the core part of their professional as well as personal conduct.

References

- Brislin, R. W. (1976). Comparative Research Methodology: Cross-Cultural Studies. *International Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 11 (3): pp. 215-229.
- Code of Ethics and Policies and Procedures of the ASA Committee on Professional Ethics. (1999). Washington, DC: American Sociological Organization. Retrieved July 1, 2014, from Matsumoto, D. & Yoo, S. H. (2006). Toward a New Generation of Cross-Cultural Research. *Cross-Cultural Research*, Vol. 1 (3): 234-250.