AHRC Network for Rethinking Research Ethics Frameworks and Processes in the Humanities
Workshop 1
University of Manchester
21 April 2022
The Challenges and Problems of Conducting Ethical Qualitative Research

- 10.00-10.15 **Introduction to the Project and the Network** (Victoria and Geoff)

- 10.15-10.30 **Mini Keynote:** Introduction to the core challenges and problems of conducting ethical research (TBA)

- 10.30-11.30
    - **Room 1: Story Telling** (Chair: Victoria)
    - **Room 2: Story Telling** (Chair: Geoff)
    - The idea of these sessions is to allow delegates to speak informally for 5-10 minutes on their experiences of problems with conducting ethical research. We encourage delegates to in particular consider issues such as: power relations and hierarchies, dimensions of oppression, marginalised communities, research partnerships, and where risk lies in conducting qualitative fieldwork. Delegates will be asked to request a slot to speak in advance.

- 11.30-11.45 **Coffee**

- 11.45-12.45 **Thematic Problems 1**
    - **Room 1: Informed Consent** – What are the problems with our common practices of informed consent? What do Participant Information Forms and Consent Forms achieve? Research "Participants" or Research "Subjects"?
    - **Room 2: Ethical Committees** – What do Committees get right and what do they get wrong? To what extent are they still reliant on medical ethical conventions and practices? Do they support researchers or seek to control them? Do they understand the communities being researched and the research being done? How are they constituted – do they reflect the diversity of research in the humanities, the researchers doing the work, and communities? What is the role of Committees in upholding hierarchies/maintaining inequalities regarding race, gender, sexuality and disability?

- 12.45-13.30 **Lunch**

- 13.30-14.30 **Thematic Problems 2**
    - **Room 1: Covert and Hybrid Research** – What are the problems with conducting ethical covert research? When should covert research be justified? Is it always possible to separate covert from overt research? To what extent should covert research in public be differentiated from that carried out in private settings? How has social media affected the ability to conduct covert research?
    - **Room 2: Anonymity and Protecting Research Participants** – What are the challenges in anonymising or pseudonymising participants? What are the dangers of anonymity? To what extent should we seek to anonymise organisations and communities?

- 14.30-15.30 **Thematic Problems 2**
    - o **Room 1: Online research** – To what extent do ethical committees understand the risks of online research? How has social media changed the ethics of research? To what extent should the rules of ethical research apply to research online? What are the future challenges to ethical research posed by social media and VR?
    - o **Room 2: Post-Field Issues** – To what extent do ethical procedures and guidelines take into account "leaving the field"? What are the challenges of ending a qualitative research project? Is it ever possible to leave the field? How have online developments affected the researcher's ability to leave the field?

- 15.30-15.45 **Coffee**

- 15.45-16.45 **Feedback from all Sessions**
    - o Victoria and Geoff report back on common themes arising from the story-telling sessions (5 mins each).
    - o Theme convenors report back on their discussions (5 mins each).
    - o Discussion (20 mins).

- 16.45-17.00 **Close and Next Stages** (Victoria and Geoff)

- **Post event drinks and networking**