



Dilemmas for Ethical Guidelines for the Sciences

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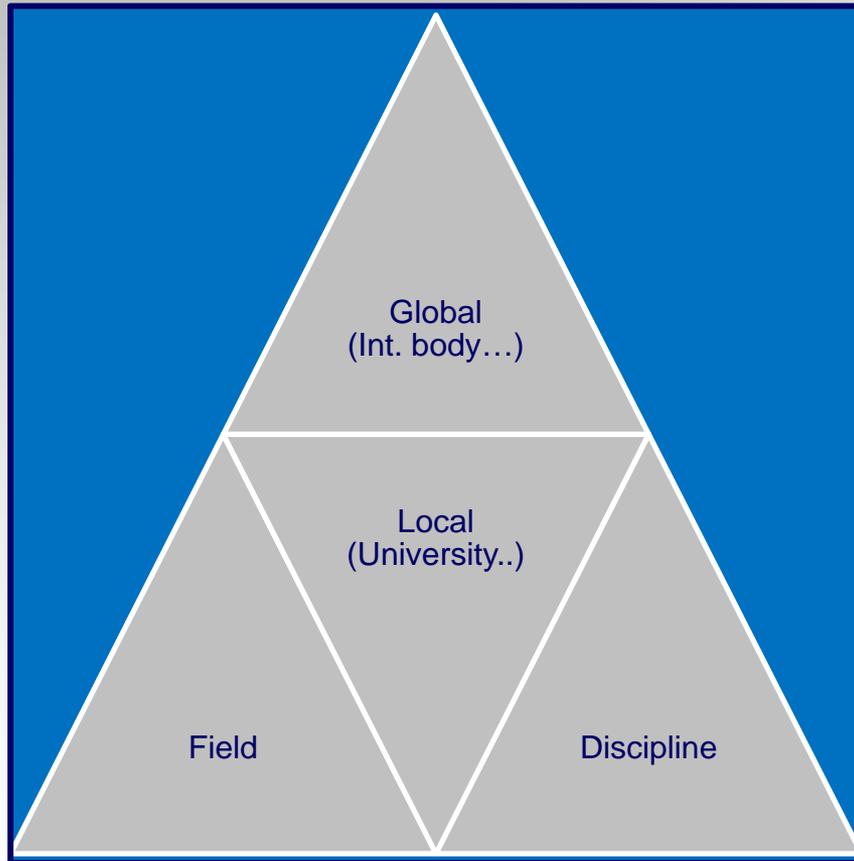
& Centre for the Study of the Sciences and Humanities,
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Four questions when designing ethical guidelines / codes of conduct for the sciences:

1. "Identification": what is the institutional anchor-point?
 2. "Consensus or education?": Stating the obvious or improving the culture of science?
 3. "Showcase or Best Practice document?": who are they for?
 4. "Hard or soft law?": How do guidelines relate to legal measures?
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1. Identification?



- "Competition" among guidelines!
- Commitment follows from either institutional identification or discipline / field.
- No problem if:
 - Consistency guaranteed
 - Completeness is sought as specific supplement to other guidelines -> What are the "natural" issues to be addressed?

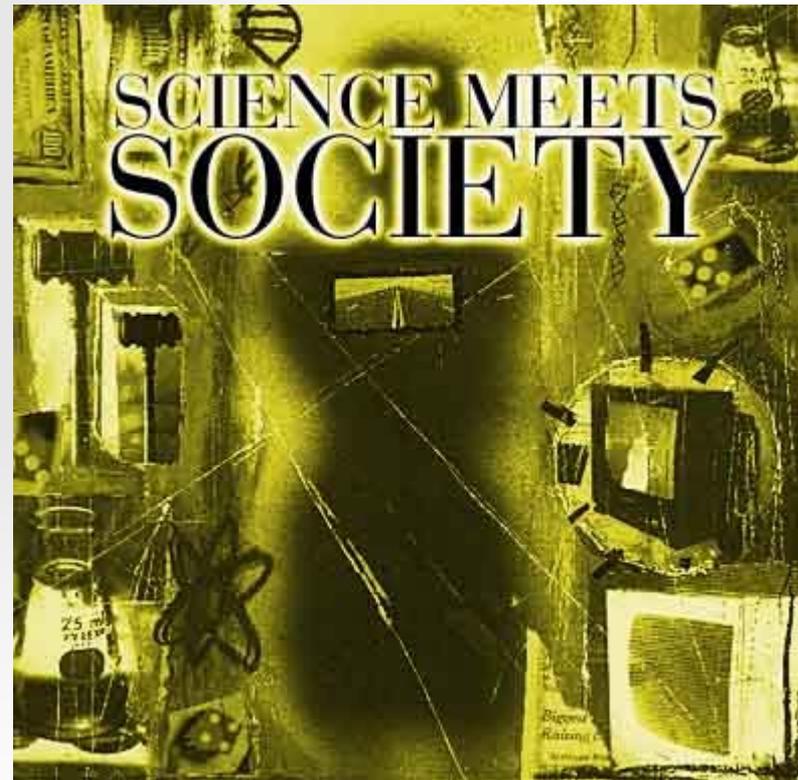
2. Consensus or education?



- Are ethical guidelines just spelling out what is (more or less) uncontroversial among scientists?
 - Or are they to move science towards "better" science?
 - This opens the question of justification for the guidelines? Normative stance or consensus?
 - I prefer the educational goal (normative stance) since it creates lively debate.
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3. Who are they for?

- A "showcase" for science?
 - "restoring" trust?
 - "selling" science?
 - Advocating a career choice?
- Internal use in science?
 - Disciplining scientists?
 - Educating scientists?
 - Clarification of disputes?
- Arguments for both, but with consequences for content:
 - Norms of science and
 - Relation to societal values!



4. Hard or soft law?

- "Self-policing" as virtue of science?
 - Autonomy / freedom of science?
 - Sometimes constitutionally guaranteed.
 - Stimulate ethical reflection!
 - Avoiding red tape!
- The need of instruments to cut through conflicts and protect weak parties!
 - Undisputed in human subjects / animal research.
 - Freedom and responsibility!
- Framework laws go well together with soft law!



Norway: Ethical guidelines for research in science and technology

➤ www.etikkom.no

**GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH ETHICS
IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**



Structure and content of the Norwegian Guidelines:

1. Introduction

2. Overriding obligations of research:

i. Human rights

ii. Sustainable development

iii. Peace

iv. Democracy

v. Equity and fairness in wealth and information globally

Continued:

3. Good research practice:

- i. Honesty (no fraud, no plagiarism, data access, balanced presentation)
- ii. Individual responsibility for subject matter, method, and quality
- iii. Respect for fellow scientists' contributions (reference, authorship, data use, etc.)
- iv. Follow/obey existing national / international regulations

Continued:

4. Uncertainty, risk and the Precautionary Principle

- i. Clarify degree of certainty and precision, and reveal risks and uncertainties
- ii. Contribute to possible applications of Precautionary Principle

5. Protection of research subjects

- i. Informed consent
- ii. Secure privacy of subjects

Continued:

6. Protection of animals

- i. Care & respect for animal welfare (the three R's)
- ii. Use of animal research should not result in less animal welfare.
- iii. Consult independent ethics committee if in doubt

7. Relationship with traditional and alternative sources of knowledge

- i. Incorporate and respect traditional knowledge
- ii. When natural, employ participatory methods.

8. Openness, contract research and conflicts of interest.

- i. Openness and quality in contract research
- ii. Obligation to reveal conflicts of interests

Continued:

9. Whistle-blowing

- i. Individual possibility and some times duty to act as whistle blower
- ii. Institutional responsibility for independent mechanisms re whistle blowers

10. Popularization of science

- i. Research institutions should give credit for popularizing
- ii. Individual researchers should routinely consider presenting their research for a broad audience

Proposal for a scientific oath:

An oath when attaining a Ph.D.?

- **“ I will conduct my activities as a researcher with integrity and honesty; I will use my scientific knowledge and skills for the benefit of humanity and for a sustainable development; I will show respect for animals and nature; I will act in accordance with research ethics, and I will not allow considerations based on ideology, religion, ethnicity, prejudices or material advantages to overshadow my ethical responsibility as a researcher.”**

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Thank you!

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