



PROMOTING INTEGRITY IN SCHOLARLY
RESEARCH AND ITS PUBLICATION

COPE WEBINAR: DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Speaker

Deborah C Poff, CM, PhD
Past Chair, COPE



4 FOCI TODAY

1. **Meanings of Discrimination/Bias and Identifiers for Diversity and Inclusivity**

2. **Representational Issues: workforce, editors, editorial boards**

3. **Peer Review and Diversity: Some groups are pushing the boundaries of what counts as expertise/Citation and Algorithmics: Factors in Citation; Why are some scholars researching what they call “the algorithms of oppression?”**

4. **Recommendations for Actions**

DISCRIMINATION/BIAS

Irrelevant, arbitrary, biased and unfair variables or criteria utilized as the basis for judgments about competencies. Behaviours or rules that have outcomes that impact others unfairly or are experienced as harm.

Judgments that negatively impact persons based on systemic categories of membership.

Discrimination/bias can be conscious or unconscious.

Discrimination/bias can impact employment, promotion, fair representation or how work is evaluated, including with peer review, acceptance of articles for publication and who is studied and by whom.

SUBJECTS OF DISCRIMINATION/ BIAS AS IDENTIFIED IN HUMAN RIGHTS/ SOCIAL JUSTICE RESEARCH AND POLICIES

Among the categories of discrimination biases are the following:

Sex/Gender Race Ethnicity Visible Minority

Physical/Mental Challenges Poverty Illiteracy and Innumeracy

Geography Religion Language and Culture

De-Colonized Populations, including Indigenous Peoples Stigmatizing Disease

Vulnerable populations (including under certain circumstances older persons and children)

REPRESENTATIONAL ISSUES IN THE WORKFORCE

Two studies of the publication workforce. The Workplace Equity Survey in Publishing (2018) conducted by the Workplace Equity Project and the Research by Diversity in Publishing study (2019). The results include the following:

...the industry is 76% female, 81% white and 83% heterosexual. Yet men are nearly twice as likely to be in senior and executive management roles, “roles for which our study found no representation from respondents identifying as Black.”

(2018)

According to the 2019 study, university presses are, 81% white; 65% Cis women, 79% heterosexual and 88% non-disabled.

DEMOGRAPHICS ON EDITORIAL BOARDS/EDITORS

Many studies have surveyed the underrepresentation of women as editors and editorial boards. Three such studies include:

Topas and Sen (2016) found that while women made up 15 percent of the tenure-track faculty at doctoral degree-granting universities in the field studied made up only 8.9 percent of editorships.

Similarly, Lerback and Hanson (2017) found that “Journals invite too few women to referee” in an analysis of peer reviewers for journals published by the American Geological Union.

Lerback and Hanson (2018) looking at the data of approximately 24,000 submissions to the Biomedical open access eLife journal found that “women world wide, and researchers outside North America and Europe were less likely to be peer reviewers, editors and last authors.”

FURTHER SOURCES OF BIAS

Tompkins, Zhang and Heavlin (2017) reviewing refereed conference presentations and comparing single blind versus double blind reviews found that:

“reviewers rate papers with famous authors or authors from prestigious institutions, more highly.”

Some good news

A few more recent studies showed proportional representation at least with respect to percentage of women in the field and showed that older women editors were more likely to select women peer reviewers than men or younger women. Unfortunately, time limitations precludes further discussion of these data.



ISSUES WITH REPRESENTATION IN SUBJECTS OF RESEARCH AND RESEARCHERS

Who is studied and who does the studying? Two examples:

In April 2017, the Journal of Political Philosophy published a 30 plus page symposium on substantive normative issues in the black lives matter movement authored by all white Philosophers. As Scott Jaschik quotes from an open letter by Black scholar Professor Chistopher Lebron who has recently published a book on the subject:

Try to imagine my distaste when it was brought to my attention that your journal published a philosophical symposium on 'black lives matter' with not one philosopher of color represented...

Christopher Lebron quoted by S. Jaschik, *Inside Higher Education*, May 30, 2017

SECOND EXAMPLE

“Dynamics of conflict during the Ebola outbreak on the Democratic Republic of the Congo 2018-19”. by Kraemer *et al*, BMC Medicine, 2020, 18:113. doi.org/10.1186/212916-020-01574-1

Research was criticized because there were no Congolese researchers.
Research done by 17 non-Africans.

Some Twitter feedback:

It is disheartening that parachute researches (sic)
are still conducted for Africa...

And another

A Colonized narrative...



LINGUISTIC DISCRIMINATION: IMPACT ON CITATION

“...around 27,000 journals included in the Web of Science...indexes – most prominently, the Science Citation index...[mostly]...publish in English. However, more than 9,000 peer-reviewed scholarly journals are being published in other languages, with French (3,500), German (2,700), Spanish (2,300) and Chinese (1400) contributing the highest numbers. Most of these journals are excluded from journal indexes, thus perpetuating the ideology that English is the global academic lingua franca.”

Mary Jane Curry and Theresa Lillis (March 13,2018)

WHY SHOULD THIS MATTER?

1. **More countries and universities within those countries have changed their criteria for PhD graduation, hiring into tenure-track positions and requirements for tenure and promotion as a response to, among other pressures, the world rankings of universities. This includes preoccupation with Rank A journals, impact factors and the number of citations. This has had a significant impact in China and India.**
2. **If the number of citations and the impact factor of the journal is biased toward English language journals then people for whom English is a second language are disadvantaged in fair peer review.**
3. **A number of articles about disadvantages of LIC and English as a second language have focused on higher rejection rates and other related issues.**

RELATED ISSUES INCLUDE:

4. The tendency for authors from LIC who are rejected to submit papers to predatory publishers. Although recent research has illustrated that academics from high income countries also publish in predatory journals the data include findings such as:

“The regional distribution of both the publisher’s country and authorship is highly skewed, in particular Asia and Africa contributed three quarters” of submissions and publications [to predatory journals] by authors.

Shen and Bjork (2015)

ALGORITHMIC DISCRIMINATION

Recent empirical research has been published illustrating how discrimination operates in the lexical and structural construction of algorithmic data that, it is argued, “suppress” or “marginalize” certain topics in research so that they are less likely to appear in citation venues which, in turn, suppresses the citation of authors of certain kinds of research.

PEER REVIEW IN DIVERSITY RESEARCH AND THE HOAX PAPERS

The Grievance Studies Affair

Three authors submitted 20 made up fictional academic papers to a number of established feminist and/or left leaning journals to illustrate what they claimed was the lack of rigour in “grievance studies”. Seven of these papers were accepted despite seemingly weird, overwrought identity politics as topics with real lack of scholarly content or merit.

Like the examples cited before with the Black Lives Matter symposium and the Colonized style parachute research, questions are raised as to who gets to conduct research into some fields and some subjects of research.

Further, the Hoax papers raise the issue of how research into issues of marginalized people can be evaluated for excellence. What counts as good research in social justice research?

ISSUES RAISED BY ALL OF THESE MATTERS

1. **Who the peer reviewers are for articles related to social justice issues and discrimination matters.**

Excellent scholarship requires expert knowledge with respect to the subject matter. E.g., articles on feminist critiques of traditional ethical theories in philosophy should be reviewed by peers fully grounded and contributing to the literature of feminist ethical theories. A specialist in moral philosophy may know very little to nothing about this field of feminist inquiry and consequently dismiss the topic as marginal.

ISSUES RAISED BY ALL OF THESE MATTERS (CONTINUED)

2. Can some researchers be excluded from certain areas of inquiry because it is not part of their lived experience?

There are two kinds of knowledge – knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description. The problem identified here is captured by the issue of helicopter or parachute research where the subjects of the studies are absent from participation in the research in any meaningful way. The solution proposed is in broadening the representation of local researchers and the meaningful and engaged participation with the population studied. Also, the inclusion of researchers and authors from the studied population are important to include as they may represent both ways of knowing.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS AND ADVICE

Caroline, Rachel and Tess are going to talk about COPE's recent work so I won't. But I will note that COPE provides the following advice:

- It is important to remain unbiased by considerations to the nationality, religious or political beliefs, gender and other characteristics of the authors, origins of a manuscript or by commercial considerations.

Further, COPE recommends to:

“...be aware of sensitivities surrounding language issues that are due to the authors writing in a language that is not their first or most proficient language, and phrase the feedback appropriately and with due respect.”

PUBLISHERS TAKE ACTION

Many publishers and learned societies have introduced policies, training and DEI procedures and practices. These include:

1. The American Geophysical Union which has developed a policy to provide attention to identified groups including women, young scientists and minority reviewers as peer reviewers.
2. Some publishers are advising to include local researchers, particularly on research related to representation of marginalized/discriminated groups.
3. Organized sessions on Eliminating Racism in Editorial Practices are more frequent, such as, the International Academy of Nursing Editors' (INANE Virtual Conference).
4. Tracking demographic data of journals. Sociological Science, for example, tracks diversity and also states on their website "Sociological Science encourages submissions from all scholars, regardless of position, affiliation or country of origin."

SUGGESTED SUPPORT FOR ESL AUTHORS

5. Journals should provide advice to peer reviewers to try to evaluate the substance and the merit of an article by a ESL author while advising on the need for editorial services.
6. Journals should provide assistance to ESL authors in interpreting peer review critique.
7. Many publishers currently provide post acceptance technical support with editing but more helpful advice in language issues with revising should be provided.
8. As recommended by Pickler, Munro and Likis (2020) journal websites should post statements like the following from The Northwestern University Law Review's web page.

This journal is “fundamentally committed to diversity, in both its membership and its scholarship.”

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The American Association of University Presses summarized a number of progressive activities that have been undertaken by University Presses in the United States, including programs funded by the Mellon Foundation to “increase the recruitment and retention of those currently under-represented in publishing” through the Mellon University Press Diversity Fellowship Program. Coggins *et al* (2020).

I’m afraid I have to leave it here for my colleagues’ presentations and to leave time for questions and discussions.

Thanks for your attention and best wishes in your DEI work, Deborah

REFERENCES

Block, S. (2020). DHQ:
Digital Humanities Quarterly. 14(1).

COPE. (2017). *Guidelines:
Ethical guidelines for peer reviewers.*

Chen, S and B. Bjork (2015) *Predatory open
access: a longitudinal study of article volume
and market characteristics. BMC, 13: 230.*

Coggins, N. Lelanionapaeania et al. (2020).
*Towards inclusive scholarly publishing:
developments in the university press
community. Insights 33.*

Curry, Mary Jane and Theresa Lillis (2018).
*The Dangers of English as Linqua Franca
of Journals. Inside Higher Education.*
<https://www.insidehighereducation.com>

Glymour, B. and J. Herington (2019).
*Measuring the Biases that Matter:
The Ethical and Casual Foundations
for Measures of Fairness in Algorithms.*
Association for Computing Machinery.

REFERENCES

*Lerbeck, J. and Brook Hansen (2017)
Journals invite too few women to referee.
Nature. Thompkins, A., M. Zhang and W. Heavlin
(2017). Reviewer bias in single versus double
blind review. PNAS.*

*Pickler, R., Munro, C. and F. Likis (2020).
Addressing Racism in Editorial Practices.
Nurse Author & Editor. 30(4).*

*Topas, and Shilad Sen (2016). Gender
representation in journal editorial practices
in the mathematical sciences, PLoS One.*
