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The Institutionalization of Ethics

Challenges for Community-Based Research with Young People in the 21st Century

Keri Schwab and Laurie Browne

Introduction

Engaging young people in critical social, political, and environmental issues via community-based research (CBR) benefits young people and the communities in which they live in many ways. At the program level, inviting young to participate in decision making within their schools and other youth-related programs improves academic performance (Vieno, et al. 2007), general participation (Ellis and Caldwell 2005) and overall well-being (Evans and Prilleltensky 2007). Opportunities for meaningful decision making are among the key qualities of youth development programs (Gambone et al. 2004). More broadly, communities that include young people in projects targeting local issues benefit through strong citizenry and a vibrant youth population (Flanagan, Syvertsen and Stout 2007; Libby, Sedonaen and Bliss 2006; Schusler et al. 2009). It is not surprising, given the evidence that youth engagement benefits young people and their communities, that many scholars now look for opportunities to engage young people in the research process. CBR is an approach to addressing critical social, political, economic, environmental or other community issues and places participants at the center of the research process. For young people, this means researchers engaging directly with those affected by such issues and inviting young people to be at the forefront of identifying problems, gathering information, and crafting and implementing solutions. As researchers seek to address community based problems in their research, engaging with young people in their communities is an important consideration for creating lasting change. However, as we will explore in this chapter, conducting research with young people can lead to a unique set of ethical problems for adult researchers.

An increasing number of studies employing a CBR approach suggest this is a growing trend among youth studies scholars. For example, researchers have worked with young people to consider potential programs that could address physical activity levels among tribal young people (Perry and Hoffman 2010). In a similar study, young participants were asked to identify community-preferred health interventions to address obesity (Goh et al. 2009). Photovoice,
a program that gives young people video cameras to document social problems, has been used to build curriculum, engage young people to address policy issues (Strack, Magill and McDonagh 2004), and to develop a youth violence prevention intervention (Snider et al. 2010). Trussell (2008, 164) suggests trends toward CBPR with young people are a “paradigm shift [that] conceptuates young people as active competent participants in the research process.” According to Trussel (2008), potential methods include those noted above, such as program design and implementation, in-depth interviews, and more unique methods, such as creating rap music, drawings, or writing an ethnography.

Based on this trend, CBPR appears to be a promising way to enhance our understanding of how young people interact with critical social issues and an effective way to promote overall youth development. Placing a young person in the researcher role, which is a position of power, clearly has many benefits, yet our experience with CBPR suggests there are many ethical questions that can arise from research that challenges the power differential characteristic of traditional research methods.

CBPR is a different type of research, from the process of developing research questions with community members to sharing results immediately with those affected; there is much to CBPR that does not look like ‘traditional’ research. However, most universities still evaluate and approve CBPR by the same standards applied to all research; an ethic of justice; a focus on non-malfeasance and beneficence. Of course, community-based researchers desire those same outcomes, but the process by which they go about preventing harm and doing the most good is very different. This issue can become especially pronounced when researchers want to work with young people to address community problems. Young people, who hold significant knowledge about their world, not to mention the potential to change it, are considered legal minors and thus subject to additional protections in research. In this chapter, we will argue that Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Ethics Review Board in some countries) justice-based criteria used to evaluate research are not appropriate for CBPR, and can in fact often undermine the very good CBPR tries to accomplish, especially with young people. We will then suggest that an ethic of care (EOC) better aligns with the goals of CBPR, and is a more relevant standard by which an IRB should evaluate the appropriateness of research involving young people. This examination, which builds on our experience navigating the IRB process, as well as ideas from related literature, asks scholars to consider and advocate for a new approach to the IRB – one that replaces limiting ideas about right and wrong with views about shared power among scholars and young people in the entire research process.
Our Story

We came to this line of thinking as we worked our way through a study intending to examine leisure time use and so-called ‘delinquent’ behaviors of teenage mothers. Our research questions focused on the protective and risk factors present in young mothers’ lives, and how those factors influenced their attitudes and then leisure behaviors regarding sex, drugs, and other behaviors considered risky or inappropriate. Our interest in learning more about teenage mothers stemmed from us both having personal and professional interests in improving the lives of women through recreation and education. From this study, we thought our findings would be useful for after school recreation programs to shape their leisure education component or implement ways to increase protective factors among teens. We intended to investigate our question through semi-structured interviews with mothers enrolled in an alternative high school and young parent program. This question was completely researcher driven, and we thought we could find participants in the program because the first author had previously worked with a manager at the young mothers’ program. Everything we were doing was aimed at serving our own research interests and agenda, but we didn’t see it that way at the time.

We knew the research question and interview schedule would likely raise eyebrows during the IRB approval process. And it did. We were asked at least twice for additional information, specifically about the protection of the ‘vulnerable’ subjects involved. Because the potential interviewees were minors, the IRB wanted both parental or guardian permission and assent from the young mothers. In addition, the IRB asked us to change language in the consent forms related to mandatory reporting if abuse or neglect was discussed, and to emphasize that all identifying information about the mothers would be kept confidential. This process took time, but eventually our study was granted IRB approval, as long as we used the required consent, assent, recruitment, and parental permission forms also approved.

As young researchers looking to launch our careers, we were excited to tackle a controversial subject, as well as gather information that could help after school recreation programs improve their programming and participant outcomes. We sincerely wanted to help create the best experiences for all young mothers who participated in after school recreation. But, in repeatedly editing the consent forms, we realized that the protections offered by the IRB really resulted in keeping the mothers (and any meaningful contribution they could help make) at a distance. The approved consent forms and research process did not serve to help build trust between researcher and interviewee but,
rather, served to further separate the two as large institution and one-time-use subject, passing briefly during an interview.

During the IRB approval process, we came to a major realization, something we should have recognized from the beginning having both worked in community settings. We should have begun this research process by asking, at the very least, the after school or young parent program what they needed to know about participants, and at best, by asking the mothers themselves what recreation or after school education administrators needed to understand, but didn’t, about their lives, and then how we could best gather that information. It struck us that, while the research questions could add to our leisure and young people development literature perhaps they were not useful to anyone else, and the interview process, which sounded like simple, painless interviews to us, were perhaps more intrusive than we thought.

We also realized that we would not be permitted to ask the program administrators what they wanted to explore in the research without University IRB approval. The school Principal wouldn’t speak to us about research unless we had approval from the District Superintendent Office and this could only be gained via an application that included the University’s prior approval. Thus, we could not begin the process of asking what was important to the program stakeholders (embedded in the high school) until we had IRB approval and this required that we first provide a detailed research proposal. In keeping with the principles of CBR this would not be possible until we were engaged with the program and this, in turn, wasn’t possible until we had IRB approval. The irony is that we wanted to improve recreation programming to be the best it could be for young parents, but were thwarted by institutional safeguards put in place to ensure our research did what was best for the young parents. This lead to our sense that the traditional IRB process – focused on justice, preventing harm, and doing the greatest good for the greatest number – may not be appropriate for community-based research in general, and particularly for research with young people. Youth researchers, especially those wanting to look at young people’s so-called ‘risky’ behaviors, activism, or non-normative youth culture using CBR approaches may find that review boards that seek to protect ‘vulnerable’ subjects end up hindering the research process so much that it cannot occur in any meaningful way. Researchers trying to work with young people, to make a difference in young people’s lives may be so thwarted by the ‘protection’ process that no good comes to the young people via the institution or its researchers. Having reached this impasse, we ask: who is the university protecting and at what cost? Could there be another way to evaluate the appropriateness of research, one that did not prioritize one party over another so that someone always lost out, but rather one that sought to equalize relations between participants?
We began to think that an ethic of justice was not appropriate when conducting research with the community, but rather an ethic of care might be more appropriate for research with a community, as it is research that seeks to develop relationships, collaborations, and create reciprocity among researchers and community members.

The Ethics of Ethics

In the United States, IRBs have the purpose of “ensuring that research conforms to a set of ethical principles guided by respect for persons, beneficence, and justice The most basic premise is that research poses no risk or harm to the human subject participants” (Cahill 2007, 361). The Belmont Report, the seminal statement on research ethics in the United States mandates that all research must show respect for persons, including two specific moral requirements: acknowledge autonomy and protect those with diminished autonomy. The report is based on principles first laid out in the 1947 Nuremberg Code, which focused on appropriate treatment of subjects involved in medical research. These principles focus on informed consent and ensuring participants were aware of the benefits of the research to humans or communities as weighed against any possible harm that might come to them by participating. Precautions taken by an IRB are based on an early history of prisoner and hospital patient abuses and are rooted in a medical model of protection and least harm. We, as have others, argue that these precautions may not be appropriate for research in the social and behavioral sciences (Cahill 2007).

The three questions IRBs are usually concerned with when determining if a study is ethical include asking if it respects the guidelines of autonomy, non-malfeasance, and beneficence. Each of these is explained here. Respect for autonomy is seen through the informed consent process, whereby participants are told about the purpose of the research, possible harms associated with it, confidentiality and privacy procedures, their rights, and withdrawal options, should they decide not to participate (Flicker et al. 2007). In research with minors, this process involves receiving parental permission, as the review board indicates that minors are not legally able to consent for themselves. Non-malfeasance and beneficence are always expected. Any research methods that knowingly harm participants are simply not allowed. Waiver of parental consent is possible when the research is of minimal risk, such as an experience no greater or more difficult than what a participant might experience in daily life, or where the waiver “would not adversely affect the child or compromise his or her rights” (Miller et al. 2006, 346).
While these rules and regulations are meant to protect research subjects and participants from unethical procedures, treatments, or methods, what we see is an expression of power differentials that separate researcher from subject and create such a division in relationships that some types of research, notably CBR, are not likely to be successful, given the roots of and methods for CBR require trusting, caring, relationships. The power differential created by the IRB requirements is best summed up by Martin (2007, 325) who suggests that the regulatory regimes of research ethics as practiced by IRBs represent a codified set of power relations and assumptions about agency and abilities to produce knowledge that, however inadvertently, disenfranchise both researchers and the potential participants of any social research.

**CBR: Potentials and Challenges in the 21st Century University**

In order to examine why the IRB process undermines the relationships and efforts CBR tries to build, especially when working with young people, we must first review what exactly CBR is. CBR is gaining attention in many disciplines as a research process that can address community and social problems and injustices in ways that are meaningful and sustainable to those impacted by the problem. At the start of the 21st Century, young people experience increasingly complex and interconnected sets of problems. Many young people today struggle not only with what we might term ‘typical’ teenage insecurities brought about by age, gender, and physical development, but also face problems such as increased presence of drugs and alcohol in school and their communities, in-person and cyber bullying, social exclusion, community disconnections, homelessness, and a frightening increase in young people violence (Anderson 2011; Cavalcanti et al. 2011; Cooley-Strickland et al. 2009; Garcia et al. 2013; Gruenewald 2011; Holland 2012; Turner et al. 2013; Underwood and Rosen 2010). Young people can be creative, energetic and powerful agents of change, and their abilities and impact can be made even more substantial with the support of larger institutions and scholars, and through the process of CBR.

One definition of CBR specifies it as “systematic investigation with the participation of those affected by an issue for purposes of education and action affecting social change” (Green et al., 1995, 24). CBR emphasizes understanding a problem or social concern within its social, political and cultural context, and in partnership with the people affected by the issue (Strand et al. 2003). The emphasis is on the collaborative process and relationship building among
those involved, and can include a broad swathe of the community – anyone with an interest in the problem of injustice. CBR is conducted collaboratively among people who have a shared interest in addressing a community problem and working for social change. However, when conducting CBR with young people, researchers are often confronted with a variety of challenges or roadblocks put up the IRB. These challenges come largely because of who CBR seeks to work with and the power differences involved in the research process itself. Both challenges are briefly outlined here.

CBR prioritizes issues important to a community over those of the researcher. Because of a desire to work for social improvement as experienced and defined by the affected community, community groups involved in CBR are often those who are “oppressed, powerless, economically deprived, or disenfranchised – that is, who are disadvantaged by existing social, political, or economic arrangements” (Strand et al. 2003, 3). However, because of the issues most often felt by so-called vulnerable populations, university IRBS take a much closer look at such studies, and often reject them or request substantial and detailed additional information. In general, a review board seeks to protect research participants from harm and ensure that research benefits outweigh risks. But an irony in this is that CBR also seeks to avoid harm and prevent injustices, and seeks to create long-lasting change, and should not be so frequently challenged by 21st Century university policies and procedures.

For example, one tenet of CBR is that, in order for researchers and participants to work together to address sensitive social issues, the two groups must first have trust and equal power relations. But, the standard IRB process, especially for working with young people, requires multiple consent and assent forms, which can imply “assumptions about agency and abilities to produce knowledge that, however inadvertently, disenfranchise both researchers and the potential participants of any social research” (Martin 2007, 325). These underlying assumptions in place in the research process can hinder relationship building, or worse, help reproduce the status quo to keep marginalized groups in less powerful positions by preventing involvement in the research process.

While CBR seeks to empower marginalized groups, researchers involved are not able to ‘give’ power, but rather must recognize that power dynamics are already and always at play when bringing together powerful institutions and marginalized groups. Thus, researchers must recognize the importance of always negotiating power relationships among researchers and community members (Martin 2007). In addition, with an emphasis on a multi-group, collaborative processes and capacity-building, issues of power and trust are important to address from the beginning, and continue to address during the
research process. Such research “requires open lines of communication and ongoing discussion among the partners, as well as clear mechanisms for avert-
ing problems before they arise and for resolving problems if they do” (Leadbetter et al. 2006, 6). This emphasis on process and the flexibility to change tactics as needed, or at a community partner’s request, can become problematic when seeking approval through a standard review board process that requires a complete research outline before granting approval. For exam-
ple, an ideal CBR research application would be a work in progress, and not specify exactly who the participants are, or the research questions, methods, analysis, or dissemination procedures. These items would be co-created with the community in an on-going process. This process would indicate shared power, and would help build the trusting relationships suggested previously.

An Ethic of Care as a Way to Review Research CBR: Potentials and Challenges in the 21st Century University

In this chapter we argue for an ethic of care (EOC) to be considered during the IRB review process. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) describe two types of ethics to be considered when conducting research. The first is procedural ethics, which have to do with informed consent, confidentiality, deception, and protection from harm. The second type is ethics in practice, or situational ethics that deal with the unpredictable events that might occur during research. Carolyn Ellis (2007) suggests a third type of ethic important to consider in the research process – that of relational ethics, which she describes as akin to the ethic of care suggested by Gilligan (1982) and Noddings (1984), and to feminist ethics. Finally, Foucault offers critical commentary on power, knowledge, and ethics, which we will draw on to challenge researchers as they embark on CBR with young people.

To start, we’d like to expand Ellis’ third type of ethic – that of relational ethics, by sharing our experience in CBR and outlining why we believe an EOC is applicable specifically to CBR. In our attempted study of teen mothers, after considering questions posed by the IRB, and reviewing our intentions for the study, we concluded that a different method for reviewing and approving research was necessary. We were struck by the invasion of privacy that would have occurred had we tried to recruit mothers through a formal school district relationship. This would have required a lengthy explanation of our study questions, and then required the mothers to seek parental assent before participating in our interviews. We realized that we ourselves had not taken a caring, relational approach to this work. Having both studied and written about
Gilligan and Noddings (Browne 2011; Schwab 2011), we were surprised we had not taken a more relational stance to the research. Perhaps we had been too focused on starting an academic career and researching topics we thought would be readily publishable, rather than seeking research topics that were meaningful to and respectful of a community. After having time to reflect, we were able to clearly see the applicability of an EOC as a more suitable framework to evaluate the researcher-participant relationship in CBR. In this next section, we will describe an EOC, and then several ways it is appropriate for community-based research.

A feminist, care-based approach to ethics is appropriate for community research because it aligns with several key CBR principles in ways that a justice approach does not. Table 27.1 outlines these differences, and makes clear why an ethic focused on relationships rather than justice is a more appropriate lens for evaluating CBR.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Review Board Guidelines</th>
<th>Community-Based Research</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethic of justice: Greatest good for the greatest number of people</td>
<td>Ethic of care: Greatest good for a specific person (or group) in a specific situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population: Autonomous agents; individuals with diminished autonomy must be protected</td>
<td>Population: Communities who are marginalized, underserved, or vulnerable and who seek out assistance from other groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems: Issues identified by the researcher</td>
<td>Problems: Specific issues identified by the members of a community who are most affected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process: Measures designed to protect autonomy of study participants (e.g. consent, parental permission, assent)</td>
<td>Process: Collaborative process between researcher and community members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes: Justice, non-autonomous agents, avoidance of harm and malfeasance, beneficence</td>
<td>Outcomes: Identify, explore, and create solutions for a specific problem, increase problem solving capacity within a given community, promote equity, social justice, and community sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical imperative: Do what is best for the most number of people within global guidelines</td>
<td>Ethical imperative: Do what is best for a given population in a given set of circumstances</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The idea of an ethic of care (EOC) was originally presented by Gilligan and Noddings, who suggested that all humans want to be cared for and have a desire to care for others. Their work is rooted in the study of women's ethical viewpoints on relationships, and both authors suggest that women's behavior may be guided by a desire for connectedness and reciprocity. Both suggest that women's ethical behavior is guided more by a value for relationships rather than principles, they seek out human relationships, and look for ways to express care for one another. Women are more likely to see relationships as “connected networks of webs or reciprocities than as rule-governed hierarchies of authority and obedience among separate individuals” (Preissle 2007, 517).

Thinking about all humans, these researchers suggest that people have a desire to be cared for, a desire likely based in their memory of care (Flinders 2001). Further, both suggest that caring is guided by a moral attitude, a sense that one should or ought to care for others, leading to an ‘ethic of care’. Finally, Noddings describes ethical caring as a commitment to the development of another, and as characterized by receptivity, relatedness, and engrossment. Receptivity and engrossment, Noddings explains, open the person doing the caring to what she calls ‘motivational displacement’, or a shift in motive to where all their energy moves toward the needs and wants of the other person or group. She (Noddings 2005, para. 5) clarifies that this does not mean she will always agree with what the other person wants, “nor does it mean that I will never try to lead him or her to a better set of values, but I must take into account the feelings and desires that are actually there and respond as positively as my values and capacities allow.”

We are not suggesting that a researcher guided by an EOC should try to lead individuals or groups to different sets of values, but rather that through the process of working together, and developing mutual respect and trust, the researcher will prioritize the feelings, needs, and desires of the community or group. The group, in turn, will indicate being cared for, perhaps by listening, considering suggestions, conversing, or trying new approaches. For example, in some community research settings, participants may be reluctant to talk about their life experiences, feelings, thoughts, or beliefs. Some researchers try to make this process more comfortable by first building relationships, and then offering multiple ways to talk, think, and share ideas about the problem at hand. Researchers may use focus groups, one-on-one interviews, photovoice, journaling, poetry, or even drama to facilitate community members as they express thoughts and feelings. With an EOC, and the process to develop a trusting relationship, participants may be more willing to express their honest opinions and ideas about the problem under investigation.
As Cahill (2007, 362 original emphasis) argues, community research can be viewed as “an ethical praxis of care in which primacy is placed upon relationships and the responsibilities involved in working with communities, as opposed to just not doing harm.” When placing greater emphasis on community interests or needs, the traditional IRB basis of justice is at least grounded in concepts and ideas that are meaningful to the community. Cahill (2007, 362) argues that such research

is a negotiated process developed between people – collaborators – who have agreed to work together to solve a particular issue. This, again, is in contrast with the IRB model of ethics that is framed by abstract concepts of morality and assumes the consent process to be between strangers.

Michel Foucault offers a critique of traditional approaches to power and knowledge, and ideas on ethical behavior, all of which can and should be considered by a critical youth studies for the 21st Century. When his ideas are considered in the context of CBR with young people, they challenge researchers to rethink their approach to the IRB, to the overall research process, and to think critically about what messages or behaviors are communicated in each process.

A theme that underlies much of Foucault's work is the relation between knowledge and power. Briefly, Foucault writes that power should not be thought of as negative, nor should it be considered to be wielded upon a group of people by those in power, to exclude or repress. Rather, power to Foucault is diffused among groups, enacted or embodied by people, and helps to create human agents (Gaventa 2003). Foucault (1991, 194) suggests that power helps “produce(s) reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production.” Further, in looking at how power plays out in relationships, Foucault (1982, 789) argues that power does not act upon actors, but rather it acts upon their actions, and each person or part of the relationship is essential. In a power relationship, the person subject to an exercise of power must be

recognized and maintained to the very end as a person who acts; and that, faced with a relationship of power, a whole field of responses, reactions, results, and possible inventions may open up.

His understanding of power is quite different from a more traditional, perhaps Marxist view of power, and supports our ideas of an EOC in the IRB process.
In applying this idea to the IRB, we argue that the traditional process attempts a Marxist view of power by dictating that those with social standing are the only ones allowed to create knowledge, and asking the community ‘subject’ to provide the labor. An EOC, focused on process and relationships, would embody a more Foucaultian view of power, in which a group of people enact or create power together, to consider new responses, reactions, results, and interventions in the process of seeking knowledge and truth.

Foucault’s own work on ‘ethics’ can contribute to an application of EOC to the IRB process. Foucault includes ethics as one of three components to morality, which also consists of a moral code and the acts of moral agents. A moral code consists of explicit rules strongly recommended to individuals by institutions, and concrete acts refer to the actual behaviors of people, and how they comply with or resist rules. Foucault also states that ethics have to do with how a person conducts his or her own behavior, or the extent to which they act in alignment with a moral code or approved behavior (Foucault 1982). Ethical conduct, then, is the actions performed to engage in morally approved behavior. In other words, ethical conduct is how one behaves so that final actions or outcomes are morally approved and acceptable according to particular norms.

In combining his ideas of power relations and ethics, we find an interesting dilemma for 21st Century youth studies. It appears that researchers, such as Foucault, and research methods, such as CBR, argue for co-creation of knowledge and power as action shared among all involved. However, these ideas remain at odds with the ethics of the IRB, which clearly seeks to follow ethical conduct to arrive at morally approved outcomes, as prescribed by the University. So what would Foucault have us do in this situation? In his work, he clearly calls for a rejection of the normative assumptions of institutions, and instead suggests that humans work to reinvent themselves as autonomous beings who enjoy new experiences and pleasure: “We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for centuries” (Foucault 1982, 785). In promoting an ethic of care in the IRB and research processes, researchers can be on the forefront of doing just what Foucault called for – refusing normative directives and working toward forming new beliefs, perspectives, and desires about power, knowledge, and the process of ethical behavior in institutions.

Moving Towards Doing Care

In all likelihood, we know that changing the processes of an institution will take a long time, and that what we are suggesting is likely to be only a
conversation for quite some time. The agenda for 21st Century researchers should be to seek to create positive social change with young people as CBR partners, and to question and challenge traditional approaches to research approval processes. To assist with this, we’d like to suggest ways IRBS might amend current research processes to move towards an EOC approach in the research consideration and approval process. This section will address how IRBS might go about ‘doing care’ in CBR, and in each step of the research process.

First, and of utmost importance, is that the community have input in the entire process – from choosing a research topic, to methods, to analysis and dissemination. Community members should be invited to sit on IRBS to provide input as to whether the research questions, methods, and dissemination are appropriate for the community, and adequately share power and resources among researchers and the community. Sippola (2006, 126) for example, argues that when she engages in CBR, she discusses all the research procedures with community partners, such as students or school administrators, and views them as ‘professional experts’ and relies “on their advice and suggestions for conducting research in their schools...we discuss potential costs and benefits of the research protocol to the school and to the students.” By including the community in the entire process, she practices caring with her embeddedness, motivational displacement, and caring action. She is no longer looking out for her best interests, but those of the community.

Our second recommendation addresses the institution directly. Members of the IRB must be knowledgeable about the reasons for conducting research from a community-based perspective – this is often a shift for a review board used to seeing researcher-directed studies. Universities could, for example, have at least one person on the IRB specifically trained in community research, or who has experience doing it and understands its unique approaches. Sippola (2006, 127) notes that any ethics decisions “must be based on evidence and on a clear understanding of the importance of the research for the community and not simply on individual committee member’s beliefs and concerns.”

Our final recommendation is for the 21st Century youth studies researchers as well as the institution. Researchers and IRB members must always be aware of the power and privilege they have as members of an institution, and how that power plays out during the research process. ‘Who is doing what to whom, and for what benefit’ should be a common reflection question among community-based researchers. To avoid power differentials from taking over the process, Brydon-Miller and Greenwood (2006, 125) suggest researchers continually engage in reflection to “examine these relationships and the potential for
coercion in a critical manner.” Flicker et al. (2007) admonish IRBs to not become caught up in ‘knowledge production’ but to remember the purpose of CBR is to enhance community capacities and produce action outcomes. With these three suggestions in place, we believe 21st Century youth researchers will be much better positioned to advocate for a change in approach to the IRB process in CBR with young people.

**Conclusion**

Atop the agenda, then, is recognition of the challenges and opportunities for change in conducting CBR involving young people. CBR is a research method that addresses social issues by involving and empowering those affected to make long-term change. With young people, CBR has particular promise both as a vehicle for developing new subjectivities around power, knowledge, reactions, responses, and interventions, and a deeper understanding of how young people interact with critical social issues. Our experience proposing a CBR study involving teenage mothers compelled us to examine both our personal agendas in relation to the topics, and the institutional mechanisms for conducting research with ‘vulnerable populations’. That experience led us to seek ways to bring this conversation to larger audiences and advocate on a broader scale for the change that a critical youth studies for the 21st Century can drive.

The agenda for those conducting young people-focused research in this century, then, is to understand the power of CBR for creating change, recognize the limits of the traditional justice-focused IRB process, and advocate for a new IRB process that operates from an ethic of care. This process would be reviewed in terms of relationship development instead of merely of research outcomes. Institutional review of CBR must value how the process itself fosters positive young people development and helps to create new subjectivities among young people by placing young people at the center of meaningful change. IRBs must be sensitive to the on-going and changing needs of populations involved and provide for young people research teams to determine the design, pace, and value of research projects. Rather than examine risk, justice, or harm as a ‘greatest good for greatest number’ or one-size-fits-all approach, the IRB would examine each study on a case-by-case and population-by-population basis, considering the needs of each person, community, and issue, and examining the relationship and reciprocal benefits that could be experienced by all involved.
References


