

# ETHICS OF EVERYTHING:

## Looking beyond biomedical research

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# Disclosures

- None

**Is there any field which should ignore the ethical considerations and potential implications of its research?**

**Is there any aspect of the processes  
required for successful creation of  
generalizable knowledge that does not  
require some consideration of ethics?**

# Essence of research and research ethics

**Positive assurance:  
results will be  
applied for benefit of  
mankind**

**Research puts  
people (and animals,  
and societies) at risk**

**Risk exposure  
usually to  
benefit others**

**Responsibility to  
protect research  
participants  
from harm**

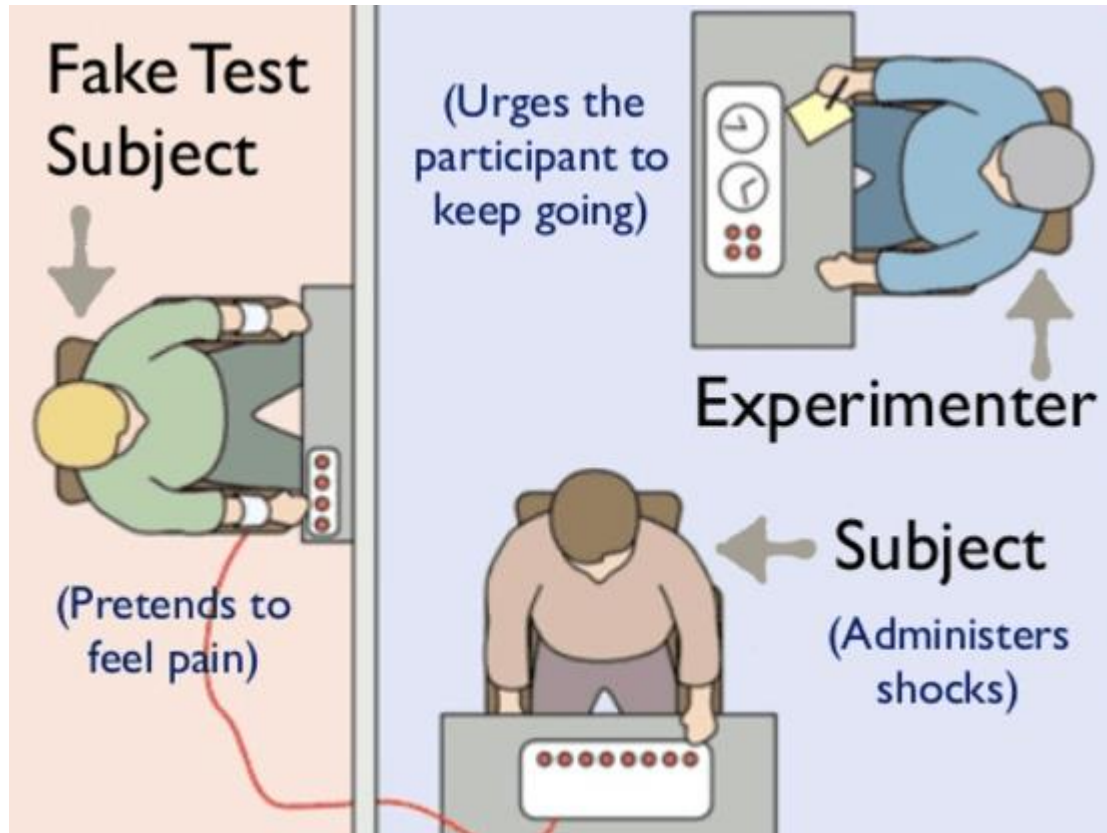
**Responsibility to  
ensure integrity of  
research output**

**Implementation  
of credible  
output**

**Maintenance of  
public trust**

# Broadening scope of application

- Presumption: that research in some fields is **universally unproblematic** from an **ethical standpoint** puts participants at **risk** from inexperienced or unscrupulous researchers
- Origins of ethical enquiries: humanities disciplines
  - Paradox: main focus of research BUT least applied in research
- Inter-disciplinary research transcends boundaries
- Potential harm from research goes beyond physical harm
- Potential risks more closely aligned to nature of enquiry, study methods, integrity of the researchers



### **1961: *The Milgram Experiment***

Location: Yale University

Inspiration: Nazi war trials

Purpose: Obedience to authority

Impact: Trauma to participants



### **2010: *Game of Death***

TV documentary (France)

Inspiration: Milgram experiment

Purpose: Obedience to authority

Impact: Trauma to participants

# Potential risks of research

- **Physical**

Rights and  
dignity

Personal  
social standing

Individual  
privacy

- **Psychological**

- **Social**

Personal  
values and  
beliefs

Links to family  
and society

Occupational  
status and  
position

- **Economic**

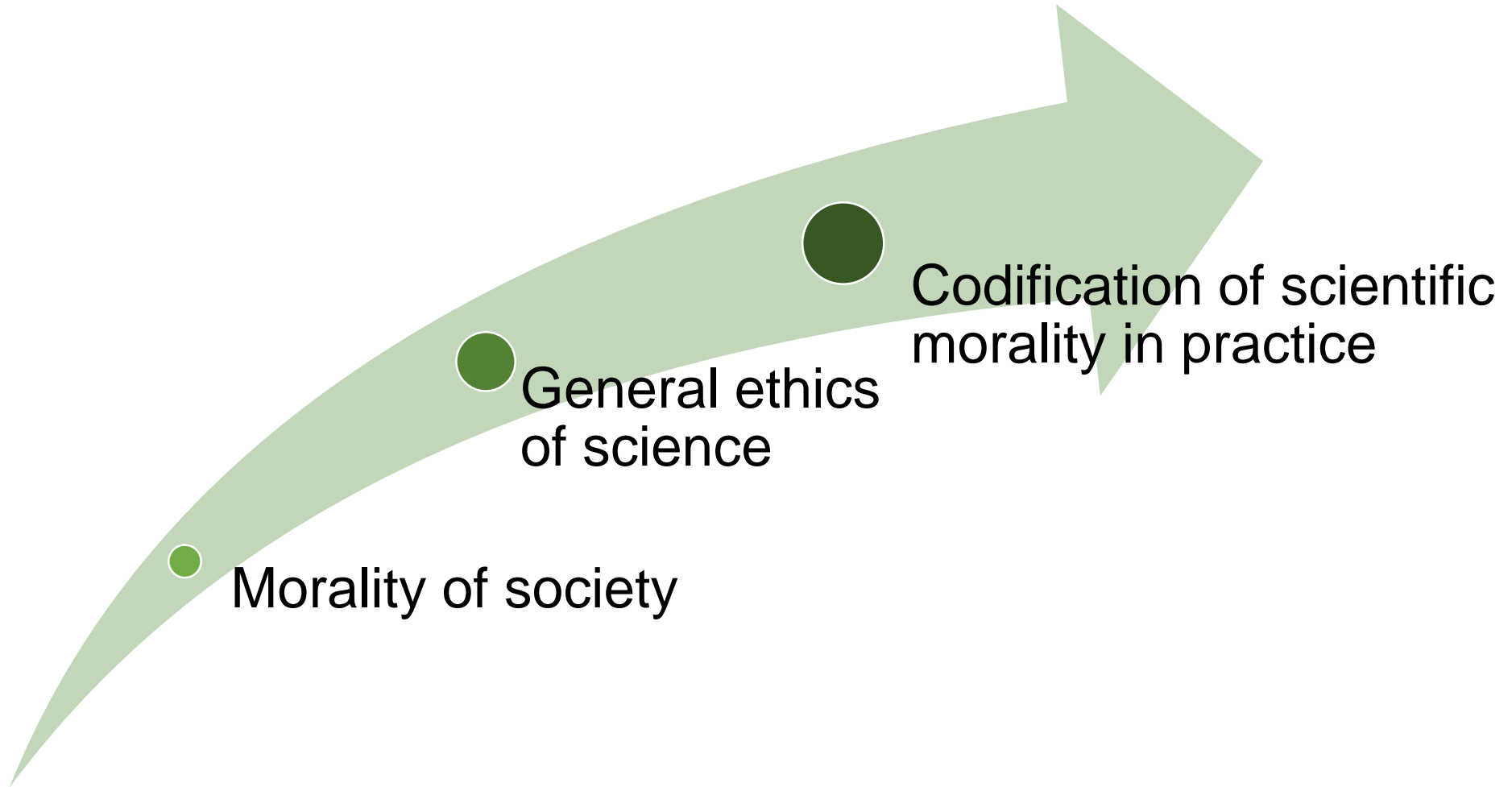
- **Legal**

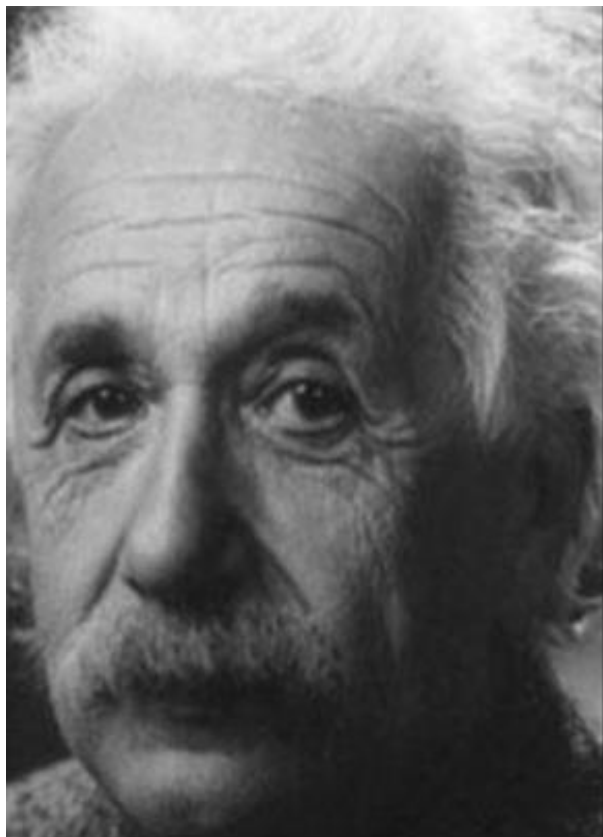
Discrimination  
and  
stigmatization

Criminalization

- **Dignitary**

# Origin of research ethics principles





All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree. All these aspirations are directed toward ennobling man's life, lifting it from the sphere of mere physical existence and leading the individual towards freedom.

— *Albert Einstein* —



# Shared norms and values

Quest for accurate, adequate and relevant knowledge

- academic freedom, originality, openness, trustworthiness

Need to regulate research community

- integrity, accountability, impartiality, criticism

Relationship to research participants

- respect, human dignity, confidentiality, free and informed consent

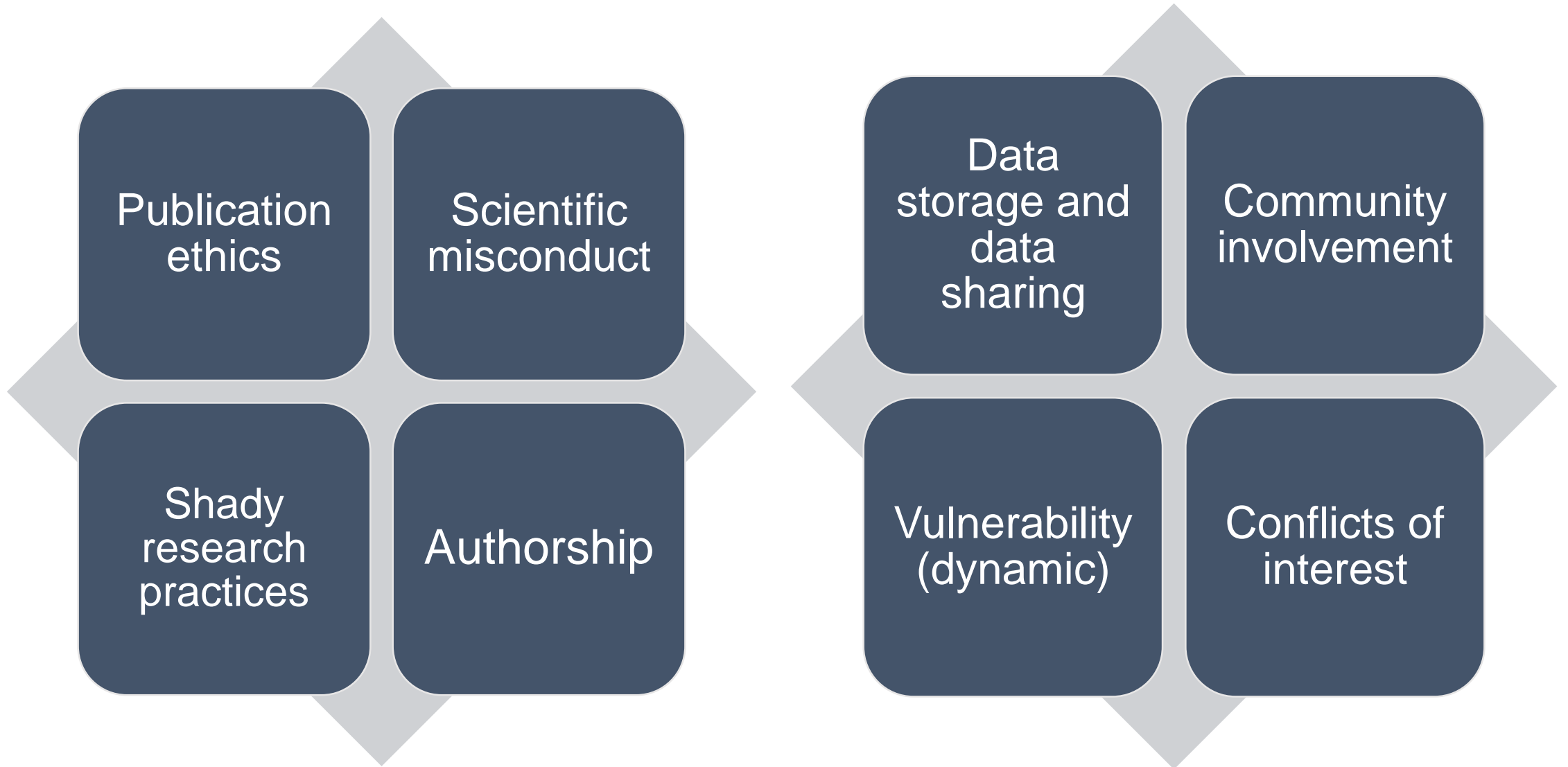
Relationship to rest of society

- independence, conflicts of interest, social responsibility, dissemination of research





# Expanding emphasis



Ministerial Introduction

Foreword

Vision, Mission and Values

Foundations for excellent  
research and innovation

Pushing the frontiers of  
human knowledge and

Home > About us > UKRI Strategic Prospectus  
> Foundations for excellent research and innovation

## Foundations for excellent research and innovation

To achieve our vision, we need to get the  
foundations right.

**MAJOR PRIORITY:**

**Research and  
innovation ethics**

1. Arts and Humanities Research Council (RC)
2. Biotech and Biological Sciences RC
3. Economic and Social Research Council
4. Engineering and Physical Sciences RC
5. Science and Technology Facilities Council
6. Medical Research Council (MRC)
7. Natural Environment Research Council
8. Research England
9. Innovate UK

# Provisos

Different research studies = different risks

Adapted/modified specialty-based systems for review

No 100% guarantee of safety in research

- Offer participants and researchers reasonable protection
- Appropriate arrangements in case of harm

# Ethics of other things.....

Collaboration

Research  
funding

Intellectual  
property rights

Research  
supervision

Ethics of the  
practice of  
research ethics

Ethics of  
'emerging'  
media and  
methods

# Conclusions

- Research ethics is just as important in the behavioral sciences, law, sociology, humanities, environmental sciences and ALL research disciplines
- The core values are relevant to ALL researchers as there are potential applications across the components from research conceptualization to dissemination of research findings and translation of findings into practice (implementation)
- Advocacy to expand uptake and infuse ethics principles across all specialties (with modification and contextualization) is required

**Thank you for your kind attention**