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Source: <http://www.dvpw.de/wir/profil/ethikkodex.html>.

Code of ethics of the German Association for Political Science

Preamble

The elaboration and dissemination of political science knowledge are social processes which require ethical considerations and decisions at each stage. Political scientists should always keep in mind this key component of the production, use and transfer of political science knowledge.

The code of ethics is kept alive through continual discussion and application by political scientists and should contribute to making political science in Germany more professional. The code sets out the consensus on ethical conduct within the field of organised and professional political science in Germany and defines the foundation on which the work of the ethics committee is based.

The code should serve to raise the awareness of political scientists about ethical problems related to their work and to encourage them to critically examine their professional activities. Political scientists who work at universities are particularly called upon to communicate the elements of professional ethics to young academics and students and to encourage them to act accordingly.

The code of ethics calls upon political scientists in particular to identify every form of professional and personal discrimination and to work towards its elimination. At the same time, the code of ethics serves as protection from the requirements of, and expectations about, the research and practice of political science on the part of research participants, students, staff, colleagues, and private and public-sector clients in various situations which might amount to ethical conflicts.

Individuals who file complaints with the ethics committee with reference to the code should not be discriminated against in exercising their rights to do so.

In order to achieve the aims set out in the preamble, the members of the German Association for Political Science shall confirm and support the following code of ethics.

I. Research

A. Integrity and Objectivity

(1) Political scientists shall strive for academic integrity and objectivity during the exercise of their profession. They are bound by the highest possible standards as regards research, teaching and other types of professional practice. If they express subject-specific opinions, they shall provide clear and adequate information on their areas of work, levels of knowledge, expertise, methods and experience.

(2) In presenting or publishing political science findings, all the results shall be presented without any omissions that might lead to misrepresentations. Details of the theories, methods, and research designs relevant for proper assessment of scientific findings and limits on their validity shall be communicated to the best of their knowledge.

(3) In their publications, political scientists shall disclose all funding sources for their research. They shall ensure that their findings are not distorted by any specific interests of their funders.

(4) Political scientists may not accept any grants, donations, contracts or research projects which are in conflict with the principles laid out in this code.

(5) If several political scientists – possibly including students – work together on a project, agreements accepted by all the parties shall be made at the beginning setting out the distribution of tasks, remuneration, access to data and authors' rights as well as other rights and responsibilities. Such agreements may be modified by mutual agreement during the project as a result of changed

conditions.

(6) Political scientists bear social responsibility in their roles as researchers, lecturers and practitioners. Their recommendations, decisions and statements could influence the lives of their fellow human beings. They should be conscious of this situation and the inherent constraints which might lead to an abuse of their influence. Political scientists should take adequate measures to make sure that such abuses and any harmful effects on clients, research participants, colleagues, students and co-workers are avoided.

B. Rights of Research Participants

(1) Compliance with the standards of scientific method could lead to negative consequences or specific risks for individuals or groups. Furthermore, research activities could limit or deny future access to study populations for the entire profession or related occupational groups. Political scientists must anticipate both these issues in order to avoid negative consequences.

(2) The personal rights of the people who are involved in political science studies as well as their rights to freely decide whether or not to participate in research projects shall be respected by political science researchers.

(3) Participation in political science studies should normally be on a voluntary basis and should also be based on as much information as possible about the aims and methods of respective research projects. The principle of informed consent cannot always be implemented practically since, for example, providing detailed information in advance might in some cases unduly influence research findings. In such circumstances, researchers should try to use other options for informed consent.

(4) Particular efforts for ensuring appropriate information is provided shall be required if research participants have little formal education or are of low socio-economic status or are members of minorities or marginalised groups.

(5) Individuals who are being observed or questioned or otherwise involved in research, for example with respect to evaluations of their personal documents, may not be exposed to any disadvantages or dangers by the research conducted. The individuals affected must be advised of any risks in excess of those of normal daily life. The anonymity of questioned or studied persons shall be preserved.

(6) As far as possible, political scientists shall anticipate potential breaches of trust and confidence. They shall use procedures that avoid research participants from being identified wherever appropriate. Particular attention must be paid to the possibility of data access resulting from electronic data processing. Careful precautions are also required in this case to protect confidential information.

(7) Confidential information obtained from research participants must be treated accordingly. All members of the research group who have access to data (including interviewers, coders, typists and secretaries) are bound by this obligation. Project managers are responsible for advising their staff of this, and for controlling access to confidential material.

(8) Political scientists should be bound by professional secrecy regarding relevant regulations for other professional groups and do their best to try to invoke their rights to refuse to testify if their informers are in danger of sanctions, especially under penal law, based on the information that has been obtained by political science research.

II. Publications

(1) Political scientists shall name all the individuals who have made significant contributions to their research and their publications. The claims to authorship and the order of authors should represent their contributions to research processes and publications. Data and materials that have been adopted verbatim or *mutatis mutandis* from papers written by other authors shall be properly cited irrespective of whether or not those papers have been published. References to ideas that have

been developed in papers written by other authors may not be knowingly omitted.

(2) Critical exchange among the members of the profession shall be promoted in journals. In this context, rules specifying options for making statements and replies shall be published.

(3) Editors and editorial departments of journals are obliged to assess submitted contributions fairly and within an adequate period of time, without personal or ideological biases. They shall inform authors about decisions on submitted manuscripts without undue delay.

(4) Commitments for publication are binding. If publication has been promised, it should take place as soon as possible.

III. Assessments and Peer Review Evaluations

(1) If political scientists are asked to evaluate people, manuscripts, research applications or other works, they shall decline such requests in cases of conflicts of interest.

(2) Works to be evaluated should be assessed completely, carefully, confidentially, and within an appropriate period of time.

(3) Assessments relating to staffing choices should be treated as confidential by all the parties involved. The highest expectations are demanded regarding integrity, objectivity and prevention of conflicts of interest.

(4) Political scientists who have been asked to review books or manuscripts they have previously reviewed elsewhere shall advise the persons making these inquiries of the fact. They should decline reviewing papers that they have directly or indirectly contributed to themselves.

IV. Professional Contact with Students, Staff and Colleagues

(1) Political scientists who lecture at universities must devote sufficient levels of commitment and effort to ensure that students are provided with a proper education.

(2) Political scientists shall strive for objectivity and fairness regarding hiring, dismissals, evaluations and assessments, promotions, salary determinations and other issues with respect to employment contracts and relationships, decisions on appointments, recruitment and co-option. They may not discriminate against other people on the grounds of their age, sex and gender, physical handicaps, social or regional origins, ethnic or national affiliations or religious creeds or political opinions.

(3) Political scientists may not force students or staff and colleagues to make themselves available as research objects or mislead them over such uses.

(4) Political scientists may not take unfair advantage of the work of other persons and may not use such work without proper declaration and citations.

(5) Political scientists may not force anybody, e.g. interviewees, clients, staff or students to make personal or gender-specific concessions or to grant personal or professional advantages. Any type of sexual harassment or violence during professional contact shall be considered an especially grave breach of ethics.

V. The Ethics Committee

A. Structure and Term of Office

(1) The ethics committee shall consist of six members. They shall be voted for during a secret primary election based on a list of candidates proposed by the executive and the advisory boards and containing more than six suggestions. The committee members shall remain in office for five years.

(2) The committee shall elect a chairperson.

(3) The ethics committee shall convene as required or of its own volition.

B. Tasks, Competences and Responsibilities

- (1) The ethics committee shall:
 - (a) advise the executive and the advisory boards of the German Association for Political Science on general ethical issues and concerns,
 - (b) accept reports and notifications about breaches of the code of ethics and strive for conciliatory settlements,
 - (c) organise mediation between the parties regarding the settlements of their complaints,
 - (d) hear the parties in case of formal complaints about misconduct,
 - (e) recommend measures to the executive and advisory boards of the German Association for Political Science,
 - (f) report at least once a year about their work and the cases they have handled to both the executive board and the advisory board of the German Association for Political Science and in its newsletter.

C. Sanctions

- (1) If the ethics committee finds that no breach of ethics has been committed, they shall inform all the parties as well as the executive and advisory boards of the German Association for Political Science and the procedure will thereby be deemed concluded.
- (2) If the ethics committee finds that a breach of the code of ethics has been committed, it shall inform all the affected parties and report to the executive and advisory boards. The following measures may be recommended:
 - (a) no sanctions,
 - (b) a public reprimand in the newsletter of the German Association for Political Science,
 - (c) a suggestion that a member voluntarily resign from the association,
 - (d) a suspension of the membership for a certain period of time,
 - (e) exclusion of the member from the respective association.