MFT 1033: Humanity, Ethics and Culture

Topic 2: Humanity, Ethics, Culture in Science, Technology and Innovation Policy

Assoc Prof Dr Norihan Abu Hassan

UTM Perdana School of Science, Technology and Innovation Policy

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- In developing policy, effective decision-making requires good advice

- Depends on informed use of evidence

- Able to evaluate its effect once implemented

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Excerpts from a speech by Gabriel Makhlouf, , New Zealand Secretary to the Treasury, April 2013 Evidence based policy

- Policy advice that informs these decisions must be built on a strong foundation

- Good policy is backed up by solid evidence and quality analysis

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- New Zealand report: The role of evidence in policy formation and implementation

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- Complexity of policy formation may stems from issues such as:
  - (i) the need to balance the many inputs into the process such as rigorous analysis of a problem
  - (ii) variability of uptake capacity and appetite for such information by policy makers (not always the culture and capability within the public service for example to see out appropriate evidence and to critically appraise and apply it to a policy question

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- Concept of evidence-based policy making for the past 15 years form a major global shift

- Transformation in the public service for example

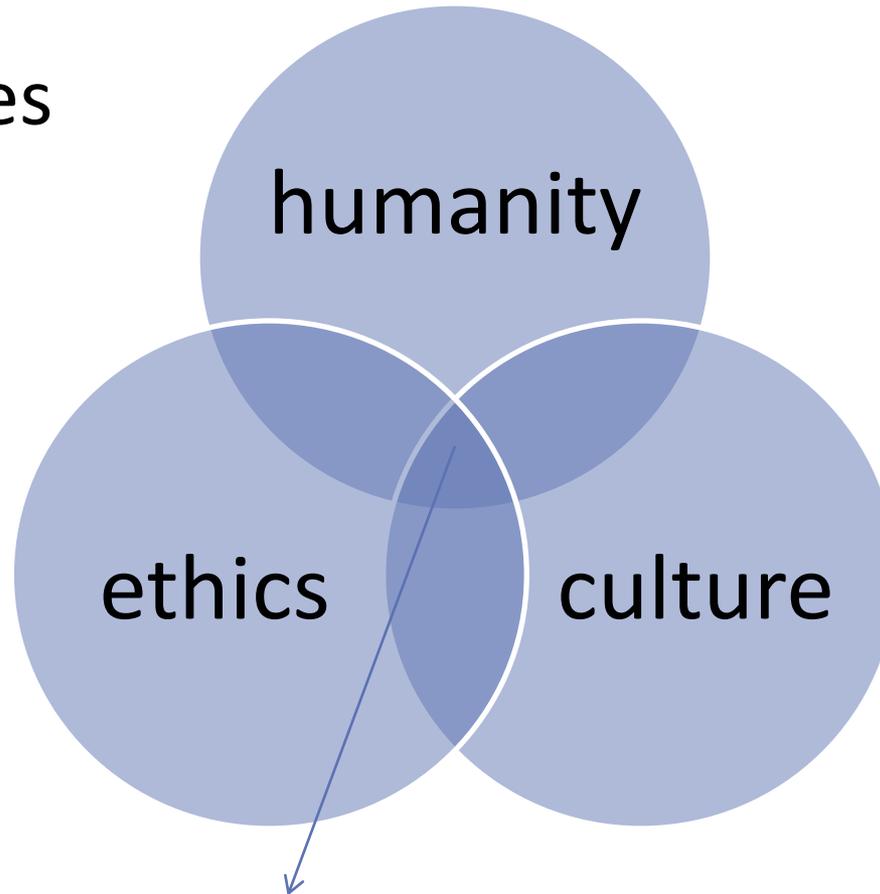# Humanity, Ethics and Culture and Science, Technology and Innovation Policy

- Academic scholars and researchers emphasise that policy must take into account both robust evidence derived from research; understanding of social values, humanity, ethics and culture

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- Challenges
  - To build public service culture that has the attitudes, capabilities and internal processes to support the generation and use of quality evidence derived through the formal process of research

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- Challenges

humanity

ethics

culture

Interface between humanity, ethics, culture is policy

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- Interface between humanity, ethics and culture
    - Demands knowledge of science, technology and innovation
    - Recognise the need for rigorous evidence to justify policy directions and decisions

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A case study in the public service sector

- Due to organization cultural shift such as transformation in the public service, the process requires:
  - Skilled leadership
  - Access to well-developed scientific and research expertise outside the government for example
  - Expertise in translation between researchers and policy experts
  - Capacities to evaluate evidence without bias and with rigour
  - Enabling practices and administrative infrastructures that can accommodated robust processes of data collection and analysis

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Research involving human participants / subjects

- In developed countries there are requirement for researchers to get approval for conducting research on human subjects / participants

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Research involving human participants / subjects

- approval for conducting research on human subjects / participants by

- Reviewing proposals for research and teaching exercise that involve human participants/ subjects

- To ensure the work is conducted with appropriate regard for ethical standards and cultural values

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- Examples:
    - Human Ethics Committee in New Zealand University of Canterbury
    - National Institute of Health (Online Training Certificate for the Protection of Human Subjects)

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Examples of Policy Statement:

The purpose of research is to produce evolving understanding and information which may improve the situation of human beings. All research involving human participants should be conducted in accordance with ethical norms and be subject to ethical appraisal and approval of both its means and ends.

- All such research must:
- have the informed consent of participants
- guarantee confidentiality of data and individuals
- avoid unnecessary deception,
- minimise risk to all participants

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An example : Guiding Principles from the University of Canterbury New Zealand:

- The guiding principles of the University of Canterbury regarding research and teaching exercises involving human participants are:

- a) Participation of a human subject in any research project, course work project, or teaching exercise must be voluntary.

- b) Information provided to gain the consent of participants must be adequate and appropriate.

- c) Any deception or departure from the standard of **fully informed consent** must be justified in terms of its necessity to the scientific aims of the project.

- d) Confidentiality of information is to be assured at all stages of a project.

- e) Risk of harm to participants must be minimised.

- f) Projects must accord with legal requirements such as those of the Privacy Act.

- g) Research must demonstrate respect for the participant. It should be sensitive to the needs of the participants, such as age, gender/sexuality, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability or social class.

- h) Projects must accord with the Treaty of Waitangi.

- i) Projects involving human participants must be carried out and supervised by suitably qualified personnel. Research must meet appropriate scientific and scholarly standards.

- j) Conflict of interest should be avoided or declared.

- k) Research may be critical of public persons, institutions or organisations where benefits to society as a whole are considered to outweigh individual harms so that the role of critic and conscience of society can be fulfilled.

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Examples from New Zealand University of Canterbury (case study)

Procedures:

- Projects requiring review and approval by the UC HEC include:

- a) any research or teaching activity in which **persons** are subjected to experimental procedures or observation or questioning or otherwise used as a source of information or data.

- b) research which draws on personal information which is not currently in the public domain accessed from artefacts such as documents or computer records that has been collected for other purposes than the research. Personal information means any information about an individual who may be identifiable from the data once it has been recorded in some lasting and usable format.

- c) Projects which require approval from an appropriate medical ethics committee such as a Health and Disability Ethical Committee (HDEC) or the National Ethics Committee on Assisted Human Reproduction. A copy of the HDEC application form sent to that Committee must be sent to the Chair of the UC HEC for approval. Applicants must also complete a separate UC HEC application.

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- Conclusion:
- Policy advisory process
  - Triggers for seeking scientific, technology and innovation advice
  - Sources of scientific advice
  - Roles, responsibilities and expectations and boundaries or external advisors should be clarified to avoid misunderstanding
  - Quality assurance and peer review
- Capacity and capability

The end of topic 2