

Training, Supervision and Mentoring with Integrity: An Educational Scenario by the EnTIRE project

Background

Professor Donnadiou, working as an expert in computational archaeology at a prestigious university in Paris, is principal investigator for a large European research project on archaeological innovation. He is the leader of a challenging work package on sustainable archaeology, involving four other partners from universities in Bologna, Thessaloniki, Haifa and Oxford.¹ Donnadiou is the only full professor in the work package; the others are all early- or mid-career researchers with backgrounds ranging from archaeology and social science to ethics. One of the more ambitious work package deliverables is to develop a Global Ethics Code for Archaeological Research. The overall coordinator of the European research project is Professor Poortenwitz from Potsdam, famous for developing new approaches to surveying archaeological landscapes with drones and artificial-intelligence-led spatial data analysis.

Issue 1

To get a better idea of the kind of ethical issues experienced by archaeologists in the field, the members of the sustainable archaeology work package decide to conduct a series of surveys and interviews amongst archaeologists. Research protocols are submitted to the respective research ethics committees in the partner universities. Unfortunately, the research ethics committee in Haifa, which is dominated by members with a medical and life sciences background, keeps asking critical questions about the grounded theory approach proposed by the researchers. It turns out that the Haifa research ethics committee has only recently started to broaden their scope and assess research protocols outside of the fields of medicine and the life sciences. The Haifa research ethics

¹ The scenario is completely fictional.

committee members seem to lack a genuine appreciation and thorough understanding of certain research methodologies developed in

the social sciences and humanities that do not easily harmonize with the hypothetico-deductive approach that they are familiar with.

1a. Questions for Research Administrators

1. Should universities provide the members of their research ethics committee with regular training in research design, methodology and analysis of a wide variety of disciplines so that they are better equipped to deal with research protocols that come their way? What are your reasons? How could your institution provide such training in a way that is sustainable and cost-efficient?

1b. Questions for Research Ethics Committees and Research Integrity Offices

1. Are members of research ethics committees responsible for ensuring that they are sufficiently familiar with research designs, methodologies and analytical tools of a wide variety of disciplines in order to assess research protocols? What are your reasons? If there was a lack of knowledge regarding a particular research design or methodology, how might your committee address the knowledge gap in order to assess the protocol?
2. Do university research integrity offices have a duty to investigate complaints against their research ethics committee in cases where the committee is alleged to be biased against certain minority disciplines? Would your university's codes and guidelines relating to research integrity be able to capture such a complaint? If such a complaint was deemed to be founded, what sanctions and recommendations could your research integrity office impose on members of the research ethics committee?

1c. Questions for Researchers

1. If you found that your university's research ethics committee was either unwilling or unable to deal with your submitted protocol in a satisfactory manner, what steps could you take to address the issue?

Issue 2

Two years after the commencement of the project, the work on the Global Ethics Code for Archaeological Research has progressed to a stage where a set of ethical principles for archaeological research has been developed. Thus, the focus of Professor Donnadiou's work

package has shifted towards the formulation of procedures that universities and research organizations can employ to promote the Ethics Code, monitor compliance, undertake investigations and apply sanctions for violations of the Ethics Code.

2a. Questions for Research Administrators

1. Assuming that your institution has adopted the Global Ethics Code for Archaeological Research, what would be the best ways to promote it to your staff and students?
2. How could your institution ensure that the relevant members of staff and students had adequately engaged with the Global Ethics Code for Archaeological Research?
3. Should participation in training sessions relating to the new Code be obligatory for students and staff? What are your reasons?
4. Should those that attend the training be obligated to pass some form of assessment? What are your reasons? What form could that assessment take?

2b. Questions for Research Ethics Committees and Research Integrity Offices

1. Should alleged violations of discipline-specific ethics codes be adjudicated/assessed by university-based research integrity offices, or should this be left in the hands of professional research integrity bodies? What are your reasons?
2. Whose duty is it to monitor researcher compliance with discipline-specific codes of ethics?
3. Are discipline-specific ethics codes relevant for institutional research ethics committees that operate within the standards of institutional and/or national research ethics regulations and guidelines? In what ways can discipline-specific codes inform research ethics committee decision-making at the institutional level?
4. Assuming that a complaint is made to your university against a researcher for an alleged violation of a discipline-specific code of ethics, how would your research ethics committee navigate the complaint when the alleged violation is not explicitly covered by your institution's code of ethics or the overarching national code?

2c. Questions for Researchers

1. What are the responsibilities of researchers to discipline-specific codes of ethics? For which research ethics codes are researchers ultimately responsible? National codes, institutional codes, discipline-specific codes or all of them? What are your reasons?
2. As a researcher, how would you navigate a possible tension or inconsistency between your discipline's research ethics code and that of your institution?
3. What are the respective responsibilities of a) academic societies, b) professional bodies and c) universities for promoting, and ensuring compliance with, discipline-specific research ethics codes?

Issue 3

In addition to their work on the Global Ethics Code for Archaeological Research, the partners of the sustainable archaeology work package, led by Professor Donnadiu, have been cooperating successfully on several publications. Recently though, work package collaboration on one particular paper, with Dr. MacQuoid from Oxford as the lead author, has faced a problem. The paper advances a new ethical approach to the issue of repatriating the famous Elgin marbles.² One of the contributors, Dr. Angelopoulos, does not agree with the line of argumentation developed in the paper. Repeated discussions of the matter do not result in a consensus. Consequently, Dr. Angelopoulos decides that he cannot continue to contribute to the paper. Subsequently, the paper is swiftly finalized and submitted to *Archaeological Review*, one of the top journals in the field.

Professor Donnadiu contributed some pivotal elements to the paper, which had earned him

the position of senior author (and the last position in the list of authors). Yet, he had not been closely involved in the increasingly acerbic discussions leading up to Dr. Angelopoulos departure from the list of contributors. Unsurprisingly, therefore, Professor Donnadiu is flabbergasted when he is contacted by Dr. MacQuoid, who informs Professor Donnadiu that he had been contacted by the research integrity office at Oxford University, because they had received a complaint from Dr. Angelopoulos alleging that Dr. MacQuoid was biased in the research on the Elgin marbles paper and had omitted to declare a conflict of interest. Specifically, Dr. Angelopoulos alleges that Dr. MacQuoid had failed to disclose the fact that he had been invited to sit on the board of trustees of the British Museum, which has a vested interest in ensuring that the Elgin marbles continue to be displayed in the museum.

² These marbles are named after Lord Elgin who removed them from the Parthenon on the Acropolis in Athens and shipped them to Britain in the early 19th century. Ever since there has been a dispute between the Greeks and the British about the return of the marbles to Athens. Currently, the

Elgin marbles are still in the British Museum in London. In 2009, the Greeks opened a new Acropolis museum that displays the remaining Parthenon marbles. It would be eager and well equipped to house the Elgin marbles as well, thus exhibiting the complete set of Parthenon marbles.

3a. Questions for Research Ethics Committees and Research Integrity Offices

- 1) By referring to The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, what (if any) are the grounds for the complaint? What standards of good research practice has Dr. MacQuoid violated (if any)?
- 2) If there are grounds for a case against Dr. MacQuoid, what additional details would the research integrity office require in order to reach a conclusion?
- 3) Assuming you have all the necessary information relating to the complaint, what would be an appropriate verdict for the research integrity office to come to? Why have you come to that conclusion?

3b. Questions for Researchers

- 1) Was Dr. Angelopoulos' decision to make a complaint against Dr. MacQuoid the most appropriate response? Could Dr. Angelopoulos have approached the problem differently without involving the research integrity office?
- 2) By referring to The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, what (if any) are the grounds for the complaint? What standards of good research practice has the Dr. MacQuoid violated (if any)?
- 3) If there are grounds for a case against Dr. MacQuoid, what additional details would you need to determine whether Dr. MacQuoid had a conflict of interest?
- 4) Does a conflict of interest guarantee bias in the results and conclusions? What are the reasons for your answer?

Issue 4

At the next consortium meeting of the European research project, the coordinator, Professor Poortenwitz, has a discussion with Professor Donnadiou regarding the problems encountered with the paper on the Elgin marbles that led to the complaint by Dr. Angelopoulos against Dr. MacQuoid. Poortenwitz claims that Donnadiou has failed to appropriately manage the sustainable

archeology work package: specifically, he says that the problem arose, in part, because Donnadiou had failed to be a good mentor and supervisor. Professor Poortenwitz argues that Donnadiou, as the work package leader and the most senior scientist in the group, should not have adopted a “hands-off” approach, which has now resulted in the whole thing blowing up in his face.

4a. Questions for Researchers

- 1) Is Professor Donnadiou at all responsible for the situation that led to the complaint being made by Dr. Angelopoulos' against Dr. MacQuoid? As principle investigator for the sustainable archaeology WP and senior author for the paper in question, should Professor Donnadiou have proactively intervened in order to avoid this situation arising? What are your reasons?
- 2) What could Professor Donnadiou have done in order to enact his duties as principal investigator?
- 3) How could Professor Donnadiou have fostered a culture of research integrity within his WP?
- 4) As overall coordinator for the research project, is Professor Poortenwitz at all responsible for the situation that arose within the sustainable archaeology work package? What are your reasons?
- 5) How could Professor Poortenwitz have fostered a culture of research integrity within the project as a whole?

4b. Questions for Research Administrators

- 1) What are your university or research organization's responsibilities or duties when it comes to ensuring that students and members of staff not only understand the standards governing conflicts of interest, but adequately disclose those conflicts in their research activities?
- 2) In what ways does your university or research organization engage principal investigators and project coordinators in order to ensure that they consistently and proactively foster a culture of research integrity in the projects they manage?

Suggested Resources

For Researchers:

ECCRI: [The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#)

COPE: [Conflicts of interest / Competing interests](#)

ICMJE: [Conflicts of Interest](#)

Case: [Lack of ethics committee approval?](#)

Article: [On the Importance of Research Ethics and Mentoring](#)

Article: [Supervisors and Academic Integrity: Supervisors as Exemplars and Mentors](#)

Article: [Research Integrity Practices from the Perspective of Early-Career Researchers](#)

For Research Administrators:

ECCRI: [The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#)

COPE: [Conflicts of interest / Competing interests](#)

ICMJE: [Conflicts of Interest](#)

Article: [Working with Research Integrity—Guidance for Research Performing Organisations: The Bonn PRINTEGER Statement](#)

Website: [The Hong Kong Principles for assessing researchers: Fostering research integrity](#)

Website: [European Research Ethics](#)

Resource: [Toolbox in Responsible Conduct of Research](#)

For Research Ethics Committees and Research Integrity Offices:

ECCRI: [The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#)

COPE: [Conflicts of interest / Competing interests](#)

ICMJE: [Conflicts of Interest](#)

Website: [Institutional Review Blog](#)

EUREC: [European Network of Research Ethics Committees](#)

Website: [All Trials](#)

Case: [Should we always follow the decisions of Ethics committees?](#)

Case: [An unethical ethics committee?](#)