
Institute of Anthropology

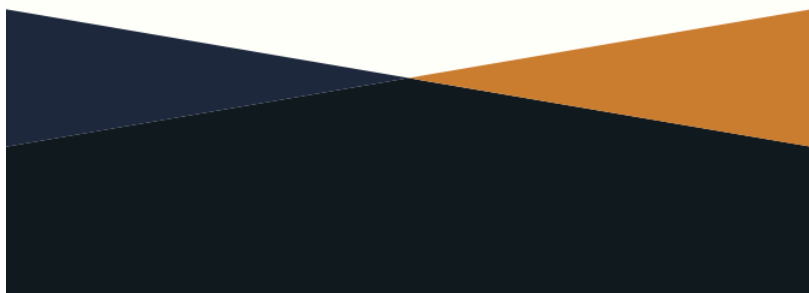
Ethical guidelines for
anthropological research

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Guidelines and best
practices for managing
data and collections



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**Guidelines and best practices for managing data
and collections**



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Institute of Anthropology

Faculty of Philosophy
University of Prishtina

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Ethical guidelines for anthropological research

Introduction

Anthropologists study cultures in both their own countries and abroad, working in various cultural, economic, and political contexts. During their research, they often face conflicts of interest and ethical dilemmas, from choosing topics and getting funding to doing fieldwork and publishing results. They try to resolve these issues without harming the people they study or the academic community. They also aim to respect the communities they study, allowing space for future research by themselves and others. An anthropologist's integrity is reflected in their respectful conduct with the community they study.

This document from the Institute of Anthropology at the University of Prishtina (IAUP) provides ethical guidelines to help anthropologists make decisions and communicate their professional stance clearly to everyone involved. The guidelines focus on ethical principles and best practices in anthropology, especially in social/cultural anthropology, linguistic anthropology, and archaeology.

These guidelines consider the general principles of anthropological research, including methods like participant observation, interviews, and surveys used mainly in cultural/linguistic anthropology, and specific methods in archaeology like observation, excavation, interpretation, and preservation. They also address how anthropologists should interact with others, including funders and society at large, ensuring proper conduct in all contexts.

Integrity and trust

Anthropology is the science of studying human culture and diversity. Culture is the set of learned ideas and behaviours that people create, carry, and recreate as members of society. Anthropology has unique approaches and methods to study and understand the world around us, but also the world away from us. Culture is carried over from the past and inherited. But culture changes, it is not static. Anthropologists aim to recognize the cultural changes of human societies, by identifying, measuring, observing and studying them in the context of scientific, empirical and analytical studies.

Four-field anthropology (*cultural anthropology, archaeology, linguistic anthropology, and biological anthropology*) is recognized as the integrated study of nature, society, and human history. Four-field anthropology is still applied in the US, although it also guides the orientation of anthropology departments in other countries as well. In Kosova, the word anthropology usually means social anthropology, as it is called in most European countries, or cultural anthropology, as it is called in the USA and some other countries. However, in the Department of Anthropology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”, anthropology is taught as the anthropology of four fields, but with two specializations: cultural anthropology and archaeology, with the aim of expanding into the other two fields, linguistic anthropology and biological anthropology, in the future.

Ethnographic methods are diverse and involve long or short-term fieldwork in single or multiple sites, including participant observation, a core method where researchers immerse themselves in various communities and settings to understand social life holistically across economic, political, legal, medical, religious, gender, and kinship dimensions. This method is flexible, allowing researchers to adjust their focus based on initial findings, and it also includes engaging in participatory activities while respecting privacy. Fieldwork methods range from informal participant observation and conversations to structured approaches like

interviews, surveys, and audio-visual recordings.

Anthropologists must prioritize the well-being and rights of their research participants, including their physical, social, and emotional welfare, as well as their privacy. They should anticipate and minimize any potential harm that could result from their research, even with participants' consent. It's crucial for anthropologists to respect boundaries and not assume an automatic right to study any aspect of a person or community. Participants may have mixed feelings about being studied, which can include feeling intruded upon or uncomfortable rather than directly harmed.

Research with people should be based on their voluntary agreement and understanding. Here are some general rules archaeologists must obey:

- Participants must know why the study is happening, its potential impacts, who funds it, how data is used and protected
- Consent must be freely given before research starts; forced participation is not genuine consent
- Consent should be ongoing and may need revisiting
- Participants can refuse to use recording devices
- Respect privacy when using proxies for information
- Inform participants about long-term data use and sharing
- In the case of studying the behavior of children and individuals with special needs, all applicable guidelines and regulations in force in the Republic of Kosovo should be followed.

Participants have the right to privacy and anonymity, but this can be challenging due to cultural and legal differences. Here are some general rules anthropologists need to obey.

- Respect people's personal space as defined locally
- Anticipate privacy risks, use pseudonyms, and secure data to protect confidentiality
- Explain that complete anonymity isn't always possible and some details might still be identifiable
- Honor promises of confidentiality unless there's a strong ethical reason not to
- Ensure that if they pay informants/participants, it should be in the form of small gifts as tokens of mutual friendship, in line with local traditions.
- Aim to provide fair compensation to translators and other participants to prevent exploitation or economic exploitation.
- Adhere to the principles of volunteer work, where travel and food expenses are covered, and volunteers gain learning experiences from the work

Participants have rights to their data, recordings, and contributions. Here are general rules anthropologist need to be aware of.

- Inform interviewees about their rights to be recorded and not to be recorded in private settings
- Get permission in writing before using audio or video recordings publicly
- Clarify if participants can review and amend transcripts and withdraw statements
- Involve participants in planning and carrying out research whenever possible, recognizing ongoing responsibilities beyond the project's completion.

Archaeology studies past human cultures and societies through material evidence, primarily discovered via archaeological excavation and historical interpretation. The methods used in archaeology are unique because they focus on the physical remains of human cultures from ancient prehistory to recent times. Due to the often-destructive nature of archaeological research, archaeologists must have the necessary training, experience, equipment, and support to conduct excavations properly. It is also the responsibility of archaeologists to work towards the long-term preservation and protection of archaeological heritage by practicing and promoting proper management of archaeological records.

Archaeological research involves excavating and studying the material culture of past societies. The evidence gathered by archaeologists is sensitive to destruction, misuse, and illegal handling. Cultural heritage in Kosovo is a shared heritage belonging to all people of Kosovo and humanity as a whole. It should be protected, preserved, and promoted as a testament to cultural diversity and respect for all, serving as a tool to promote peace.

Archaeological excavations and research conducted outside of excavation sites are subject to specific legal regulations set by the state institutions of the Republic of Kosovo. In addition to legal obligations, archaeological work must also adhere to general professional and moral ethics.

Here are some general principles and rules archaeologists need to obey:

- Archaeologist must have respect for cultural diversity and engage in research and reporting with honesty, accuracy and transparency
- Similar to anthropologists in general, archaeologists must work with local communities to ensure their work, whether on communities' property or in their vicinity,

does not harm them

- Archaeologists, as all anthropologists in general, should promote good relations during the research/excavation process with the local population
- Archaeologists should employ best practices in the context of the connection between science, ethnic sensitivity and legislation
- Archaeologist must care about and respect human sensitivity when dealing with sacred objects and human archaeological remains (funerary archaeology), distinguishing human bodies from other archaeological remains and applying the principle of dignity to them.
- Archaeologist ought to document their process of work, including writing notes and diaries reflecting their methodology and approach to excavations
- Archaeologists ought to stay updated on new archaeological methods
- Archaeologists must adhere to professional standards, codes of ethics, and legal requirements governing archaeological practice, as laid out by Kosovo Institute of Archaeology, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports of Republic of Kosovo and Institute of Anthropology UP guidelines
- Archaeologists must keep all records of archaeological work in a public archive with clear rules for access and priority
- Archaeologists must adhere to all local laws and international conventions, guidelines and agreements about archaeological heritage in Kosova
- Archaeologists and all working in archaeological settings must treat colleagues and collaborators with respect and work together in a positive and professional manner to support research and partnerships

- Archaeologists must ensure that documentation from any archaeological work is made available to other researchers in a reasonable amount of time, according to set criteria

IA members and stakeholders must respect archaeological sites, reserves, localities, monuments, artefact, remains and all other archaeological records as cultural heritage or means of protection cultural heritage.

- Access to knowledge of the past is essential, especially for those who are culturally connected.
- Human remains and artifacts deserve respect
- Conservation is crucial; reconstruction should be partial and used only when necessary and permissible
- Excavation should be minimally invasive if conservation is not possible
- Accurate documentation, safe preservation, and objective interpretation of archaeological evidence are essential
- Archaeologists should be accountable to the public and provide education about archaeology whenever possible
- Researchers may retain and access archaeological material and original documents for a limited and reasonable time before they are made accessible to all interested parties.
- The buying and selling of artifacts contributes to the damage and destruction of archaeological data in Kosovo, the region, and worldwide, and is strictly forbidden
- The commercialization of archaeological artifacts, their use as decorative or entertainment objects, or for any personal gain directly impacts the destruction of archaeological sites and the damage to the stratigraphic contexts essential for interpreting archaeological data. Therefore, whenever possible, archaeologists and anthropologists should discourage and avoid activities that increase the commercial value of archaeological artifacts

Responsibilities to funders

Anthropologists must ensure sponsors, funders, and employers understand their responsibilities to researchers, participants, and colleagues:

- Define roles, rights, and obligations upfront
- Avoid agreeing to conflicting conditions; refer to professional guidelines if issues arise
- Acknowledge constraints and potential conflicts in non-academic settings
- Be transparent about qualifications, methods, and data limitations to sponsors and employers
- Safeguard confidential information shared by sponsors and employers
- Clarify project details and control before starting
- Demand full disclosure of funding, personnel, and research goals
- Expect respect for professional expertise and data integrity

Relations to colleagues

Anthropologists access research participants and data through personal and professional community standing, with obligations and support:

- Anthropologists and archaeologists leading or participating in research projects should ensure the safety of everyone involved, both at the study site and in related areas.
- Lead archaeologists should encourage a diverse group of participants in local archaeological digs.
- When sharing information with the public, anthropologists and archaeologists should do so objectively and with

proper context.

- Archaeologists should encourage public care and respect for archaeological sites. Inappropriate behavior, including harassment or sexual harassment, especially towards students, women, and early-career researchers, must be avoided by anthropologists and archaeologists.
- In the field, all participants, including anthropologists and archaeologists, should not face discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability, or past convictions. Discrimination should be avoided in all forms.
- Researchers should protect the reputation of their field by using ethical research methods and maintaining respectful relationships with study participants.
- Like other fields, anthropology can have conflicts between visiting and local researchers, different generations, or different schools of thought. These conflicts should be minimized and focused on differences in ideas, not personal issues.
- Before starting a study, researchers should consult with colleagues familiar with the area to get recommendations for specific approaches and aspects to study.
- Anthropologists and archaeologists should explain ethical standards and professional practices when working with researchers from other fields or with students.
- Project leaders should ensure that students and assistants understand ethical guidelines and discuss potential issues that might arise during fieldwork.
- Experienced researchers should mentor younger colleagues and students on ethical research practices.
- The Institute of Anthropology at the University of Prishtina (IAUP) supports continuous learning and ethical training for its members to deepen their understanding of

ethical issues in anthropology.

Relations with governments

Anthropologists must be honest and transparent in their dealings with both their own and/or host governments. They need to:

- Ensure research access doesn't compromise professional responsibilities
- Consider ethical and political differences in wealth, power, and legal systems.
- Recognize that irresponsible actions can affect research access for others.
- Avoid using anthropology for secretive purposes, preserving the discipline's integrity.
- Understand national laws affecting research, data dissemination, and rights of subjects, sponsors, and employers
- Familiarize themselves with relevant laws like data protection, copyright, and human subjects' research regulations

Responsibilities to society

Anthropologists owe duties to the public and society, aiming to uphold trust without exaggerating their findings' accuracy or impact. They should:

- Use opportunities to expand social research and apply their findings for the benefit of the community without compromising their ethical and scientific principles.
- Promote cultural research as stakeholders in the democratization of society.
- Understand that misuse or misunderstanding should not hinder data collection but should be addressed to prevent

harm.

- Recognize that research can often be biased and avoid exaggerating stereotypes. Stereotypes should be countered with convincing arguments and integrity.
- Avoid any deceptive methods or misrepresentation of findings, especially when influenced by public policy.

Institutional Ethical Review

If unprecedented ethical concerns are raised, the Ethical Review Committee (comprising of Prof. Asoc. Dr Arsim Canolli, Prof. Ass. Dr. Arben Hajdari and Prof. Ass. Dr. Tahir Latifi) will review the case and provide suggestions in overcoming or addressing the concerns further to University Ethical Review Board, in accordance with the Document of Regulations and Procedures of the Ethics Committee on Scientific Research (1/759) dated May 31, 2024.

Final statement

The credibility of anthropological research depends more on individual researchers' actions than on professional ethical guidelines, which are designed to help navigate ethical dilemmas fairly. These guidelines are not strict rules enforced with penalties, but rather tools to educate about ethical issues in research and practice. They aim to inform and describe rather than dictate, ensuring decisions are made thoughtfully and with foresight in complex situations.

These guidelines have been drafted by the Department of Anthropology working group (Prof. Asoc. Dr. Arsim Canolli, Prof. Ass. Dr. Zanita Halimi, Prof. Ass. Dr. Arben Hajdari, Prof. Ass. Dr. Tahir Latifi, Dr. Ass. Ilir Culaj), during the period January 2024 - June 2024. A special contribution was given by (Arian Krasniqi, Valmire Rashiti, Sedat Baraliu, Elena Rexha, Fortunë Haziri, Dafina Morina) who attended the working group's meeting in late June 2024. Prof. Michael Galaty of Micigan University / USA

has also provided comments on the final draft. This guide follows the ethical guidelines in scientific research of the Association of Social Anthropologists in Great Britain and the American Anthropological Association.

The ethical guidelines will be improved and changed from time to time by the staff of the Institute of Anthropology and the Department of Anthropology at the University of Pristina, depending on the needs and new developments that emerge.

Guidelines and best practices for managing data and collections

Data management

Data management practices and policies are essential for maintaining the integrity, security, and compatibility of data in anthropological research. The document/guideline describes practices for data collection, storage, access and distribution:

Data collection

At the beginning of each research project, the purpose of the anthropological research and the purpose of data collection should be clearly defined. Following ethical guidelines, consent must also be obtained from research participants indicating how their data will be used, stored and shared. During research, standardized data collection methods and tools should be used. Negotiating consent includes the communication of information that may be material to persons expressing willingness to participate in research, material including: the purpose(s) and anticipated consequences of the research; donors; the intended uses of the data, the benefits of the study, and the harm or distress that may affect participants; issues related to data storage and security; and including limits on the degree of anonymity and confidentiality that can be afforded to informants and subjects. These can be communicated verbally, especially to those participants with whom the anthropologist has close and ongoing relationships. During research, detailed documentation related to the research will be kept, including interviews/video interviews or other methodologies used in the research.

Data storage

During each research project, secure data storage solutions will be determined that comply with the relevant privacy laws and institutional policies. All data gathered in IA research projects are stored in physical (but also electronic copies) on the hard disk managed by the project manager and the person authorized by the Director of the Institute. During each research there will be a plan B of data storage to prevent loss in case of technical failures or security breaches. Plan B is determined by the research team before the start of each research project. Data will be classified based on levels of sensitivity and access controls will be applied accordingly.

Access to data

Access to data is granted on a need-to-know basis, to authorized personnel only. Strong authentication methods will be used to verify user identities, and access logs will be regularly monitored to detect any unauthorized attempts to access data. Also, training will be provided to researchers and staff on data handling procedures and security protocols.

Data sharing

The sharing of data with the collaborators from each project is done while ensuring compliance with confidentiality commitments, privacy laws and institutional/project based policies. Thus, consideration is given to anonymizing sensitive data before distribution to protect the privacy of participants. Also, researchers have the duty to ensure that none of the data they make public, through textual or audio-visual media, would allow the identification of individuals whose well-being or safety is at risk. If the raw data, or even processed data, will be shared with colleagues or communities for analysis or preparation of publications, or deposited in archives or libraries, care must be taken not to violate privacy and guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity made through consent. Field notes and other data should not be archived in raw form if this violates the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, or the stated reasons for the agreed

upon informed consent. Anthropologists should make this clear when negotiating informed consent. Anthropologists must be aware that they may not always be able to protect their field notes, and care must be taken in how research information and data are recorded and stored.

Data integrity

Data validation procedures will be implemented to ensure the accuracy and consistency of data collected. Version control mechanisms will be established to track changes made to data sets over time and regular quality assurance procedures will identify and correct errors or inconsistencies in data.

Compliance and ethics

All IA research will be compliant with ethical guidelines set by the IA. Data management policies will be constantly reviewed and updated to align with evolving legal and ethical standards.

Training and support

Training or sessions will be provided to researchers and staff on data management best practices and compliance requirements. Ongoing support and guidance will be provided to researchers throughout the data lifecycle, from planning and collection to analysis, and distribution.

Collections

Documentation and cataloging

Comprehensive documentation and cataloging are essential to the management of anthropological/archival collections. Each item must be carefully described, including its origin, importance and condition.

Photo collection

Here are some of the tasks that need to be performed when collecting and storing photographs:

- Record essential details for each photograph, including its title or description, photographer, date the photograph was taken, format (e.g., black and white print,), dimensions and any captions or notes present.
- Assign unique identifiers, such as accession numbers or catalog numbers, to each photograph to facilitate tracking and retrieval. Ensure that these identifiers are prominently displayed on the photograph and recorded in the cataloging system.
- Provide a detailed description of the content depicted in each photograph, including people, objects, events, locations and activities. Use descriptive language that accurately conveys the subject and context of the image.
- Document contextual information about the photographs, such as their provenance, source, and any accompanying documentation or correspondence. Include information about how the photographs were obtained and how they relate to other materials in the collection.
- If photos exist in physical form, consider digitizing them to create digital surrogates for preservation and access purposes. Follow digitization best practices, including using high-quality scanning equipment, appropriate resolution settings, and file formats suitable for long-term storage.
- Organize photos systematically within the collection, using hierarchical or thematic arrangements as appropriate. Consider grouping photos by subject, location, time period, or other relevant criteria to facilitate access and retrieval.
- Verify the copyright status of each photo and comply with copyright laws and regulations when making photos available for public access or reproduction. Obtain permission

or licenses as necessary to use copyrighted material.

- Regularly review and update cataloging data to reflect changes in the collection, new acquisitions, or improvements in cataloging practices. Perform routine maintenance tasks such as cleaning and normalizing data to ensure data quality and accuracy.

Video

Here are some of the tasks that need to be performed when collecting and storing photographs:

- Record essential details about each video, including its title or description, creator (if known), creation date, duration, format (e.g., VHS, DVD, digital file), dimensions (e.g., resolution for digital files), and any relevant technical specifications.
- Assign unique identifiers, such as accession numbers or catalog numbers, to each video to facilitate tracking and retrieval. Make sure these identifiers are prominently displayed in the video and recorded in the cataloging system.
- Provide a detailed description of the content depicted in each video, including people, events, activities, locations and any other relevant information. Use descriptive language that accurately conveys the topic and context of the video.
- Document contextual information about videos, such as origin, source, and any related documentation or correspondence. Include information about how the videos were acquired and how they relate to other materials in the collection.
- If videos exist in analog formats (e.g., VHS tapes), consider digitizing them to create digital surrogates for stor-

age and access purposes. Follow best practices for digitizing video, including using high-quality equipment, proper digitization settings, and file formats suitable for long-term storage.

- Organize videos systematically within the collection, using hierarchical or thematic arrangements as appropriate. Consider grouping videos by topic, location, time period, or other relevant criteria to facilitate access and retrieval.
- Create cataloging records for each video in the collection management system or cataloging database. Include all relevant information captured during the documentation process, following established cataloging standards and guidelines.
- Verify the copyright status of each video and comply with copyright laws and regulations when making videos available for public access or playback. Obtain permission or licenses as necessary to use copyrighted material.
- Regularly review and update cataloging data to reflect changes in the collection, new acquisitions, or improvements in cataloging practices. Perform routine maintenance tasks such as cleaning and normalizing data to ensure data quality and accuracy.



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