Integrity for whom? Power, bias, and justice in research

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Outline

1. Bias within research integrity (RI) field

2. Zooming in on 'Open Science'

3. How to center justice in RI and Open Science initiatives?

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Ground rules

Respect – no personal attacks of any nature

Prioritize marginalized voices

Listen actively

No naming and shaming of people (institutions/countries/political leaders are OK)

Anger is valid, but hate and aggression are not

Be kind

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1. Bias within RI field

Article

Research Integrity and Research Fairness: Harmonious or in Conflict?

Krishma Labib

...more information ⌄

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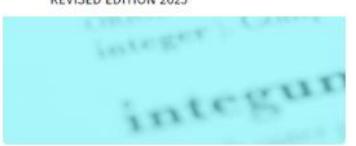

How field of RI sees research

The European
Code of Conduct for
Research Integrity
REVISED EDITION 2023

*"Research is the **quest for knowledge** obtained through systematic study, thinking, observation, and experimentation. While different disciplines may use different approaches, they each share the motivation **to increase our understanding** of ourselves and the world in which we live."*
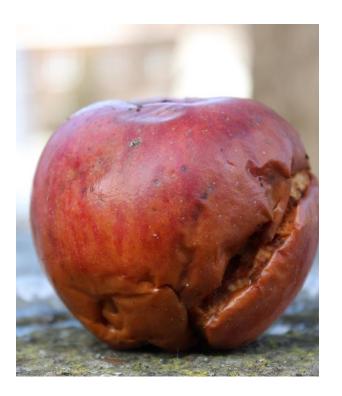
Assumptions:

Research is progressive, innocent, beneficial….

At least when done 'right'

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How field of RI sees research

Harmful research **is incidental**: bad apples, spoiled barrels, infested orchards

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Ignorance of de/anticolonial literature

"The word itself, 'research', is probably **one of the dirtiest words** in the indigenous world's vocabulary...it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing **and distrustful**. Just knowing that someone measured our 'faculties' by filling the skulls of our ancestors with millet seeds and compared the amount of millet seed to the capacity for mental thought **offends our sense of who and what we are**. It galls us that Western researchers and intellectuals can assume to know all that it is possible to know of us, on the basis of their brief encounters with some of us. It appalls us that the West **can desire, extract and claim ownership** of our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we create and produce, and then simultaneously **reject the people** who created and developed those ideas and seek to deny them further opportunities to be creators of their own culture and own nations. It angers us when practices linked to the last century, and the centuries before that, are still employed to **deny the validity of indigenous peoples' claim to existence**, to land and territories, to the right of self-determination, to the survival of our languages and forms of cultural knowledge, to our natural resources and systems for living within our environments." (Smith 2012, p. 1)

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Ignorance of de/anticolonial literature

Smith's criticism of research isn't about bad apples, spoiled barrels or infested orchards, but rather about the coloniality of research

Physical harm (killing and theft) and epistemic harm (epistemic alienation and epistemicide)

Dominant RI initiatives do not address this

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Perverse, self-serving definitions

If:

Integrity = having strong moral principles/incorruptibility

Ethics = investigating what is morally right and wrong

How can we talk about 'integrity' or 'ethics' in research while accepting complicity in genocide?

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2. Zooming in on 'Open Science'

Open Science as Confused: Contradictory and Conflicting Discourses in Open Science Guidance to Researchers

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Open Science advocacy

- Initially Open Science started as a way to 'unite humanity'

- Open Science movement gaining momentum, but terms are vague

- Scoping review and critical discourse analysis of national and international guidance documents targeted at researchers to address:

How is OS – including its goals, practices, and scope – understood in guidelines to researchers across the globe?

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Critical discourse analysis

Not theoretically neutral, but taking an equity focused approach:

1. Do documents address OS in terms of equity or other goals?

2. Is there reference or promotion to Eurocentric priorities or epistemologies?

3. Tone and language

4. Assumptions about superiority and inferiority based on colonial logics

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69 documents

Figure 2. Countries covered by national OS policies and guidelines.

Countries with national guidelines and/or policies identified

Figure 3. Countries covered by regional OS policies and guidelines.

Countries covered by identified regional guidelines

Many promises, many conflicting

1. OS as saving the world

2. OS as driving socio-economic progress

3. OS as improving reproducibility, research integrity and quality

4. OS aimed at addressing systemic injustices

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Some striking examples of lack of equity focus:

*"The advantages of this approach include the **speed of scientific progress** and the **return on investment**s in research and development, particularly public investments, where there is enormous potential **to increase productivity, competitiveness, and growth**"*

- Montenegro

*"Open access to scientific information is **in the interest of the economy**. The economy has to be acquainted with open results… in order to use them for **the development of new products and services**"*

- Slovenia

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Some striking examples of lack of equity focus:

*"National security concerns in the **US** have led to an attempt to restrict the export of software... However, **legitimate concerns** about **national security** will continue to restrict open data between countries"*

*"There are also understandable difficulties in ensuring access to data from **developing countries**. Whereas some are developing open access journals, **others are uneasy at the prospect that those with greater scientific resources will benefit overseas interests**, **to the <u>detriment</u> of home researchers.** For example, Indonesia ceased providing access to their flu samples in 2007 because of worries that more scientifically developed countries would create flu vaccines based on their data, with no benefit to Indonesia. This policy was reversed only after the World Health Organisation put in place protocols for equitable access to vaccines and medicines"*

- UK Royal Society

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Some striking examples of lack of equity focus:

*"There is a great need for policymakers, RFOs, RPOs, and researchers **from high-income countries to provide support to institutions from LMICs in <u>building their capacities</u>**, exchanging good practices, and establishing infrastructure conducive to OS"*

- *ROSiE guidelines (EU funded project)*

But also pushback, particularly from Latin America:

*"Brazil has made remarkable progress in recent years in promoting and implementing open access to scientific information. SciELO, a program initiated by FAPESP in 1997, indexes and publishes the best national journals on the web with universal and open access, progressively expanding in a cooperative network across Ibero-American countries. **Currently, 14 countries participate in the program, which was one of the first in the world offering open access to scientific publications on the web"***

- Brazil

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3. How to center justice in RI and OS initiatives?

Reflect in 5 groups

Make notes on Google Doc (use QR code)

1. How do our institutional affiliations and social identities influence our understandings and approach to RI and OS?

2. In what ways might our standards about 'good research' and 'research quality' be biased?

3. How does 'neutrality' within RI and OS initiatives about injustice in the world influence the movements?

4. How can we take equity and justice seriously within our RI and OS work?

5. What can we do as Dutch researchers to open up the space for others?

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