

# 4

## Research Ethics

This paper examines some of the ethical issues that arise in studies of family life with particular attention to qualitative mixed methods research and the use of psycho-social approaches. The author argues that unsettling stories in research on emotional–social worlds refine our understandings of ‘harm’ and ‘distress’ and reconfigure ideas of ‘responsible knowing’.

*Qualitative Research*, 10 (4): 461–78 (2010):

<http://qrj.sagepub.com/content/10/4/461>

Home truths: ethical issues in family research

Jacqui Gabb, The Open University, UK

### PODCAST

‘Bearing witness’: Helping research ethics boards to understand the value of bereavement research

Published 19 November 2010

[www.ipp-shr.cqu.edu.au/podcasts/?id=119&podcastType=1](http://www.ipp-shr.cqu.edu.au/podcasts/?id=119&podcastType=1)

This podcast discusses research governance and ethics in the case of a highly sensitive topic.

This paper discusses the ethical dilemmas that derive from controversies about research on complementary and alternative medicine. Within this highly politicised field, scientific knowledge is a potential object of misuse. The paper shows that research ethics are no longer a matter of internalising professional codes of conduct but are embedded in the totality of scholarly practice.

*Qualitative Research*, 9 (4): 423–39 (2009):

<http://qrj.sagepub.com/content/9/4/423>

Stuck in the middle: research ethics caught between science and politics  
Charlotte Baarts, University of Copenhagen

http:

### LINKS

For the ethical guidelines provided by the Economic and Social Research Council (UK), go to:

[www.esrc.ac.uk](http://www.esrc.ac.uk)

US ethical guidelines are provided by an Institutional Review Board. See:

[www.fda.gov/oc/ohrt/irbs/default.htm](http://www.fda.gov/oc/ohrt/irbs/default.htm)

Based on her own PhD research on sexual abuse in Brazil, Estefania Guimaraes shows how ethical issues enter into the nitty-gritty activity of collecting data.

*Feminism & Psychology*, 17 (2): 149–61 (2007)

DOI: 10.1177/0959353507076547

<http://fap.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/17/2/149>

Feminist Research Practice: Using Conversation Analysis to Explore the Researcher's Interaction with Participants

Estefania Guimaraes, University of York

Estefania Guimaraes has just won a National Communication Association Award for the best PhD dissertation.

### EXERCISE

Not every student research project is set in such a 'loaded' situation as Estefania Guimaraes's. Nevertheless, review how you propose to collect data in any research project you are considering (or have collected data). What ethical issues arise and how do (will) you resolve them?

Sometimes we need to conceal our identity in order to research a particular setting. In this paper, based on his own research in a cancer hospital, Marco Marzano considers when it is appropriate to use concealment and when it should be abandoned.

*Qualitative Inquiry*, 13 (3): 417–36 (2007)

DOI: 10.1177/1077800406297665

<http://qix.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/13/3/417>

Informed Consent, Deception, and Research Freedom in Qualitative Research  
 Marco Marzano, University of Bergamo

**Key words:** cancer • ethnography • informed consent • IRB • research ethics



### TIP

As Marco Marzano's paper shows, we always need to relate ethical decisions to the context which we are studying.



### LINKS

US Office of Human Subjects Research:  
[ohsr.od.nih.gov](http://ohsr.od.nih.gov) (go to Regulations and Ethical Guidelines)

The Social Research Association Ethical Guidelines at:  
[www.the-sra.org.uk/documents/pdfs/ethics03.pdf](http://www.the-sra.org.uk/documents/pdfs/ethics03.pdf)

The US National Institute of Mental Health:  
<http://ohsr.od.nih.gov/guidelines/belmont.html>

Peter Lugosi's paper addresses the issues of concealment and context in a different research setting.

*Qualitative Inquiry*, 12 (3): 541–61 (2006)

DOI: 10.1177/1077800405282801

<http://qix.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/12/3/541>

Between Overt and Covert Research: Concealment and Disclosure in an Ethnographic Study of Commercial Hospitality

Peter Lugosi, Bournemouth University

**Key words:** covert research • covert methods • concealment • disclosure • ethics

The final paper on ethics reviews a study of 'bouncers' in Manchester, UK. It returns to the issue of covert research and considers the relevance of 'informed consent' in such a setting.

*Sociology*, 42 (5): 905–18 (2008)

(Continued)

*(Continued)*

DOI: 10.1177/0038038508094569

<http://soc.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/42/5/905>

The Art and Politics of Covert Research: Doing 'Situated Ethics' in the Field

David Calvey, Manchester Metropolitan University (d.calvey@mmu.ac.uk)

**Key words:** covert • ethics • ethnography • informed consent • risk

### EXERCISE

- What ethical issues (might) arise in your own research?
- How does (might) the context in which you are researching affect your ethical decisions?

### YOUTUBE

#### Research Ethics Part 1

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=OG1ymKBLCK8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OG1ymKBLCK8) 7.37mins

and

#### Research Ethics Part 2

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=wV-118geHVU&feature=mfu\\_in\\_order&list=UL](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wV-118geHVU&feature=mfu_in_order&list=UL) 7.30 minutes

Written and produced for a US audience, and assumes the listener is a psychologist. The first part covers initial considerations when thinking about the ethics relevant to carrying out your project, the need for informed consent and the possibility of using deception. Part 2 covers issues of privacy, confidentiality and anonymity.

#### Another weblink (may not be suitable for undergraduates?)

<http://data-archive.ac.uk/create-manage/consent-ethics>

From the UK Data Archive webpages. This gives detailed and practical information and advice covering relevant ethical issues such as consent and anonymisation, as well as a clear explanation of the relevant UK law (e.g. the Data Protection Act 1998).