RESEARCH ETHICS: DUAL USE RESEARCH & HUMAN RIGHTS

Doing research in a non-EU context / 23 January 2021 / dr. Vincent Eechaudt

UNIVERSITEIT GENT

www.ugent.be/intranet/en/research/ethics

UNIVERSITEIT GENT

Ethics in research

By actively adhering to the ethical principles and professional standards, researchers continue to improve the responsible practice of research. Ethical norms help to ensure that research subjects are handled with care and respect; researchers have due regard for the health, safety and welfare of all those connected with the research and can be held accountable for it. Linked to these ethical norms, research promotes a variety of important moral and social values, such as social responsibility, human rights, animal welfare, compliance with the law, and public health and safety.

Ethics in research is therefore a multi-layered concept which brings together considerations such as the question on the necessity of certain research, the overall attitude of researchers and the way they approach and/or design their research, the standards for behaviour in a certain discipline, the formal compliance with ethical and legal guidelines and procedures (including requesting and obtaining an ethics approval for a specific research project).

Detailed information on specific topics

→ Access and benefit sharing (Nagoya Protocol): biological (genetic) resources and associated traditional knowledge

→ Artificial intelligence (AI)

→ Biobanks (human body material)

→ Confidentiality

→ Dual-use: research with possible military applications

→ Data protection (GDPR)

→ Fieldwork

→ Human research

→ Human rights in research

→ Public engagement

→ Research data management

→ Research evaluation & use of indicators

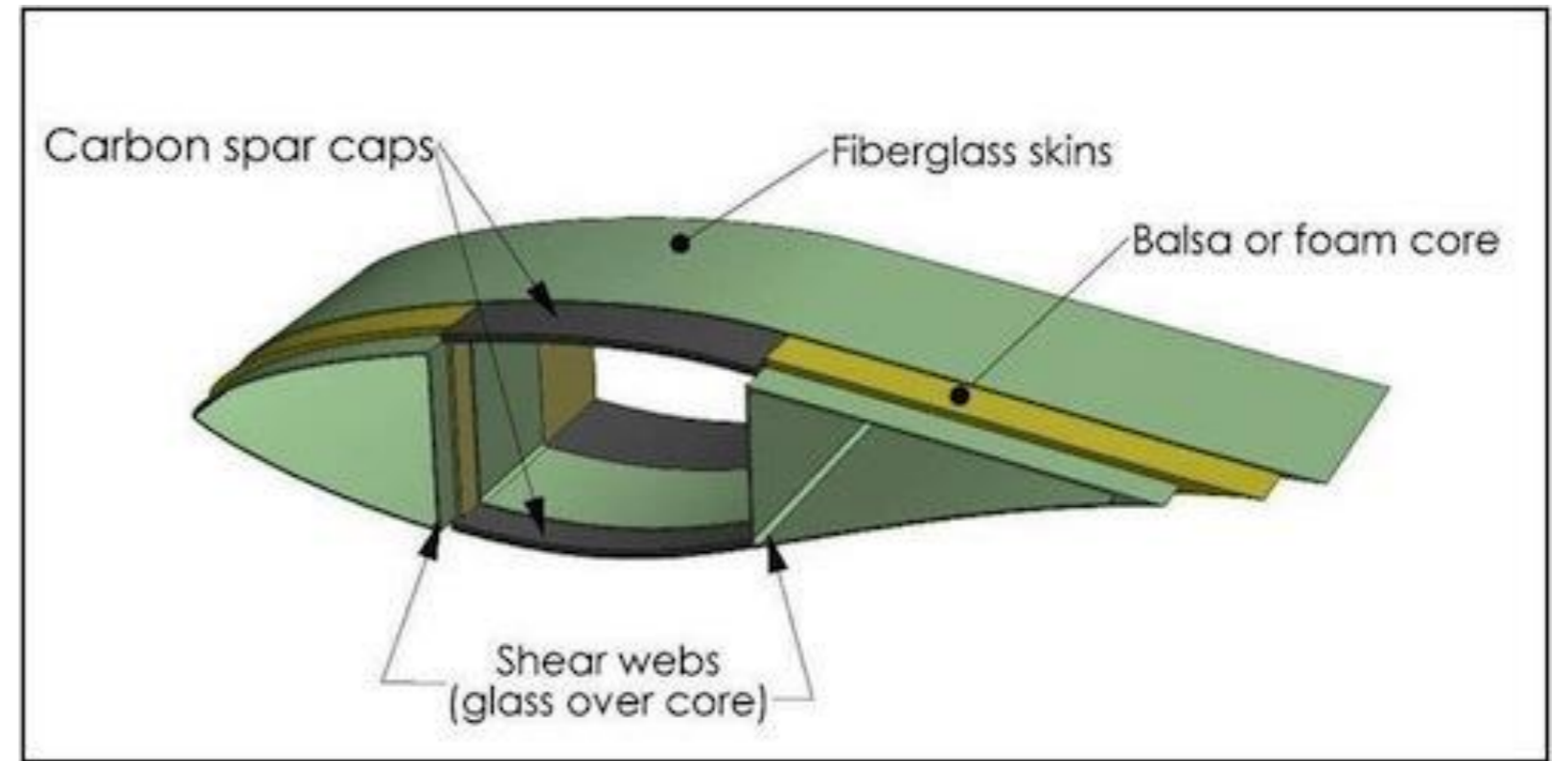→ Technology transfer & commercialisation

→ Using animals in research

DUAL-USE RESEARCH?

Research results are useful for civil society…

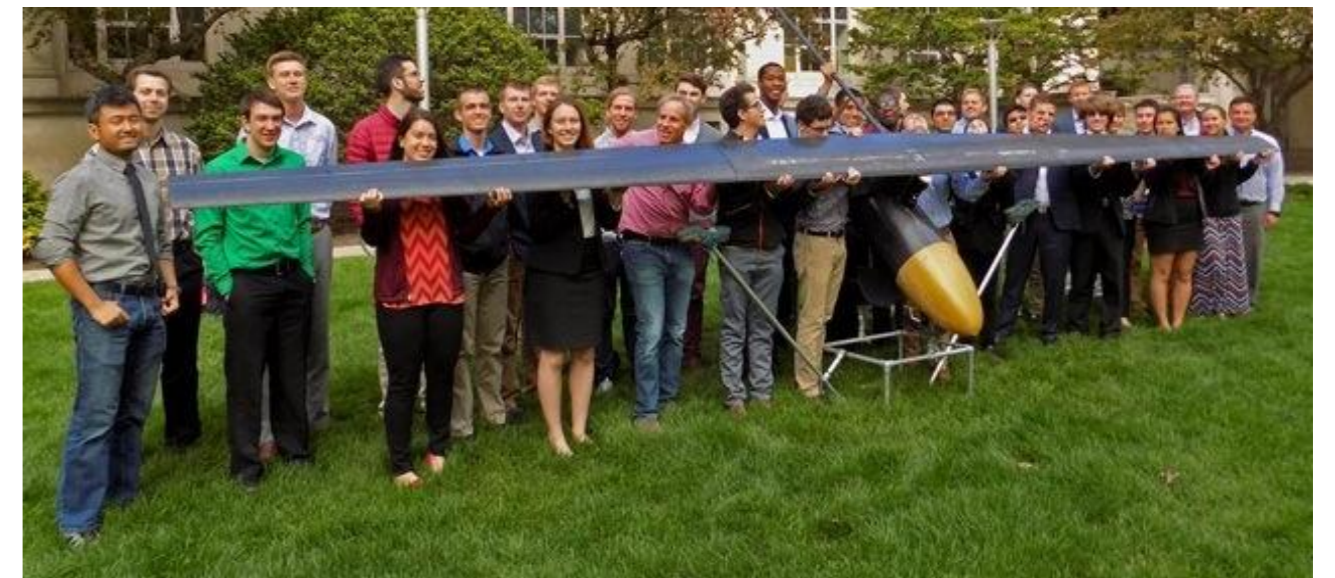*But also for military or terrorist purposes:*
- *The creation of military items*
- *Proliferation of nuclear, radiological, chemical or biological weapons*
- *And their delivery systems (missiles, drones, ..)*
- *…*

UNIVERSITEIT
GENT

EXAMPLES

Carbon spar caps

Fiberglass skins

Balsa or foam core

Shear webs
(glass over core)

Engineers design drones that can stay aloft for five days

New design could provide communication support in disaster zones.

SO WHAT?

Research that might be military useful:

– Activities involving the military or partners active in the defence industry

– Activities funded by the military or by partners active in the defence

– Activities that may be useful for military/terrorist/criminal purposes (self-assessment!)

– Sharing goods, software or technical knowledge mentioned on the EU dual-use export control list.

Inform the university's Dual Use Contact Point (reporting sheet)

– Will assess the research and provide guidance

UNIVERSITEIT
GENT

SO WHAT?

Possible measures:

– Propose measures to prevent misuse

– Submit the project to the Committee on Human Rights Policy and Dual Use Research (ethics approval)

– Legal obligation: need export license when *"sharing"* research results

Goal: making sure that dual-use technology and knowledge cannot be misused by foreign actors at a later stage, e.g.

– For violating human rights (suppressing minorities, supporting authoritarian regimes)

– By parties which are a threath to our national security

All info on the university's website on dual-use research:

www.ugent.be/intranet/en/research/ethics/dual-use

UNIVERSITEIT
GENT

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

Ghent University does not contribute to human rights violations, nor does it want to benefit from human rights violations

So, check whether

– Your project violates human rights

– The region/sector is (in)famous for human rights violations

– Your partners violate human rights

UNIVERSITEIT
GENT

EXAMPLES: IMPACT OF PROJECT

EXAMPLES: IMPACT OF PARTNER

Barış İçin
Akademisyenler
Academics for Peace

Bomb that killed 40 children in Yemen was supplied by the US

By **Nima Elbagir**, **Salma Abdelaziz**, **Ryan Browne**, Barbara Arvanitidis and **Laura Smith-Spark**, CNN

UNIVERSITEIT GENT

SO WHAT?

Self-assessment! Might
- Your project contribute to human rights violations?
- Your partners be involved in serious human rights violations?
- The region or sector be known for human rights violations?

Contact the Committee on Human Rights Policy and Dual Use Research!

All info on the university's website on human rights:
www.ugent.be/en/ghentuniv/principles/human-rights

UNIVERSITEIT
GENT

HOW?

Google is your friend (in this case… and also bing, or duckduckgo, or any other search engine).

— … + "human rights violations"

Some specialist websites:

— Hrw.org.

— Amnesty.org

— Business-humanrights.org

— www.scholarsatrisk.org

UNIVERSITEIT
GENT