

INTEGRITY: FRAGMENTED & OUTSOURCED

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Previous research
bit.ly/fear_of_scooping

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Siloed Social Responsibility

This poster presents preliminary findings of a case study on the historical development of Finnish research ethics (RE) and research integrity (RI) regulation, especially Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity. Sources used thus far are archival records and contemporary literature.

RE&RI together with the ever buzzing open science (as in accessible, verifiable, reusable) are all about the social responsibility and moral quality of research. Unfortunately they exist in separate silos, even outside research community. In Finland, where learned societies are many but uninfluential, governmental bodies, like ministries and funders, direct course of research policy discussion, f.e. in the case of recent Open Science & Research Initiative.

Finnish research policy officials are often former researchers, with strong ties to almae matres and former colleagues, and stately authority and resources have undoubtedly helped hasten progress on many fronts.

Still, when evaluating the national RE&RI landscape from 1991 on, I have recognised several challenges. The network of operators is complicated and units underresourced and understaffed. The ideal is self-regulation, but large portion of that 'self', the community, is underrepresented, especially early careers and in the RI board also natural sciences other than medicine and bio science.

Despite some shortcomings, Finnish RE&RI regulation is progressive by international standards and can generally be regarded as a trustworthy watchdog. By addressing its challenges it will continue to act as such.

Lessons on Causes

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1. Weak community: Policy for science actors, such as learned societies, are weak, passive or otherwise unable to proactively instigate research community wide discussion and action.
2. Preconceptions: Many still consider, especially among natural sciences, their work value free. Equally problematic is when professional ethics is seen as a binary condition (have it or don't), hence unteachable.
3. Extant structures: If RE&RI structures are built on the terms of institutional architecture and available existing personnel, instead of content matter, result is bound to be fragmented.

Risk Scenarios

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1. Closed science: Technical side of openness is overemphasized over social and cultural in the current discussion. I have detected a positive connection between awareness of RE&RI and willingness to share.
2. Lack of foresight: Significant part of research is done by early careers, as seniors focus on funding and administration. They are the ones who f.e. recognise p-hacking, know social media and are vulnerable to predatory practices.
3. Resource inefficiency: In a scattered system there are many overlapping functions. Having many stops and shops is also a waste of end-user resources.

Case Finland

RI and RE boards and their responsible bodies

Advisory Board on RI Members 1992-2012 (n=52)

Min. Social Affairs and Health

