



**GHENT  
UNIVERSITY**

# RESEARCH ETHICS

## – A PERSPECTIVE FROM THE ARTS

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- 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

# PSW

(POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES)

1. Guarantee integrity, quality and transparency of research
2. Inform participants correctly about aims, methods and applications
3. Clarity about confidentiality and anonymity, incl. data recording and storage
4. Voluntary consent, avoidance of damage to research subjects or unnecessary risk
5. Independent, non-partisan, avoid conflict of interest

# PSW

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1. Guarantee integrity, **quality and transparency of research**

IS ETHICAL  
APPROVAL  
ABOUT  
RESEARCH  
METHODOLOGY?

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

4. Voluntary consent  
risk

5. Independent, non-

# PSW

(POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES)

1. Guarantee integrity, quality & reliability of data
2. Inform participants correctly about data collection and its applications
3. Clarity about confidentiality and anonymity, incl. data recording and storage
4. Voluntary consent, avoidance of damage to research subjects or unnecessary risk
5. Independent, non-partisan, avoid conflict of interest

1. Anonymity: what is it? Scope?
2. Avoid cross-referencing
3. How long is the data kept?
4. Data transport and storage: "encryption"
5. ...

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# RE

## (LAW & CRIMINOLOGY)

1. Respect for integrity, quality and transparency
2. Inform researchers and participants about purpose, method and use
3. Confidentiality and anonymity
4. Voluntary consent to participate
5. Damage to researchers and informants must be avoided
6. Guarantee independence and *be explicit about conflicts of interest or partisan interest*



# PPW

## (PSYCHOLOGY AND PEDAGOGICAL SCIENCES)

- Beyond a legal perspective
- 4 key-words: research is “ethical, justified, sustainable, efficient”
  1. Research is done in accordance with accepted standards of scientific quality and ethical behaviour
  2. Within a legal framework
  3. In case of doubt, consult ethics committee
  4. Responsibility extends to supervised research
  5. Only do that which you have been trained to do
  6. Informed consent of participants and participating institutions
  7. Members of EC cannot advise on their own research
  8. Changes which affect safety or lead to a new interpretation of research need to be presented to the EC first

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# PPW

## (PSYCHOLOGY AND PEDAGOGICAL SCIENCES)

- Beyond a legal perspective
- 4 key-words: research is “ethical, justified, necessary and useful”
  1. Research is done in accordance with a high standard of quality and ethical behaviour
  2. Within legal framework
  3. In case of doubt, consult ethics committee
  4. Responsibility extends to supervised research
  5. Only do what one has been trained to do
  6. Informed consent of participants and participating institutions
  7. Members of EC cannot advise on their own research
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4. Fac PSW: supervisor of Ma-diss acts as an ethical advisor; no need to go to EC.
5. Implications for **exploratory** research?

# RESEARCH DATA MANAGEMENT

Good research data management has many advantages: for yourself, for your research institute, for your discipline and for the world around us:

- Ensuring the integrity of your research
- Increasing the impact of your research
- Supporting future use
- Satisfying in- and external requirements

## RUBRICS APPLICATION FORM ETHICAL APPROVAL “ARTS”

- *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? audio or video-recording? how is confidentiality guaranteed? payment/compensation for participation?
- *Data*: anonymisation? data storage? access to data?
- *Results*: are participants informed about results?

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- *Informed consent*: how obtained? audio or video recording? guaranteed? payment/compensation?
- *Data*: anonymous? storage? access?
- *Results*: a

“RISKS” ONLY? ALSO: “ADVANTAGES”?  
Risks run by researched groups to be weighed against advantages?

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

# 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.



## A NORTH-SOUTH “INTERDEPENDENCY”-PERSPECTIVE

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

# PARTICIPANTS ONLY? WHAT ABOUT RESEARCHERS?

- Researcher safety: an ethical concern
- “Dangerous situations” → physical well-being
- “Upsetting/unsettling information” → 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
  - Stress on “reflexive practice”
  - Ethical codes and EC’s cannot guarantee that research will be conducted ethically
  - Train researchers in detecting and acknowledging moral issues and dilemmas



# OVERVIEW

- <https://www.ugent.be/intranet/nl/op-het-werk/onderzoek-onderwijs/onderzoek/beleid/kwaliteit/ethiek.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

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