

Ethics of Research Evaluation in SSH

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Background and main idea of the STSM

Some needs felt in the area of research evaluation based on qualitative criteria:

- To employ assessment criteria based on ethical principles
- To have available shared guide lines to research evaluation

Evaluative Bibliometrics uses quantitative criteria (the count of publications and citation analysis) to assess the works of scholars to have rewards, and it produces rankings of institutions for distributing resources

It is worthwhile to consider that the Evaluative Bibliometrics also requires to employ ethical principles (Furner, 2014)

Background and main idea of the STSM

Needs of ethical principles in Evaluative Bibliometrics may concern (according to Furner):

- Identification of the *values* held by the members of subgroups that are responsible for actions taken in the course of bibliometric evaluations
- Identification of the *principles* for which the members of each subgroup advocate
- Transparency about the statistical methodologies used; clear description of the results

Moreover,

The evaluation process should be based on verified evidence and be unbiased

Statisticians should present results based only on observed phenomena

Background and main idea of the STSM

Different research evaluation situations in the SSH

- *Ex ante research evaluation:*
 - attribution of competitive research founding (national or international)
- *Ex post research evaluation:*
 - reviews after call for papers: articles to be published in scientific journals or in proceedings of scientific conferences.
 - institutional evaluations by Ministry of Education, or national habilitation procedures

Background and main idea of the STSM

- In the ex post research evaluation in the SSH:
 - The first step in the qualitative assessment consists in recognizing the object and the characteristics of the work to be evaluated:
 - In the historical field of research, for instance, a work based on unknown, or never used, important sources (such as archival documentation) MUST be recognized as a work that brings about an important contribution to the field
 - Ethical principles should be observed to lead the subjective judgement

The issue is how to define the ethical principles .

Difficulties with Research evaluation ethics

- The field is underdeveloped: everyone does it but does not bother to provide the rules
- Loads of the issue related material, which is mostly irrelevant
- Insufficient theoretical background
- Disconnected albeit important fields:
 - **Research ethics:** covers mostly natural sciences and psychology and do not think of another SSH, especially, humanities.
 - **Evaluation ethics:** mainly aims at evaluation of different social programmes, not concentrating on research

Relevant ethical theories

- **Deontological ethics:** *What are moral agent's duties to perform? Who or what justifies moral duties? What are rules of research evaluation?*
- **Utilitarian ethics:** *What consequences can be achieved by the action of moral agent? Will they increase common good? What evaluation strategies provide best moral consequences (for society in general, for evaluators and the evaluated)?*
- **Virtue ethics:** *What is moral phronesis? What are the virtues and moral character of a moral person? What is moral characteristics of evaluators?*

Research ethics: principles

- Rigour
- Reliability
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Honesty
- Value-free
- Etc.

Research ethics: sources

- ALLEA *The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity* (2017)
- ESRC *Framework for Research Ethics* (2015)
- DFID *Review of Ethics Principles and Guidance in Evaluation and Research* (2015)
- The Norwegian National Committees for Research Ethics etc.
- *****
- Robert Merton
- Michael Morris
- Thomas Schwandt
- Michelle Lamont etc.

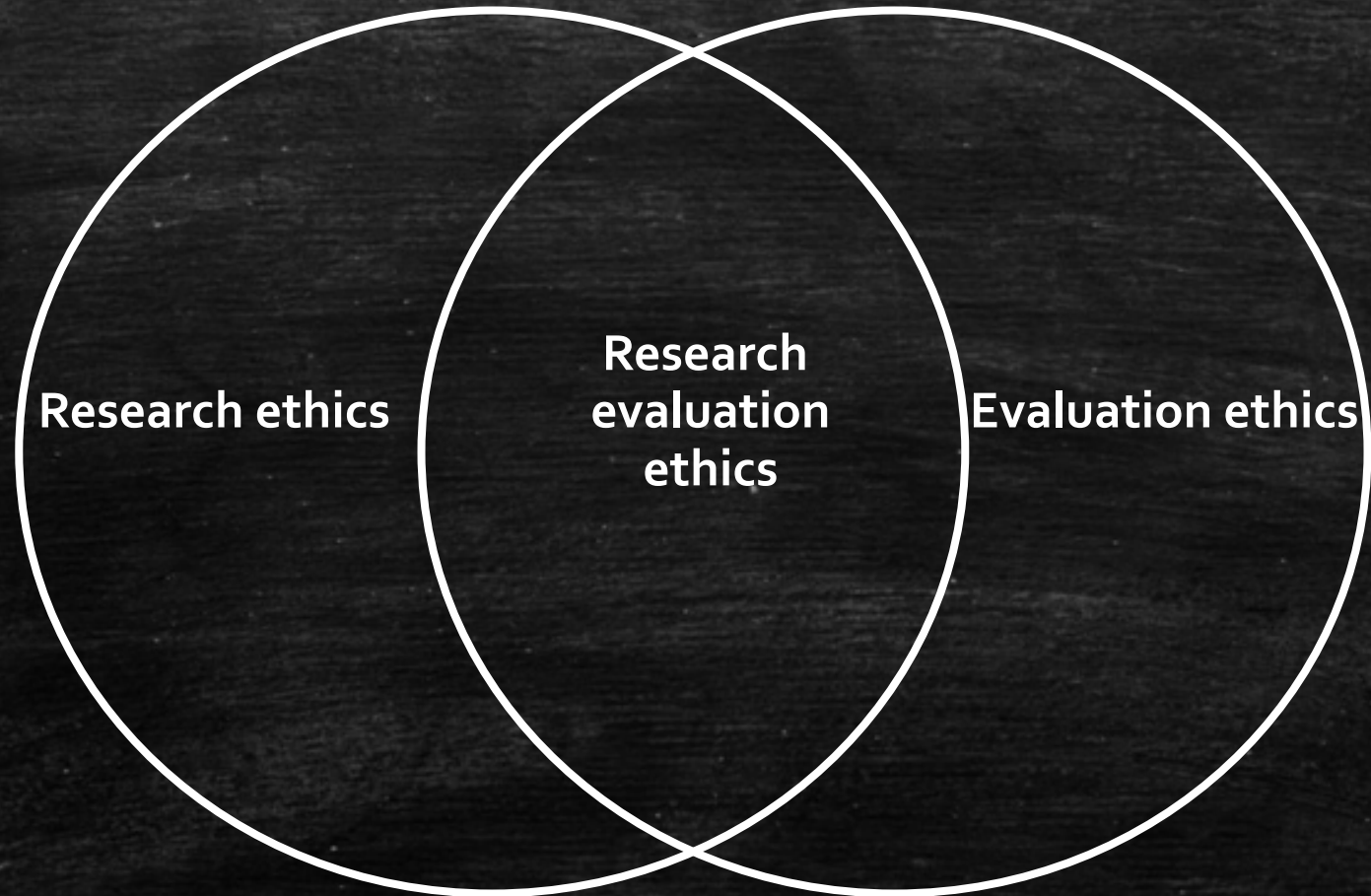
Evaluation ethics: sources

- *UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation* (2008)
- American Evaluation Association
- Australasian Evaluation Society
- Canadian Evaluation Society
- Czech Evaluation Society
- (German) Evaluation Society
- Japan Evaluation Society
- Swiss Evaluation Society

Evaluation ethics: principles

- Autonomy
- Nonmaleficence
- Beneficence
- Responsibility
- Justice
- Fidelity
- Etc.

Research ethics and Evaluation ethics (1)



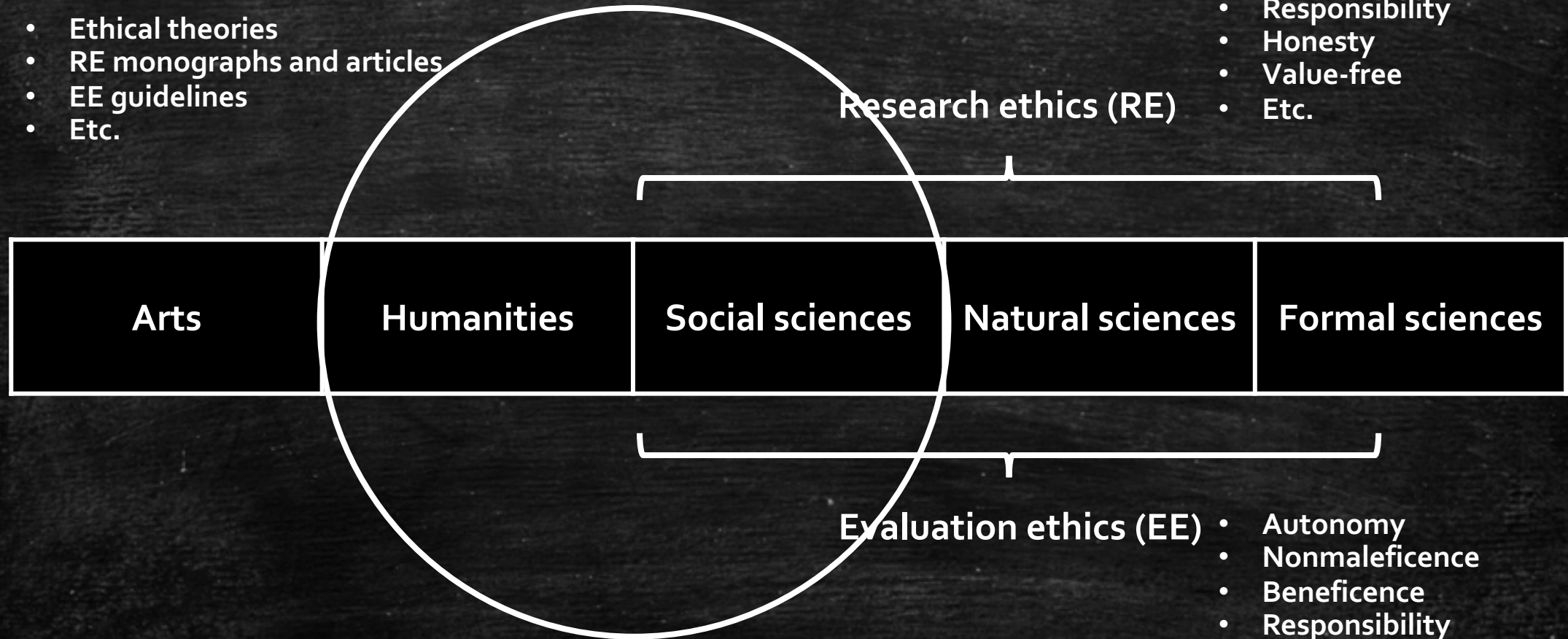
Research ethics and Evaluation ethics (2)



Problem 1: how to evaluate research in SSH?

- Ethical theories
- RE monographs and articles
- EE guidelines
- Etc.

- Rigour
- Reliability
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Honesty
- Value-free
- Etc.



Problem 2: what could be used from RE and EE?

- Principles
- Norms
- Values
- Virtues

- Autonomy
- Nonmaleficence
- Beneficence
- Responsibility
- Justice
- Fidelity
- Etc.

What is yet to be done?

- Series of interviews with practicing scholars on ethical aspects of research evaluation
- Comparison and combination of materials in the fields of Ethical theories, Research ethics, Evaluation ethics with empirical interview data
- Provision of tentative guidelines for research evaluation ethics
- Preparation / publication of an academic article

References

- Francis Narin, *Evaluative Bibliometrics: the use of publication and citation analysis in the evaluation of scientific activity*, Computer Horizons Inc., 1976.
- Jonathan Furner, *The Ethics of Evaluative Bibliometrics*, in *Beyond Bibliometrics: harnessing multidimensional indicators of scholarly impact*, edited by Blaise Cronin and Cassidy R. Sugimoto, Cambridge (Mass.) - London, The MIT Press, 2014, pp. 85-107.
- Richard Whitley, *The intellectual and social organization of the sciences*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1984.
- *The changing governance of the sciences: the advent of research evaluation systems*, edited by Richard Whitley and Jochen Gläser, Dordrecht, The Netherlands, Springer, 2007.