

Chapter 5

Ethical Issues in Surveys

Eleanor Singer

*Survey Research Center, Institute for Social Research
University of Michigan*

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Doyle, P., Lane, J., Theeuwes, J. & Zayatz, L. (2001). *Confidentiality, Disclosure, and Data Access: Theory and Practical Applications for Statistical Agencies*.32: 100-5.

Faden, Ruth R. & Beauchamp, Tom L. (1986). *A history and theory of informed consent*. New York: Oxford.

INTERNET RESOURCES

American Association of Public Opinion Research

<http://www.aapor.org/resources> The section on *Resources for Researchers* contains best practices for survey and public opinion research, AAPOR code for professional ethics and practices, interviewer falsification in survey research, and standard definitions for response rates

The **International Statistical Institute** (ISI) has published a declaration of professional ethics available at <http://isi.cbs.nl/ethics.htm>

Office for Human Research Protections has developed an International Compilation of Human Subject Research Protections.

<http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/international/index.html#NatIPol>

This provides direct web links to each country's Key Organizations and laws, whenever available. Got o page 3 and then click on the country of interest.

World Association of Public Opinion Research www.WAPOR.org

contains among others the code of ethics, a link to ESOMAR guidelines and a media guide to survey research under resources for journalists.

World Association of Research Professionals (ESOMAR)

www.ESOMAR.org

See the section *Professional Standards*, the sub section *Codes and Guidelines* contains the ICC/ESOMAR international code, plus notes on how to apply the code. In addition it has special guidelines on important topics, such as, how to commission research, interviewing children, tape and video recording, mystery shopping. It also has a special section on opinion polls and on Internet research. Country specific regulations can be found through the section Industry. Under the heading associations one can specify a country to search for national market research, marketing, and advertising associations. The net result is a short overview of the organization, including the codes of ethics used by that national organization.

UK Market Research Society <http://www.mrs.org.uk/>

Under the section Professional Standards, the subsection standards and guidelines leads to information on the code of conduct, and to two types of guidelines. (a) binding guidelines, e.g. on data protection and privacy issues, and on incentives and free prize draws, (b) best practice guidelines, for example on studying special groups like children, employees, on internet research, and qualitative research.

UNESCO has a special program MOST that fosters and promotes social science research and was launched in 1994. Their website contains a.o. an article by Marcia Freed-Taylor on Ethical Considerations in European Cross-national Research, which was originally published in *International Social Science Journal*, no. 142, 1994, pages 523-532 see <http://www.unesco.org/most/ethissj.htm>

Finally, for an **overview** of recent writings on **official statistics** and statistical confidentiality, go to <http://www.uwm.edu/~margo/govstat/integrity.htm>