

# Make Research Ethicists Your New Best Friend\* Social Science Horizon 2020 Example from Jena

\*Title based on article: Kaiser A, Carr R. "How to make the research ethics committee your new best friend" *Arch Dis Child Educ Pract Ed*, 2013; 98: 173-174.

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# Outline

- ▶ I. Example of Social Science Project Proposal from Friedrich Schiller University, Jena
  - Call: H2020–Reflective–Society–2015
  - WH&R: Cultural Heritage of War and Reconciliation
- ▶ II. Ethics as 1) Compliance and 2) Doing Good
- ▶ III. Make Ethicists Your New Best Friends
  - Kaiser A, Carr R. “How to make the research ethics committee your new best friend” Arch Dis Child Educ Pract Ed, 2013; 98: 173–174.
- ▶ IV. Conclusion: Ethics as “Doing Good” Should Be Clear In Whole Project Description



# I. Example of Social Science Project Proposal from Friedrich Schiller University, Jena

- ▶ Call: H2020–Reflective–Society–2015
- ▶ Cultural Heritage of War and Reconciliation
- ▶ WH&R (acronym modified from original grant proposal)
  - Develop Elements of EU Identity
  - Past Wars Remembered in Cultural Identity Markers
    - War Memorials...
  - Explore How This Cultural History Can be “Re–Framed to Support Reconciliation and EU–consensus Values
  - Create Scientific Case–Study Database and Research Resources for Both Academic and Applied (Political) Use



# I. Jena Example

- ▶ Key Issue for Ethics: Research Involves Human Subjects
  - Primarily “Social Psychology” Methods Relevant for Ethical Part of Project Proposal
- ▶ Research Disciplines: Interdisciplinary
  - Social Scientists,
  - Historians,
  - Pedagogical (academic, textbook publishers),
  - and Reconciliation Studies

## II. Ethics as 1) Compliance and 2) Doing Good

- ▶ Reviewers' Recommendation:
  - Good overall review, high marks
  - The ethics section was also fine,
  - Yet, the reviewers wanted to see the ethics issues integrated into the whole project proposal
- ▶ Raises Question: What is Ethics for Reviewers?
  - 1) Compliance (Break No Rules)
  - 2) Doing Good...
- ▶ “Doing Good” from Aristotle:
  - Virtuous action, in compliance with law and social customs, and ordered to the good of the community



## II. Ethics

- ▶ Reconciliation Studies – Ethical Issues
  - General Social–Psychological Studies are unproblematic in controlled/laboratory settings
  - Yet most interesting studies involve persons affected by war, however directly or indirectly
  - Issues involve re–traumatization, personal risks and risks specific to conflict and post–conflict regions
- ▶ Done Well: DFG–Sponsored “Hearts of Flesh–Not Stone” in BGU–Israel (PI: Shifra Sagy)
- ▶ Problematic: “Belfast Project” Boston College

## II. Ethics (Grey Areas?)

- ▶ **Human Subjects Principles:** (US National Institute of Justice 2010)
- ▶ “Aspirational” nature of 7/8 ethics principles:
  - #1 = clear and non-negotiable;
  - #2 → #8 require ‘best-practice’ standards, judgment, and discussion for research involving ethical grey areas
- 1. The right to end participation in research at any time
- 2. Voluntary, informed consent
- 3. Respect for persons: treated as autonomous agents
- 4. Right to safeguard integrity
- 5. Benefits should outweigh cost
- 6. Protection from physical, mental and emotional harm
- 7. Access to information regarding research
- 8. Protection of privacy and well-being

# III. Make Research Ethicists Your New Best Friends

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- ▶ Kaiser/Carr (2013) Key Insight:
  - Bring in ethicists at early stage of proposal drafting
- ▶ Especially relevant for social sciences
  - Competence: Compliance obviously necessary
  - Grant Calls for social sciences = Ethical
  - Grant "Impact" can be enhanced...
  - Ethicist help not only avoid danger, but can help shape and clarify project's "Good"



# III. Example from Genetic Research

- ▶ **Synthetic Biology and J. Craig Venter**
  - Venter included ethical deliberation of the science from the very beginning
  - Foresaw and effectively addressed legitimate public concern
  - *Creation of a Bacterial Cell Controlled by a Chemically Synthesized Genome*, in *Science* 02 July 2010 Vol 329 Issue 5987: 52–56.

Daniel G. Gibson, John I. Glass, Carole Lartigue, Vladimir N. Noskov, Ray-Yuan Chuang, Mikkel A. Algire, Gwynedd A. Benders<sup>2</sup>, Michael G. Montague, Li Ma, Monzia M. Moodie, Chuck Merryman, Sanjay Vashee, Radha Krishnakumar, Nacyra Assad-Garcia, Cynthia Andrews-Pfannkoch, Evgeniya A. Denisova, Lei Young, Zhi-Qing Qi, Thomas H. Segall-Shapiro, Christopher H. Calvey, Prashanth P. Parmar, Clyde A. Hutchison III, Hamilton O. Smith, **J. Craig Venter**
  - *Der Stand Der Ethischen Diskussionen Um Sythetische Biologie*, Johannes Achatz, Martin O'Malley, and Peter Kunzmann

*Chap. 7 In Synthetische Biologie: Entwicklung Einer Neuen Ingenieurbiologie?, edited by Kristian Köchy and Anja Hümpel, 165–90: Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2012.*

# IV. Conclusion: Ethics as “Doing Good” Should Be Clear In Whole Project Proposal

## Learning for next Horizon2020 proposal:

- ▶ End in Mind – From the Start... with Ethicists
- ▶ Spirit of “Human Subjects” principles not just protected (compliance), but supported as part of Impact
- ▶ Proposal:
  1. Identifies all potential ethical “issues”
    - in both proposal body and ethics section
  2. Explains how ethical issues are respected as part of the project work (not as afterthought, nor in checkbox fashion)
    - Provide sufficient info to support “Yes” in “4-Ethics issues table”
  3. Integrates ethical considerations into milestones and reports
    - Commit project to independent ethical evaluations with reports
    - Review whether this can be supported by project funds or by host institutions

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