

EGAP Committee Memo on the Report of the APSA Ad-Hoc Committee on Human Subjects Research

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Introduction

The members of Evidence in Governance and Politics (EGAP) greatly appreciate the work of the APSA Ad-Hoc committee in proposing ethical guidelines for human subjects research in political science. The EGAP committee, and broader membership, certainly recognizes these are hugely important and complex issues.

Researcher contact with human subjects often has an interventional aspect and therefore has the potential to affect those immediately engaged in the research and then broader populations (including through political processes). We stress that this holds for ethnographic, focus group, survey, and field experimental research. Given that EGAP is a network that focuses primarily on field experimental research, the comments below reflect that orientation. But we do think that it is crucial for the APSA Ad-Hoc committee to equally consider ethical obligations for other modes of human subjects research.

Political scientists are also citizens and stakeholders in political processes themselves, and therefore connections between research and exercise of agency as participants in political processes is also natural. Accepting that doing human subjects research can affect people individually and collectively requires that we give due consideration to ethical principles, although this should be done in a manner that respects the agency of researchers as stakeholders themselves in political processes.

APSA is an association devoted to the study of politics and indeed advocates for the research conducted by its members. Given this organizational mission, it would seem that the guidelines should function to facilitate ethical study of politics. No member has an interest in the conduct of unethical research; not only is it wrong in its own right, but it can irreparably damage the reputation of the discipline. Establishing clear guidelines can assist members to avoid pitfalls and minimize ethical concerns. In the report below, we offer suggestions on how guidelines could be written to serve this facilitating function, appropriately attending to context, and not be construed as arguments that categorically forbid particular research practices and strategies.

This document reflects feedback from the ad hoc committee and the larger EGAP membership. The process through which this document was produced involved, first, convening the EGAP committee, which was assembled so as to represent perspectives from different subfields and for those doing research both within the United States and in other countries (given that APSA's functional coverage includes research and researchers operating outside the United States). Then, the EGAP committee members commented and deliberated on the APSA Ad-Hoc Committee report and produced a first draft of this memo. The memo was then discussed in an open plenary session with approximately 45 EGAP members at the EGAP 27 Meeting in Geneva on October 12, 2019. The EGAP committee then revised the memo on the basis of this discussion and circulated it to the broader EGAP membership of approximately 200 researchers and practitioners around the world. Comments from the broader membership were then used to finalize this memo.

Part 1 below offers specific recommendations for potential revisions to the APSA Ad-Hoc committee report. These recommendations reflect essentially the consensus opinion of EGAP members who engaged in the discussion. Part 2 then presents general concerns raised by certain individuals as part of the EGAP process, and offers broader suggestions on revisions to the APSA Ad-Hoc committee report. Part 3 provides examples of tools that EGAP members use as part of ethical review processes, as a reference for the APSA Ad-Hoc committee.

Part 1: Specific Recommendations

This section provides a set of specific recommendations for potential revisions to the APSA Ad Hoc committee report (e.g. specific changes to word choice in the document, revision of sections, policies relating to third parties, etc) for which there was consensus among the EGAP members who offered reactions to the APSA Ad Hoc committee report.

1) Framing

- a) EGAP appreciates that the set of guidelines ultimately issued will need to focus primarily on the risks and costs of research. However, we would encourage the committee to begin the document with an articulation of the *goals and benefits* of social science research against which such costs and risks must be weighed. It may also be helpful to explicitly acknowledge that many of the ethical issues discussed in the guidelines arise precisely because of the kinds of questions and problems that motivate research in political science.
- b) EGAP members were concerned by the absolutist language currently in the *principles*, with the *descriptions* containing much more nuance. We recommend reframing the principles as *aspirational* -- a set of general obligations to which researchers should ideally abide -- while the detailed descriptions can explore when and how exceptions might arise, obligating a researcher to provide reasonable justifications.
- c) The current document is focused on the (single) researcher as the decision making agent. However, much of contemporary research (especially larger-scale field experiments) is collaborative. We suggest that the document should instead focus on project-level decision-making, which is more collective. This may require an additional discussion of how such collective decision making should occur and an explicit discussion of project-level collective responsibility for ethical decisions and outcomes.

2) Organization of the document

- a) Members found the document to be cumbersome to navigate. Proposals to improve the organization of the document included:
 - i) Organize the document in the expected order of steps researchers will take with respect to human subjects: research design, human subjects approval, obtaining informed consent, conducting research, and then presenting results.
 - ii) Add a checklist of considerations or questions that a researcher engaged in human subjects research should consider and document at each stage of the research. This would turn the general principles into concrete decision points.

3) Making the language more precise and actionable

- a) Members were concerned that the language in parts of the report was often too vague to act as guidance. We encourage the committee to revise the language of the report to be much more concrete. One way to do so would be to incorporate hypothetical examples throughout the report to illustrate how certain principles may be violated in practice. In Part 3 below, we have inserted vignettes from an ethics discussion activity that EGAP has used at past meetings. Perhaps the Ad-Hoc Committee will find these useful for thinking about potential examples.
- b) Specific examples and suggestions
 - i) The report should define “research” explicitly and with reference to general human subjects guidelines. As a concrete suggestion, research could be defined as the “systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable scientific knowledge”.
 - ii) It is not clear what is meant by the advice that “researchers should seek input from area specialists” (page 1 of the section *Principles of Ethics for Human Subjects Research and Guidance*; last paragraph under “Legality”). It would be helpful to be explicit about what type of input is meant here.
 - iii) “researchers should not seek to manipulate political processes, especially elections, without the consent of directly affected parties” (page 4 of the section *Principles of Ethics for Human Subjects Research*, under point 11 regarding “Impact”).
 - (1) Taken literally, the wording could be construed to rule out virtually any field of study that has any effect on any political process at any time, at any scale, whether randomized or not – no one could possibly obtain consent from every directly affected party. The guideline also requires scholars assessing compliance to answer unknowable question about intention (“seek to”) and uses seemingly pejorative language (“manipulate” here presumably refers to the act of changing or altering, not randomization).
 - (2) Moreover, this statement does not draw the appropriate distinction between researchers who introduce interventions purely for the purpose of scientific investigation and researchers who analyze interventions that are themselves part of political processes or campaigns and therefore clearly, and possibly rightly, have the intention of changing political outcomes. As presently stated, the language could be interpreted to restrict research on the latter, which would place an unwarranted barrier between researchers’ freedom to engage in processes that may have political effects and their interest in studying such processes scientifically.
 - iv) “Political scientists have an obligation to protect the integrity of political processes and institutions as well as the integrity of the profession” (page 4 of the section *Principles of Ethics for Human Subjects Research*, under point 11 regarding “Impact”).
 - (1) EGAP members wondered whether this should instead read as “democratic processes” instead of “political processes”, given that, as stated, it implies an obligation to “protect the integrity” of political processes. It seems that “democratic” is implied, given the focus on democracies and elections. But, this discussion may need to be expanded to non-democracies and other potential sites for intervention, such as political protests.

- v) “Partisan” is a term that needs to be defined and/or expanded. Some work that may be acceptable (e.g., fact checking experiments or audit experiments) may employ a treatment that could be construed as favorable or unfavorable for a particular party even though it provides accurate information and/or is not intended to affect an election outcome. Some non-partisan work may be unacceptable (e.g., an experiment designed to reduce voter turnout across the board). Some non-election work deserves equal scrutiny (e.g., attending Citizen Power Council meetings in Central America; attending protests in the Middle East). It is not clear that overtly partisan work should be explicitly forbidden, but the authors should be urged to elaborate on the ethical and political implications of the treatments provided (e.g., “electoral participation is an important democratic norm...” or “voters should have accurate information about government performance because...”).
- vi) At the end of page 2 in the *Principles of Ethics for Human Subjects Research and Guidance* section (under point 5 on “Consent and Deception”), a good example of how “researchers should identify and justify their deviation from this practice in scholarly publications and presentations of their work” would be very helpful.
- vii) At the end of page 6 in the *Principles of Ethics for Human Subjects Research and Guidance* section (under point 8 on “Harm and Trauma”) which discusses de jure versus de facto availability of resources for help, it would be very helpful if the paragraph also talked about what researchers should do if a resource is not de facto available. Perhaps the logical follow-up to that paragraph is to say that “researchers should not take the availability of resources for granted and do prior research to confirm the de facto availability of a resource.”

4) Third-party collaborations

- a) EGAP is a network of researchers and practitioners alike, and as such is especially well positioned to comment on the ways in which collaborations with third parties (e.g., governments, NGOs, political parties, etc.) should be considered in the context of ethical obligations. If it would be of assistance to the APSA Ad-Hoc committee, EGAP members could participate in further discussions on how the ethics of such partnerships have been navigated in past research, perhaps through the convening of a subcommittee of practitioners from our network.
- b) It may be helpful to explicitly discuss “program evaluations” as the most common form of collaboration with third parties.
 - i) Within such program evaluations, the organization often makes the ultimate decisions on designing and allocating programs, and the role of the researcher is to systematize, document, and study the effects of these decisions. The ethical responsibility of the researcher should be clarified in light of this possible difference in roles.

5) Informed consent & deception

- a) The suggested guidelines do not make clear whether or not research subjects in field experiments should be informed and give consent for their participation in

the field experiment, or only be informed and give consent for any data collection that is not “public behavior”.

- b) The consent section is too absolute (page 2 of section *Principles of Ethics for Human Subjects Research and Guidance*, under “Consent and Deception”). The qualification “Researchers who do not communicate this information to participants during the consent process” assumes that there is a consent process. Instead, this might read “in instances where consent is not practical, researchers need to justify their decision to bypass the informed consent.”
- c) The idea that the permissibility of deception should depend on the degree of political power of the subject (page 4 of the section *Principles of Ethics for Human Subjects Research*, under point 10b regarding “Power”) is potentially problematic. Instead, the permissibility of deception should be determined by a comparison of benefits and harms of the research on a case-by-case basis rather than an *a priori* wider permissibility when relatively powerful parties are the subjects.
- d) We propose to add the following to Principle 5 on informed consent, similar to the language on deception in Principle 6: “In some political science research, the possibility of ‘Hawthorne effects’ (the idea that behavior can change simply because subjects know it is being studied) can be substantial. There are situations in which the benefit of doing the research in a way that mitigates Hawthorne effects can outweigh the risk of harm to subjects. Researchers who do not seek informed consent from some or all subjects should identify this choice, explain why foregoing informed consent was necessary to address the research question, and justify their decisions in scholarly publications and presentations of their work.”

6) Other recommended changes

- a) Page 12 of the *Principles of Ethics for Human Subjects Research and Guidance* section, under “Impact”: Change “Researchers should also strive to:” to “When intervening in democratic processes solely for research purposes, researchers should also strive to:” (based on a comment offered by an EGAP member).
- b) Page 1 of the *Principles of Ethics for Human Subjects Research and Guidance* section, last paragraph under “Legality”: “... when there is reason to believe that review bodies do not fairly represent the interests of the people under study; when political elites try to use those approval processes to prevent research on topics that might jeopardize their power”. It seems like the latter is just an example of the former, so perhaps one can simply connect the two with “such as”.

Part 2: General Concerns

This section provides general concerns expressed by the EGAP membership that the APSA committee could consider in drafting the final report.

1) How the report will be read and used

- a) A large number of EGAP members expressed concern about how the report will be used and by whom at various points in the research process. Many members felt the document currently reads like a list of rules rather than principles, but

that, at the same time, the language is sufficiently vague that proposed rules are not clear. There is also variation in the specificity of the rules/principles provided - some are made in absolute terms while others acknowledge a variety of trade-offs without providing much guidance about how to weigh these trade-offs.

- b) More generally, there is little guidance about how to proceed when principles are in conflict with one another.
- c) One concern raised was that the document could be used by editors (especially those less sympathetic to experimental work) or IRB committees (without knowledge of the political science discipline) to block projects from taking place or being published. Relatedly, one member noted a particular concern for field experimentalists in this regard: “the standards and language are sufficiently vague and overbroad such that scholars will have no idea what is considered ethical ex ante, and as such, those who do field experiments will be in a unique position of being unable to anticipate what after the fact some other group of political scientists will find objectionable. I note that no such special ethical review exists for other forms of research, including ethnographic work or work that endangers subjects through research gathering. Rather, we use the IRB process to decide on what is appropriate and scholars can know that ahead of time.”
- d) The term “be open” is used a number of times throughout the document. In the associated guidance it is often suggested that this means to disclose these issues in publication and presentations. Given the space constraints authors often face, we should consider whether this is information that should be provided in online appendices, and if so, if something like the consort diagram would help provide clarity on what should be included in an ethics statement. We might consider whether this would constitute too onerous a reporting burden and who would enforce its inclusion.

2) Harms and risks versus potential benefits

- a) Another set of comments from the EGAP membership centered around the discussion of harms and risks. We first note that members appreciated that the document highlights and emphasizes that researchers should consider risks not only to subjects, but to others involved in the research, such as enumerators and staff.
- b) The document is guided by what reads as a sole focus on risk. EGAP members noted that although we should always work to minimize risk, in a great deal of research (especially research conducted outside of advanced, consolidated democracies), there is never no risk, and we need to balance risk and benefit.
- c) IRBs consider risks against potential benefits, and such would be appropriate for the type of ethical review that the Ad-Hoc committee is attempting to guide. With respect to experimental research, for example, the evidentiary benefits of certain choices (e.g., choosing not to provide detailed information on the purposes of interventions to anyone who may be affected so as to avoid social desirability biases) should be weighed against the risks associated with such choices.
- d) EGAP members brought up how harm can be contingent on context and the positionality of the researcher vis-a-vis the research subject, thereby

complicating efforts to establish rules for researcher behavior. Furthermore, distance between researcher and research subject can produce situations in which the researcher is unaware of (or underappreciates) the potential harms involved. Safeguards need to be put in place to avoid this.

e) Areas that could use further clarification:

- i) On page 6 of the *Principles of Ethics for Human Subjects Research and Guidance*, point 8 of the “Harm and trauma” subsection is overly vague, but without a clear fix. For instance, IRBs have denied surveys because they ask *attitudinal* questions about “abortion” or “sexual assault” for fear that mentioning the words might trigger trauma. There are certainly worries around these topics, so it is unclear what the guidance should be.
- ii) Some members were concerned that the guidelines on deception were too constraining and that there was a lack of clarity on the boundaries of what should be considered deception. It may be worth considering approaches taken by other disciplines (such as psychology).
- iii) Some members expressed concerns that obligations to be more explicit with research subjects about the purposes of a study may impact the results due to social desirability or presentation biases. Other members suggested conducting further research into these types of “social desirability” issues, as the evidence is limited.
- iv) One member noted that “the section on laws says all foreign laws should be followed if possible, but the details of the section only focus on foreign laws pertaining to research. In an increasing number of countries (e.g., Russia, China), actions taken to protect subject privacy may put researchers into a legally ambiguous zone because of new laws unrelated to research. In these circumstances, should researchers follow the letter of the foreign laws (meant to sustain authoritarian control) or protect human subjects? Or should researchers abstain from research?” This comment is important because APSA guidelines have implications for research undertaken not only by Americans and in the US, but internationally.

Part 3: Preliminary Suggestions of Tools

Stating principles is important for guiding researchers. However, it is not always clear how to apply the principles to concrete situations -- especially when the principles come into conflict with one another and other goals. It would be useful for the APSA Ad-Hoc committee to suggest or design tools to help researchers apply the principles and think through their implications.¹ With that in mind, we provide here two examples of tools that EGAP members have used. The first is a worksheet from the MIT Gov/Lab and shared by EGAP member Lily Tsai. The second is a series of vignettes and a scoring tool used by EGAP as part of ethics discussion sessions at past meetings.

¹ Tools like Flowcharts can be very helpful in directing thinking, but the best examples tend to focus on narrow topics (e.g., [obtaining consent from children](#)). A flowchart that encompasses the breadth of political science research is likely to be either unwieldy and confusing or too vague to be of use.

Gov/Lab Risk and Equity Matrix

Worksheets

The basic idea behind an ethical worksheet is to force the researcher to consider important dimensions for each stakeholder and document their thinking about each facet. The exercise could be routinized and required in a way analogous to pre-analysis plans.

Some advantages of worksheets² include:

- a) Increasing transparency -- deviations from disciplinary norms are easier to catch when researchers are required to explicate their thinking;
- b) “Forcing” researchers to consider the relevant stakeholders -- Very often research is focused on a particular group (e.g., subjects) that dominates the ethical considerations. Worksheets can remind researchers to broaden the scope of their considerations;
- c) Balance -- By explicitly stating the costs, benefits, and risks involved to all parties, the worksheet can assure that the conversation does not focus solely on perceived potential harms or sweep them under the rug;
- d) Power dynamics -- Looking across stakeholder groups, the researcher can ensure that the benefits and costs fall across groups equitably and one stakeholder does not wield undue power that is not accounted for.
- e) Actionable mitigation strategies -- By inviting researchers to state mitigation strategies for each listed cost, the worksheet nudges researchers to designs that protect subjects as much as possible.
- f) Feedback -- Sharing the worksheet provides a simple means for researchers to get feedback from their peers focused on ethical considerations. It also focuses the discussion so it is clear which assumptions or strategies are at issue should disagreements arise.

The Risk and Equity Matrix below was developed by MIT GOV/LAB as part of their review process and is an example of an ethical worksheet. The exercise is designed to go beyond the scope of a traditional IRB review to identify potential benefits, risks, and mitigation plans for a diversity of actors involved in the research.³

Notes on using the template:

- **Objective of this exercise is to think about possible risks and to consider if everyone in the research study is benefiting in an equitable manner**
- **This is just a suggested template; feel free to adapt to your project design**

² Checklists have many of the same attributes of worksheets. Their advantage over worksheets is that they are often faster to fill out. A disadvantage is that they emphasize sequential reasoning and make balancing the concerns of different stakeholders more difficult.

³ The tool is a work in progress and working examples can be provided upon request. Feedback is welcome (mitgovlab@mit.edu).

- May be useful to include details at various stages of the research project (e.g., pre-implementation, implementation, post-implementation).
- May be useful to break down the categories of actors into multiple lines (e.g., different subject populations, partners, or government actors involved).

	COSTS	BENEFITS	RISKS	MITIGATION
Research Subjects:				
Research Assistants:				
Researcher:				
Practitioner Partner:				
Government Actors:				
Other? (Media, Civil Society, Enterprises)				

EGAP Vignette Exercise

It is often much easier to see the complexities of ethical principles when provided a concrete scenario to consider. The exercise makes explicit competing programmatic and ethical demands and forces researchers to grapple with the trade-offs in a scenario where they have no personal stake in the study.

The vignettes included below were used in a recent EGAP meeting to try and identify important ethical principles. Participants broke into small groups, read the vignettes, filled out the worksheets, discussed them within the small group, then reconvened to discuss as a whole. Many members found it a useful exercise in helping them to pinpoint and explicate their qualms about research. A series of similar vignettes could help make the APSA Ethical Guidelines clear to consumers.

Note: These vignettes are all focused on field experiments because that is the major focus of EGAP. However, ethical problems can arise across a range of research methodologies and the committee should probably provide a wide range of vignettes to capture the breadth of political science.

Vignette I “Anti-immigrant parties”

Version A: Researchers are interested to know what motivates support and voting for anti-immigrant parties in a Northern European country. They design an experiment that they administer through an online platform (e.g., MTurk) in which they expose participants to pairs of candidates who issue appeals that vary in their emphasis on how immigrants threaten safety, demographic stability, and welfare programs, and they also vary the emotional intensity of the appeals. Outcomes include measures of respondents’ preferences over the pair of candidates as well as their attitudes toward immigration. Participants are not given any forewarning or debriefing regarding the content of the experiment. Rather, they are told that they are being asked to complete a task that asks “their opinions on issues of current interest,” and then the task ends with no explanation as to its purpose.

Version B: Same as above, but participants are debriefed at the end, and told that the task was designed by researchers who are interested to learn about reasons for support of anti-immigrant parties, that this is solely for an academic enquiry into this phenomenon, and that if participants are troubled by any of the content, the researchers would appreciate hearing from them, with contact information provided.

Version C: The researchers make a connection with an anti-immigrant party in a Northern European country that allows the researchers to experiment with the content of their television and radio appeals in a large number of media markets. They use this opportunity to test variations of media ads that vary in the same manner as the ones that were studied using the online platform. The experimental variations are issued in waves over the set of media markets. Wave-specific outcomes are measured using an opinion poll panel that was assembled in a way

that makes no reference to the experiment. In addition, outcomes measuring accumulated effects are assessed with administrative data on turnout and vote shares. The results are to be shared with the party.

Version D: Same as Version C, except that the researchers get the party to accept that the content of the ads cannot contain any falsehoods or provocations to violence, and the ads will explicitly state that the best way to address immigration issues is through legal and non-violent pursuit of policy initiatives.

Vignette II “Irregular migration”

Version A: Researchers would like to know to what extent information about the characteristics and risks of migration routes can shape individuals’ decisions to irregularly migrate from low-income to high-income countries. They design a field experiment where they enroll randomly sampled subjects in several origin communities, with the treatment consisting of factual and truthful information about the journey, such as death and injury rates, financial costs, likelihood of arrival at the destination, etc. Outcomes are measured a month and half a year post-treatment and include actual migration attempts, migration intent, any preparatory steps taken, and social and economic indicators of well-being.

Version B: Same as Version A, but the researchers conduct a pre-intervention survey to measure the state of migration-related knowledge in origin communities and subsequently include only those pieces of information in the treatments that suggest irregular migration is riskier than the average community member believes. For example, actual death rates are only included if they exceed the average community member’s belief about death rates.

Version C: Instead of factual information about irregular migration, the treatment consists of a recorded emotional appeal from a returnee who greatly suffered during his or her migration attempt.

Version D: Same as Version A, but the researchers combine the treatment with information about how to (legally) migrate internally to an economically advantageous location.

Vignette III “Ethnicity and voting”

Version A: Researchers working in an ethnically polarized society seek to understand what informational messages can undermine ethnic motivated reasoning, or the biased take-up of political information based on ethnicity. Messages will be disseminated via community-level pre-election workshops organized and funded by the research team prior to legislative elections. Members of the control group receive information about the date of the election, how to register to vote, biographical information about the slate of candidates (which will implicitly reveal ethnicity), and basic information about past performance of their parties (all compiled by the research team). Members of treatment groups receive one or more additional messages designed to undermine motivated reasoning. The unit of randomization is the polling station catchment area, and outcomes will be measured using administrative election data. Given a

within-constituency research design, a large treatment effect has the potential to alter the outcome of an election (raising concerns about the justice principle for candidates and parties involved). Polling station level outcomes are not only visible to researchers, but also the parties and candidates which could alter treatment of the community by politicians going forward (raising concerns of the do no harm principle for the communities involved). The researchers have blanket administrative permission to work in the country and must receive assent by a local leader to occupy public space in each community.

Version B: Same as Version A, but a local NGO takes responsibility for the implementation of the workshops, including the compilation of information, and a foreign donor is already funding them (with or without the research component).

Version C: Same as Version A, but a representative sample of the community is asked to consent to the information treatment prior to its provision. Communities are informed about the types of information that will be made available in the treatments. The treatment would not be provided if consent were not given by at least two-thirds of the community.

Version D: Election related ethnic violence has occurred in prior elections in this country. This raises the stakes of the intervention: both for potential benefits if ethnicity is made less salient, as well as for potential risks, if the information intervention generates unanticipated perverse effects.

Vignette IV “Housing discrimination”

Version A: A research team collaborates with the New York Human Rights Commission to assess the level of housing discrimination in NY and possible responses to it. The commission engages confederates who pose as prospective tenants and make over 3000 apartment visits. The visits involve deception, there is no consent (raising concerns with respect for persons principle), and the subjects (the landlords) could be put at risk of prosecution (raising concerns with do no harm interpretation of the beneficence principle) and landlords would likely not value the outcome of the research (raising concerns with the justice principle). Although the commission and not the researchers employ and direct the confederates. The large scale of audits is a result of the research partnership. Researchers find that there are much higher levels of discrimination than previously thought. However, the evidence for the effectiveness of interventions is murky.

Version B: Same as above but the researchers hire and direct the confederates and that way (a) take more responsibility for directly affecting the subjects and (b) reduce the risk of prosecution of subjects.

Version C: Same but researchers set things up so that they only work with subjects who have consented to be exposed to random audits (though not told which particular cases are audits, of course). The consenting pool likely selects for non discriminators.

Version D: Same but this time the agency is ICE who want to audit businesses to make sure that they would not hire undocumented migrants.

Vignette Assessment Worksheet

Version	Gut reaction	Considered reaction	Prohibitory Principles Violated	Permissive principles satisfied	Other Remarks
#	0 = No! 10 = Yes!	0 = Prohibit 10 = Permit	# or Explanation	# or Explanation	
A					
B					
C					
D					

Conclusion

We hope that the comments and suggestions above are useful to the APSA Ad-Hoc committee as it considers revising the report on human subjects. While some of the feedback above may sound critical, we want to state unequivocally how much we appreciate the extraordinary effort of the Ad-Hoc committee in helping the discipline of political science set crucial ethical standards. We remain at the Ad-Hoc committee's disposal in case there would be any interest in follow-on discussion or activities, or if there may be any other way that EGAP could be helpful to the Ad-Hoc committee's work.