Research Ethics and Ethics Reviews in the Social Sciences

Symposium

Sept 14-15, 2023, Munich, Germany

Ethical challenges are built into the quest for knowledge. In the social sciences, striving for scientific insight and integrity while investigating human beings under conditions of inequality raises many questions. Who should benefit from research? How can we address power inequalities without reinforcing them? What is the role of science in a globalized world characterized by climate change, war, human rights violations and an unequal distribution of resources, privileges and deprivations? On a more day-to-day basis: What are the individual and collective benefits and risks of our research and how can we avoid harming those who participate? In recent years, technological advances have amplified some of these challenges. For example, how can we promise anonymity to anyone in times of the internet, big data and artificial intelligence? Given the history of unethical scientific conduct, ethics reviews have been introduced to help enforce ethical principles and standards. The practice and actual effects of ethical reviews, however, have been a topic of great controversy. In the German social sciences, ethics reviews are a relatively recent phenomenon. In the past decade, a new landscape of research ethics committees has evolved – bottom up, with very little coordination and exchange. The symposium aims to address this void. We invite social scientists involved in ethics reviews (as chair persons, members, expert advisors and/or applicants) to tackle some of the challenges presenting in this field currently – learning from experiences in other countries. A focus will be on:

- international and interdisciplinary perspectives
- the role of ethics boards and the limits of what ethics reviews can do
- conflicts of interests in (applied) social science research
- anonymity and other ethical challenges in times of big data and digital technologies

Thursday, Sept 14, 2023

2.30 pm	Registration Coffee	
3.00-4.30 pm	Welcome and introduction	Moderation:
	Sara Eldén (Lund University, Sweden): "Ethics as regulatory regime: the tension between juridification and professional judgment in social science research in Sweden"	**Hella von Unger** (LMU Munich)
	Discussant: **Michael Schönhuth** (University of Trier, Germany)	
	Break (30 mins)	

5.00-6.30 pm	**David Resnik** (National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, USA): "Conflicts of Interest and Ethics Reviews in the US"	Moderation:
		Daniel Rottke (University of Applied Sciences Neubrandenburg)
	Agata Ferretti (ETH Zurich, Switzerland): „Big data and other challenges for Research Ethics Committees: A Swiss Study"	

Friday, Sept 15, 2023

9.00- 11.00 pm	„Was können Ethikkommissionen (nicht) leisten?"	Moderation:
	Assessing and shaping an evolving landscape: "What do we need for ethics reviews in the social sciences?" (in German)	**Herwig Reiter** (German Youth Institute, Munich)
	Panel discussion with: **Hansjörg Dilger** (FU Berlin) **Hubert Knoblauch** (TU Berlin and RatSWD) **Heidi Schuster** (Max Plack Society, Munich) **Hella von Unger** (LMU Munich) **Arne Freya Zillich** (Film University Babelsberg, Potsdam)	
	Coffee break (30 mins)	
11.30-12.30 pm	**Open Space** Do we need a network of research ethics committees in the social sciences in Germany? and other issues	
	End of symposium	

The symposium will take place in English and German at the IBZ, Amalienstr. 38, Munich, Germany.

The symposium is organized by Prof. Dr. Hella von Unger, Institute of Sociology, LMU Munich in cooperation with Dr. Herwig Reiter, German Youth Institute (DJI) and Prof. Dr. Daniel Rottke, University of Applied Sciences Neubrandenburg.

The symposium is free of charge, but places are limited.

To register, please send an email (until Aug 1, 2023) to: symp.ethics@soziologie.lmu.de

Please note:

The Oktoberfest will take place in Munich from Sept 16, 2023 onwards, i.e. the following day. It is therefore advisable to make travel arrangements as early as possible.