

RESEARCH ETHICS – A PERSPECTIVE

STEF SLEMBROUCK

WHERE WE COME FROM?

- A general formulation: “agree with the rules of ethical conduct and Belgian legislation”
 - The “privacy law” → protection of the personal lifeworld (8 December 1992)
 1. Not use collected data for other purposes
 2. Data is confidential (what is in the data base)
 3. Avoid indirect identification
 4. Ethical limits of response-raising strategies
- Arts Faculty: no detailed ethical code or charter posted on the faculty website

ISSUES TYPICALLY RAISED

1. Privacy: securely protected
2. Informed consent → inform about research
(conditions of participation and use)
3. Integrity, quality and transparency of research
4. Impact of research
 - Negative consequences for/impact on participants
 - Who benefits from the research?



ISSUES TYPICALLY RAISED

1. Privacy: securely protected
 2. Informed consent → inform about research
(conditions of participation and use)
 3. Integrity, quality and reliability
 4. Impact of research
 - Negative consequences
 - Who benefits from research?
1. Anonymous vs pseudonymize: what is it?
 2. How long is the data kept? For what purposes?
 3. Who can access the data in what form?
 4. Data transport and storage: “encryption”
 5. Avoid particular forms of cross-referencing.
 6. ...

ISSUES TYPICALLY RAISED

1. Privacy: securely protected
2. Informed consent → inform a
(conditions of participation and use)

IS ETHICAL APPROVAL ABOUT
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY?

3. Integrity, quality and transparency of research

4. Impr

RESEARCH DEONTOLOGY: correct use of appropriate scientific methodology

1. State-of-the-art knowledge of field
2. Researcher chooses the most appropriate method; proven methods of analysis
3. There is sufficient consensus about the adopted methodology
4. Methodology and methodological decisions are made transparent
5. All information is made available to enable verification and replication

ISSUES TYPICALLY RAISED

1. Privacy: securely protected
2. Informed consent → inform about research
(conditions of participation and use)
3. Integrity, quality and transparency of research
4. Impact of research
 - Negative consequences for/impact on participants
 - Who benefits from the research?

1. Redress possible negative impact
2. Conflict of interest?
3. Subsequent uses of results?

APPLICATION RUBRICS TODAY

- *Participants*: how recruited? what kind of information? known problems? list of Qs/topics to be attached.
- *Procedure*: what expected to do? advantages of participation? risks of participation? what are they told?
- *Informed consent*: how obtained? pretense? how informed about this? forms of recording? how is confidentiality guaranteed? payment/compensation for participation?
- *Data*: anonymisation? pseudonimisation? data storage? access to data?
- *Results*: are participants informed about results?

APPLICATION RUBRICS TODAY

- *Participants*: how recruited? what kind of information? known problems? list of Qs/topics to be attached.
- *Procedure*: what expected to do? **advantages** of participation? **risks** of participation? what are they told?

“RISKS” ONLY? ALSO: “ADVANTAGES”?

Risks run by researched groups to be weighed against advantages?

- *Data*: anonymisation? pseudonymisation? data storage? access to data?
- *Results*: and

Pollock (2012): risk assessment too often conducted from within a clinical framework; the risks attached to qualitative research are minimal but also different

- The engaged researcher
- The advocate researcher
- A processual approach

PARTICIPANTS ONLY? WHAT ABOUT RESEARCHERS?

- Researcher safety = an ethical concern
- “Dangerous situations” → physical well-being
- “Upsetting/unsettling research experiences” → socio-psychological well-being

REFLEXIVE/SELF-INTERROGATIVE PRACTICE

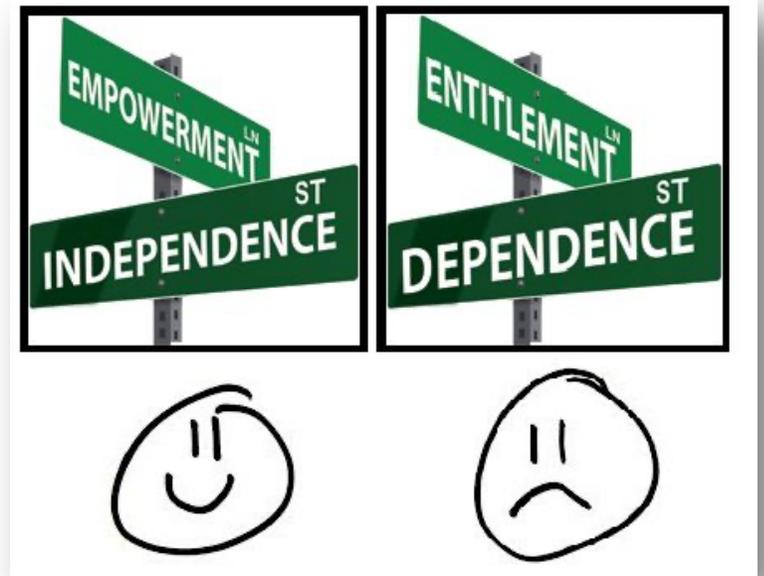
- WEBER, WOUTERS & CLAES (2016), [Van ethische codes en ethische commissies naar ethische vorming voor wetenschappers](#), *Ethiek en Maatschappij*, 18 (1/2), 71-86.
- Raise awareness about issues
 1. Stress on “reflexive practice”
 2. Ethical codes and EC’s cannot guarantee that research will be conducted ethically
 3. Train researchers in detecting and acknowledging moral issues and dilemmas



A NORTH-SOUTH “INTERDEPENDENCY”-PERSPECTIVE

1. Co-construction of knowledge in a collaborative context
2. Co-ownership of research: its design, findings, benefits, publication opportunities, ...
3. Questions of representation beyond “anonymity”
 - References to people, socio-cultural categories, historical events, etc.
 - How to give “voice” of research participants?

North-EC? Or, South-EC?
Which to apply to?



ACADEMIC RECIPROcity (AAA-CODE)

- A particular inroad from anthropology
 1. Include host context colleagues in research plans and funding applications
 2. Establish collaborative relationships with local colleagues and their institutions
 3. Include host context colleagues in publication of results
 4. The researcher's primary obligation is to the population being studied

“Ethnographic tradition”: assumption of ethical practice, but research path is not laid down beforehand.

OVERVIEW: “ETHICS IN RESEARCH”

- See: <https://www.ugent.be/intranet/en/research/ethics/ethics-research.htm>
- Overview of faculties, EC’s, weblinks
- With the exception of what is legally required (experiments on animals, human beings and privacy), an advice by an ethics committee remains an advice (not compulsory but strongly recommended)

STEF SLEMBROUCK

FORMER DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH

FORMER MEMBER OF ETHICS COMMITTEE
FACULTY OF ARTS & PHILOSOPHY

E stef.slembrouck@ugent.be

