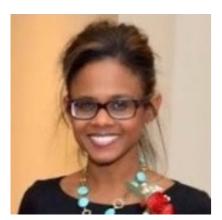# Just Ideas? The Status and Future of Publication Ethics in Philosophy

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COPE North American Seminar 2019

Wyndham Hotel, Philadelphia, PA

May 3, 2019

Core Project Team

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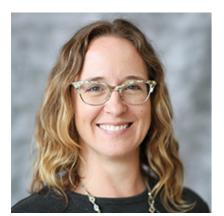of Philosophy
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The Project

This project seeks to foster greater awareness among humanities scholars and editors about ethical issues in philosophy publishing.... [It] acknowledges that research and publication ethics in the humanities are in many ways and for good reasons complex matters and that, unlike in the sciences, there have not been broad efforts in the humanities to make existing expectations and practices explicit and to develop shared best practices across various subfields and disciplines.

White Paper

Our white paper responds to this disparity by providing insight into the current status of publication ethics in philosophy and seeks to offer a starting point for a collective discussion within the philosophical community about what core values and practices might be shared and/or are in need of development.

Available now for public comment:

http://publication-ethics.org/white-paper

Why It Matters

Publishing has a direct, albeit complex, relationship to issues of marginalization, equity, and diversity in philosophy as a profession.

Therefore, questions of authorship, citation, and review practices — which are central to publication ethics — cannot be separated from issues of diversity and equity.

Issues of fairness and responsibility arise where research explicitly relates to, draws on, represents, and affects marginalized groups and their experiences.

The goal?
Intentionality.

Methodology (1)

- Survey existing explicit policies and statements on publication ethics (based on COPE principles) of 265 journals in philosophy

- Convene six focus groups with journal editors and members of American Philosophical Association (APA) leadership committees

  - Three in person at 2018 APA meetings, three via Zoom

- Convene two focus groups with representatives from publishers of philosophy journals and from COPE

  - One in person, one via Zoom

Methodology (2)

- Obtain community feedback

    - In-person "scholars' conversations" and ad hoc chats

    - Comments via email and anonymous comments form

    - Presentations at all three 2019 APA meetings

    - Open-comment period on white paper (happening now)

- Meet with other societies' executives

    - Presentation of findings, discussion of possible collaboration

- Read, read, read

    - Public Zotero library (>700 items):

    https://www.zotero.org/groups/2272596/publication_ethics

Conclusions

- No agreement on (and even some resistance to) idea of discipline-wide best practices

- Wide agreement that individual journals need to be more transparent (i.e., follow COPE guidelines)

- Lack of clarity as to who is responsible for handling potential problems

- Wide agreement that more diversity of authorship and scholarship is desired and needed, but no clear sense how to achieve this goal

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Recommendations

1. Discuss and disclose

2. Take steps to diversify journal leadership

3. Encourage collaboration among scholarly societies

4. Continue to improve peer review

Final Thoughts

- Developing good guidance, standards, and policies is time intensive

- Many journals are looking for guidance on how to proceed, but time involved in can prevent them from undertaking this work

- Support from publishers, scholarly societies, and institutions is very welcome, especially in bringing together editors and other community stakeholders

Project website: http://publication-ethics.org/

Project email: PhilPubEthics@gmail.com