



Publishing ethics in the Social Sciences, Arts & Humanities:

**towards better guidance and shared best
practice**



Taylor & Francis and COPE



- All Taylor & Francis journals are members of COPE, and editors may attend COPE Forums, access the flowcharts, submit queries
- Taylor & Francis is the leading publisher of AHSS journals through our Routledge brand
- COPE originates from a biomedical tradition
- We have a joint requirement to develop ethical guidelines for the particular needs of AHSS scholars



Aims for this session



To discuss the specific needs of AHSS Editors for support, guidelines and training from COPE and Taylor & Francis to help with the publishing ethics challenges which you face.



Types of ethical problems

- **Common problems within all disciplines, but sometimes different treatment**
 - Plagiarism
 - Authorship
 - Different definitions apply in STEM and AHSS
 - Libel and defamation
 - Greater risks in AHSS due to more focus on subjective analyses of other people's views and the world around us, rather than “raw laboratory data”
- **New types of problems**
 - Online harassment: especially around topics such as race and gender
 - Political pressure leading to withdrawal of submitted articles
 - Issues around research with human subjects (eg using social media)





2 Key findings

Co-authorship is increasingly typical

74% of respondents reported that the typical number of authors per paper in their area of expertise is now two or more. Over half of respondents believe the incidence of co-authorship has increased since the beginning of their research careers. The most common reason identified for this growth of co-authorship was 'increasing competition and greater performance-based pressures'.

Researchers encounter problems attributing authorship fairly

Co-authorship is not without its challenges. When asked about the most commonly occurring problems associated with co-authorship, the highest scoring responses related to the order in which author names should be listed and determining who should receive an authorship credit. Where no author has made a dominant contribution, respondents believe authors should either be listed jointly as first authors or should be listed alphabetically.

There is an authorship attribution 'reality gap'

There are conditions regarded as being important for determining an authorship claim in practice which respondents do not believe would have significance in an ideal world. In practice, too much weight is placed on being a senior ranked researcher, the supervisor

of a doctoral student, or a research grant holder. As a result, respondents believe that there is a tendency for senior academics to be over-credited and junior ranked academics to be under-credited in comparison to other authors.

Instead, researchers believe that an authorship credit should go to those who are responsible for the conception and/or design of a project; the analysis and/or interpretation of data; or drafting the paper or revising it critically for intellectual content.

Few researchers receive guidance and training on authorship

Only 25% of respondents reported that guidance on authorship is included in the research ethics policy of their institution. Just 18% have received training or guidance from their institution in respect to determining academic authorship.

Editors and reviewers would intervene if they suspected incorrect authorship attribution

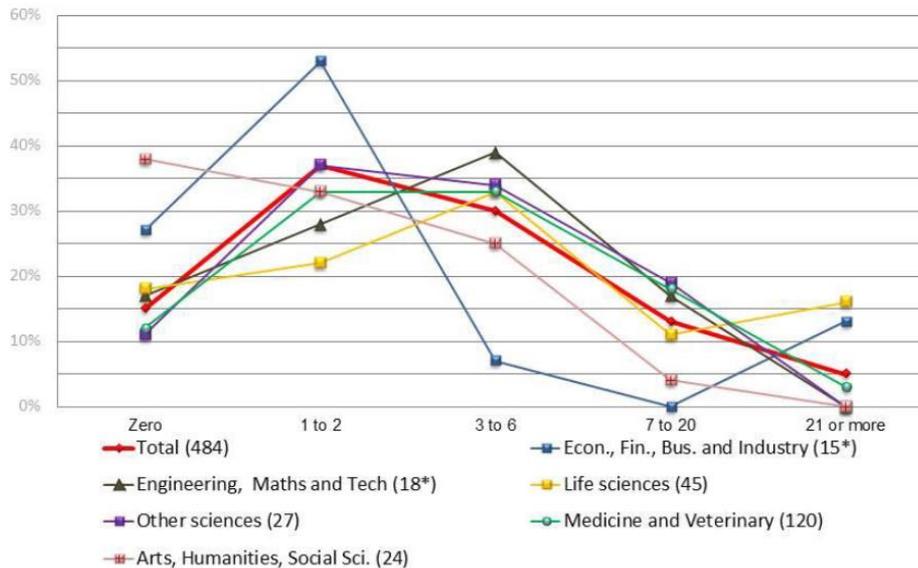
The majority of editors surveyed would ask the corresponding author of a paper to amend the authorship list if they believed an uncredited research assistant had made a substantial contribution to the paper. Most reviewers would also give advice to the journal editor to take this course of action.



Why now?



Volume of publication ethics cases seen annually



Base: All with an opinion ()
* Indicates caution: low base of less than 20 respondents

- Ethics cases are perceived as less prevalent in AHSS but those that are picked up are often more serious, needing legal advice, when they occur
 - Only 1/3 of the ethics cases logged at T&F over the past 12 months were AHSS, but 83% of the cases dealt with by the T&F legal counsel are AHSS
- On the Retraction Watch leaderboard, 5 of the top 20 are from non-STM subjects





Steps for dealing with ethics problems

- 1. Keep the case confidential**
- 2. Contact your Taylor & Francis Managing Editor for guidance and support**
- 3. Use the COPE flowcharts**
- 4. Request a Crossref Similarity Check report**
- 5. Draw on your editorial board for subject specific expertise**
- 6. Take advantage of peer-review systems features**
- 7. Use it as an education opportunity**
- 8. Keep up-to-date with Editor Resources**



Peer Review and Research Integrity team



- This newly created team work with Taylor & Francis Editorial teams to manage peer review policies across all journals, act as a central point for all ethics queries and cases, monitor and report on change and innovation in industry standards, and take responsibility for new peer review initiatives.
- Some peer review initiatives
 - Publons trial
 - Open peer review trial



C O P E

20TH ANNIVERSARY
1997-2017



COPE: Issues in the Humanities and Social Sciences

History of COPE's Relationship with the Humanities and Social Sciences

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COPE's History is Consistent with the Contemporary Evolution of Treatment of Research Integrity/Publication Ethics

- In 1997, COPE begins as an informal small, self-help group of editors in the Bio-medical sciences
- It is not surprising that this was the initial group in terms of discipline because of shared values and shared concerns:
 1. **Shared Values:** Unity of science model with shared methodological norms for scientific rigour, such parsimony, replicability, hypothesis-driven, importance of objectivity, fact-value distinctions, truth claims, etc.
 2. **Shared values of concern:** the protection of human-subjects in research and the cluster of values which follow from commitment to scientific and ethics integrity, such as, publication integrity, integrity of results, dissemination standards, avoidance of salami slicing, plagiarism, COI, authorship issues, etc.





Research Integrity Policy Development Nationally and Internationally

- In the mid to latter part of the 20th century, the development of standards of research ethics and research integrity followed the same pattern in articulation and development - earlier in time - but consistent with the early COPE identification as issues within Biomedical Sciences which led the way





COPE's Growth and Evolution

- As COPE developed contemporaneously with the development of Research Policies initiated by government directives, granting agencies, universities and teaching and research hospitals, our membership broadened, initially within the Sciences and then more recently within the Humanities and Social Sciences
- We currently have over 11,000 members





Social Sciences: Family Resemblances and Misfits

- At the quantitative end of the Social Science Spectrum, such as, Experimental Psychology, large survey research in Sociology, Econometrics, etc., family resemblances within the fields of science are clearly identifiable
- In such a context, these Social Sciences editors essentially share the same ethics norms as bio-medical science. For example, what counts as authorship, avoidance of plagiarism, proper citation, standards in peer-review, ethically approved human participant research (here the language begins to shift)
- At the other end of the spectrum in the Social Sciences, however, with qualitative research, participants as authors sometimes with veto power, lack of hypotheses (e.g., grounded theory where themes ‘emerge’) and less commitment to an understanding that the product of science is objective, factual or true, **standards and guidance for editors needs nuance, different emphasis and appreciation of unique features of the research product and ethical norms.**



Humanities: Now for Something Completely Different



- Many Humanists do not engage in empirical research or ask original scientific-type questions or formulate hypotheses, as such
- Do not always claim truth functions for their intellectual product
- Frequently study the same topic(s) for their entire career
- Believe that inquiry is based on depth of interpreting the same material repeatedly
- Are more frequently sole authors of works; value monographs more than articles
- And, nonetheless have important ethical standards that must/ought to be/should be abided by.





COPE's Approach

- **Currently our SS and Humanities journals abide by COPE's guidelines for conduct and Best Practice for Journal Editors, although we recognize that the diversity of disciplines need special development for ethical norms within those disciplines**
- **We have recently created a Multidisciplinary Committee with a special focus on the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences**
- **Stay tuned. We need and welcome your guidance as we extend our reach to more inclusively invite and assist with the participation of our diverse membership. We wish also to extend the number of members of COPE who represent Arts, Humanities and the Social Sciences.**





Forum

- **We have held forums specifically on the Social Sciences**
- **We have discussed and developed cases within the Humanities and Social Sciences with and for our members**
- **We are happy to participate in this special venue with Taylor & Francis to develop materials and enhance discussion of issues in the Humanities and Social Sciences**
- **We will be developing discussion papers on disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences**





The Case of a Disputed Authorship

Yana Suchy, Ph.D., ABPP-CN



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The Impetus

- **An invited Reviewer informs the Editor that**
 - **The Corresponding author for the MS under review was his formal trainee**
 - **The Reviewer had been a co-author on an earlier version of the MS**
 - **The Reviewer had not been aware that the MS was being submitted for publication**





The Investigation

- T&F Managing Editor is informed
- Steps are taken to gather more information from both parties
 - Who conceptualized the research
 - Who submitted the study IRB
 - Who obtained funding
 - Who collected data
 - Who entered and analyzed data
 - Who wrote the MS
 - Who possessed final approval authority
- The two parties are encouraged to resolve the situation





The Resolution

- **The Corresponding author fails to provide adequately convincing information**
 - **Appears naïve to details about funding, IRB, etc.**
 - **Denies any involvement of the Reviewer**
- **The Reviewer offers convincing information**
 - **PI on a parent project**
 - **Clear knowledge of the research process**
 - **Funded the Corresponding author**
 - **Admits the first draft was written by the Corresponding author**
- **The two parties are unable to reach an agreement**
- **The paper is unsubmitted by the Editor.**





The Aftermath

- The Corresponding author submits the MS to another journal
- The Reviewer is again invited to review the manuscript
- The MS is eventually unsubmitted
- The MS appears in an Open Access journal
 - Authorship remains unchanged
- The Reviewer wants the paper retracted—waiting for a resolution





Questions & Challenges

- **Confidentiality**
 - If double-blinded review, can the Editor disclose the identity of the authors?
- **Data protection**
 - Who is responsible for what gets disseminated?
- **What steps can authors and journals take?**
 - Exclusion from databases?
 - “Unpublishing”?





A Case of Lack of Proper Accreditation and Acknowledgment

*Dance Chronicle: Studies in Dance and the
Related Arts*

Joellen A. Meglin, Editor-in-Chief



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The Problem Presents

- A few years ago, X informed Taylor & Francis that she believed Y had used, in an article published in *DC*, some of X's previously presented and published scholarship without proper accreditation or acknowledgment.
- Taylor & Francis delegated the matter to the coeditors of the journal, Dr. Lynn Brooks and Dr. Joellen Meglin, who communicated with X to ask for clarification and greater specificity.





Resources available

- Committee on Publication Ethics' best-practices model on the question of "What to do if you suspect plagiarism"
- "Avoiding plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and other questionable writing practices: A guide to ethical writing," by Miguel Roig, available through the Office of Research Integrity of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
<http://ori.hhs.gov/images/ddblock/plagiarism.pdf>.
- COPE North American Seminar in Philadelphia





A historian's definition of plagiarism

- **“The misuse of the writings of another author, even when one does not borrow the exact wording, can be as unfair, as unethical, and as unprofessional as plagiarism. Such misuse includes the limited borrowing, without attribution, of another historian’s distinctive and significant research findings, hypotheses, theories, rhetorical strategies, or interpretations, or an extended borrowing even with attribution.”**
- **Robin Levin Penslar, “The Historian’s Code of Ethics,” in Research Ethics: Cases & Materials, ed. Robin Levin Penslar (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 148.**





X's complaint

- “My main argument is that Y uses my methodology, follows my source trail, and states my conclusions”
- The original complaint was nebulous and scattered, requiring the co-editors to seek specific details and clarification.
- A 12-page document resulted.





Y's response

- Y submitted 10 documents, including her entire 1995 dissertation and various forms of evidence of a continuing research path.
- Along the way, the co-editors had to request that Y address X's specific complaints.
- Y's rebuttal turned into a 31-page document.
- Y included a letter of support from her dissertation advisor, a prominent researcher in the field (immaterial).





Findings of co-editors

- While we found that Y's research and expression of that research were her own, we noted that, by her own admission, Y had accessed a paper written by X and published in a conference proceedings, and had presented on a panel with X at another conference.
- While Y's own research appeared to have led her to concepts, sources, and conclusions similar to those of X, good sense and scholarly ethics dictate that Y should have cited X's papers, not only because they were relevant to the research topic, but also because they corroborated Y's own research findings.





Findings (continued)

- We did not find sufficient grounds for retraction of Y's article.



Considerations

- We decided that active mentorship afforded the best chance of producing positive outcomes. X and Y, both at the early stages of their publishing careers, seemed to be ignorant of certain publication standards and the importance of developing a scholarly discourse.
- Particularly in the humanities, the concept of one author “getting the scoop” on a singular research discovery has limited relevance, because the expression of ideas is typically complex, multi-faceted, and embedded within an author’s unique style, thinking process, narrative path, contextual choices, etc.





Recommendations to T&F

- We strongly recommended that Y acknowledge X's research in a corrigendum to be printed in a forthcoming issue of *Dance Chronicle*. Because Y knew of X's work, which was closely related to her own, at least by the time she submitted the final revisions of her article to *Dance Chronicle*, such an acknowledgment seemed to be fair and of service to readers and the field; moreover, it would reflect the highest scholarly standards.





Conclusion

- ***Dance Chronicle* published the author's corrigendum the following year.**
- **In a first draft, the author buried the required acknowledgment in a long list of additional sources for further study.**
- **The managing editor at T&F directed the author toward more direct acknowledgment.**

