CIRAS TALK #1: NAVIGATING INTELLECTUAL LABOUR

This conversation arose from having spent time in and outside of academia, working in various capacities towards individual and collective intellectual contributions. The intelligentsia, particularly in academia, is increasingly becoming more inclusive in practice about giving credit where credit is due. Some of us may be coming to the realisation that practices that we may have once been part of, knowingly or unknowingly, are now currently making way for a more ethical assessment of intellectual labour. As such, some of us may find navigation some tricky questions about intellectual work - have we (or another) done enough work on a piece to deserve authorship? What is the best way to discuss credits for an intellectual contribution?

These and some more 'grey' questions are discussed here below as a means to answer or guide any dilemmas that early career researchers or students might have regarding the 'worth' of their or others' (intangible) intellectual work. We thank Prof. Arjya Majumdar for taking the time to meticulously answer these questions for our peers.

These are solely the views of the speaker and moderator, in parts tempered with the contributions of the audience. If you know or feel strongly and differently, please let us know and we can input your suggestions in the online version of this document for future reference.

QUESTIONS & THEIR ANSWERS:

1. As a student or researcher fresh into academia, how would I understand the concepts of authorship in a research paper & acknowledgments? What kind of labour would entitle me to these?

Fundamentally, the concept of authorship is firmly tied to the ownership of idea. If you have participated in the research in a way that contributes to improving the existing literature, or adding to the research idea in a way that has taken the paper to a publishable or improved level, it would entitle you to authorship. It is also tied in with responsibilities. It is best to conceptualise who does what at the start of the project, and have clear expectations of contributions that would entitle one to authorship on delivery of the commitment. This might vary on various levels – expertise, seniority, time and visibility (these factors will be illustrated later). Essentially, your contribution has to add to the impact of the paper drastically, otherwise it can be listed as acknowledgements.

2. If you have contributed to a colleagues' paper by correcting ideas or lending specialised expertise, do you deserve authorship or acknowledgement – how does one decide?

It depends on the extent of the colleague's contribution. In case you are working on a topic that you are not familiar with and flesh out the idea with an expert in that area, or if you consult a colleague about and idea and they assist in consolidating the hypothesis/research question/design; then this is not deserving of authorship. Sharing of ideas and sound-boarding them off colleagues is an accepted and even

expected exchange within academic camaraderie, and is essential for the growth of ideas. You might even have an eureka moment when bouncing off ideas with peers but that may only, and only if you feel, entitle them to a thank you in the acknowledgments.

The process of research can be divided into three stages – ideation → prep work (literature review, is the question relevant to be answered?) → actual work (fleshing out, field work, quantitative analysis etc.). Ideally, the first two are considered part of the preparation and the intellectual labour towards authorship counts from the beginning of the actual work. Unless your colleague's contribution has added to this part, it is best to thank their contribution in acknowledgements. However, it is always good to discuss this with the contributors ahead of the conversation (at least, if it is an intended consultation) and clarify expectations to avoid bad blood.

3. Do you think that all intellectual contribution deserves remuneration? If so, what are the forms these remunerations take place?
Also answered, How does one go about defining appropriate remuneration for one's intellectual labour, especially in a collaborative project and in terms of publication? & (mostly wrt student papers) Do marks compensate for acknowledgment/authorship credits?

While all intellectual labour needs to be credited, the form of crediting the work might happen in four ways -

1. Co-authorship – when the person has put in substantial amount of work into preparing the paper and the underlying research required. Speaker cites an example of when a junior colleague has applied for a research grant, and the author had collaborated on the proposal. Post receiving the grant, the colleague left and had not worked on the project or the resulting publication, in which case, they were not given authorship but thanked in acknowledgments for their assistance in securing funding.

2. Research support – If the support provided has been in the form of preparatory work – expert advise or assistance with literature review, it doesn't guarantee ownership of idea. An acknowledgement of the effort is becoming. This is generally in respect to work done by research assistants or students (although their contribution may vary).

3. Stipend – If the project or employer allows, some research positions are open to being paid for their work. This is mostly for research assistance provided but the contribution can vary. Again, the contribution credits depends on the ownership of the idea, and the expectations set about authorship at the start of the work. Some publications may carry the organizational name instead of individual authors, however the authors may be acknowledged somewhere on the document. This helps the authors to take credit for their contribution in their resumes. Of course, there can be arrangements where you 'ghost write' research for a fees, and if that's what you mean by research stipend then that is understood. This is mostly a corporate process though.

4. Marks – Generally, term papers submitted as part of assignments are not at a level to qualify for original research or publication. Marking is obviously done on set expectations of quality, content, originality and writing skills (or as the instructor decides). Often the work done in term papers is preliminary (or redundant) due to various limitations of time and ability. In some rare cases

though, they might have enough intellectual content to warrant potential for publication. However, being publication-worthy can still be a huge leap away, and will require adding to and finessing the initial draft towards publication. When a teacher contributes to such efforts, they are warranted authorship, and usually first authorship. However, this is subject to conversation about expectations and must be decided before furthering the work on the paper. For a student to be entitled to authorship, they will have to show substantial engagement with the research and writing process. In case a student's work assists or inspires a larger body of work by the teacher, the student maybe credited for their assistance, but no authorship is given.

4. **How do you acknowledge everyone who work on research projects in the published outcomes of the research without running up a list of co-authors and risking the publication seem ridiculous?**

It can be crazy to see some papers that have been authored by an exorbitant number of authors, and these are indeed generally ridiculed within writing circuits. However, this is very discipline-specific and dependent on research design. Here, an audience contributed that having many authors in a paper is not uncommon in psychology. Also, in cross-jurisdictional or large-scale studies spanning over samples across the world, there might be multiple authors. In social sciences, it is common to find 5-10 authors in a comparative study paper, however there is a continuous and common thread of study that ties the work together. Some disciplines have guidelines elaborating who needs to be given authorship and in which order, and in some cases, even those participating in collection of field data may be required to be given. This will obviously increase the number of authors.

In some other disciplines, this is not that clearly defined and upto the collaborators to decide on authorship. This should be a part of the first discussion, where these expectations should be outlined and subjected to deliverance of certain responsibilities/commitment to the project. Also, researchers must realise that giving somebody authorship does not take away from your ownership of the idea and credit for the paper's impact. However, authorship comes with great responsibility and at the stake of credible deliverance. As the late Madhav Menon put it,(paraphrasing here) there are two types of paper – one that is original and one that is cited. The kind of work that it takes to create a paper based on pure original idea is rare and doe not occur for many academic productions. The second is more common, and mandates that the source of inspiration and reference be cited for the sake of authority.

Expert assistance based on special skills like data analysis and making sense of data might credit you to authorship (2nd, 3rd maybe), especially if that contribution adds to the crux of an article; however assisting in data collection often does not make a cut for authorship, but is acknowledged.

However, there are also checks installed by reputed publishers (A star journals) who ask the authors to clarify the work undertaken by each author, and in some cases, may ask for one or more contributors to be deleted if they do not meet the criteria for authorship (authorative/relevant). This is part of the submission process to the journals, and one must be willing to pull their weight if they don't want to get left out of co-authorship.

In reality though, determining the authorship status, sans disciplinary guidelines can be tricky, especially if no discussion has taken place about this early on in the project. We also need to acknowledge the reason that multiple authorship was looked down upon, and why that could be up for a change. If you have multiple authors, they are generally referred to in citations and references as Bhadra P. et al, the rest of the authors get relegated to et. al. and this might affect their recognition in the field, and also hurt some egos. Although, now Google will automatically count citation for you, no matter where you are on the list, if that particular paper is cited or referenced online. However, it maybe seen that in search indexing via Google algorithm, the first few authors hold a higher position and this might affect their h-index compared to those of other authors listed later on. So there is still a question of order of authorship that can be very tricky.

5. **How does one decide on first author or second author? In collaborative projects between peers, how do we go about defining authorship credits?**

The best way to go about this is to discuss this beforehand and come to a decision on authorship ranking, based on expected effort and contribution. Of course, realistically one has to be aware of the element of power and how it works within your academic setup and in respect to the persons you are collaborating with. It might also be favourable for a young academic to at first pair with a senior researcher as first author, since that might ensure greater visibility for the paper (based on the senior researcher's reputation in the field). However, in some case, the senior researcher might concede first authorship to the junior researcher, because of their efforts and contribution to the work. This is usually done by established academics, and is a good way to boost younger colleagues and respect their ideas and labour. They still reap the tangible benefits of their work – citation index, h-index etc. which using their earned privilege to enable the younger authors.

The other way to do this, especially among equal contributors and peers, can be to go alphabetically, as per first name or last name. Whatever way you prefer, this conversation needs to be had before hand to avoid confusion and conflict later.

Although in some cases, it might be that despite set responsibilities and authorship stakes being outlined, one or more of the authors fail to deliver because of circumstances or other limitations. In that case, it is best to follow up with them and given them enough opportunities to deliver on the research support promised. If at the end of it, they do not participate, still keep them in the loop when you are submitting the paper for journals, and on acceptance, you can make a call on whether to take their name off the authors list or keep – depending on the pros and cons of doing so. One of the audience members suggested that it best to have this conversation with the 'non-participating' co-author much before an offer of publication is received. In their experience, more time and laxity has made the conversation more painful and contentious. In the end, it depends on whether you have set down expectations and agreed upon them mutually – preferably in writing or some form of documentation. At which point, it is a good idea to keep them informed of the progress of project, and where needed, ask them to either commit/adhere to their part of the agreement or to

curtly withdraw from authorship, with credit being given in acknowledgments for any contributions made so far in the project. The key is to clearly state the expected contribution to the final product. See previous example of a young researcher who collaborated with the speaker on a research proposal and grant but then left the organization and did not work further on the research. She was not given authorship on the papers that came out of the research, only acknowledged. Some authors are brought in for their academic repute and the quality of critical analysis that they offer that elevates the level of the paper, this may not be proportional to the amount of grunt work put in by others but may still avail them first authorship. Whatever the case-to-case scenario may be, it is always best to have this conversation before starting rather than expect these things to be implicitly understood, because people's understanding might be different and that could lead to conflicts and make the project suffer.

6. **Some students may approach instructors with a desire to convert their IRPs and Thesis papers to publications – does the supervisor deserve any credit for guiding the project? What form does it take? In what cases can the supervisor not take credit for their contribution?**
Also answered, If you have contributed to a colleagues' paper by correcting ideas or lending specialised expertise, do you deserve authorship or acknowledgement – how does one decide?

Very few thesis papers are deemed worthy of taking to the next level. An instructor should only commit to contributing to a paper when you can contribute to substantially – which generally involves rewriting the entire paper or chapter or adding a substantive section(s). If the contribution takes this form, then authorship is warranted. However, again the deliverables are made clear when the student approaches the instructor for guidance. Generally, the amount of work or analysis needed to elevate the paper to become publication ready is most often difficult to come by for the student but the faculty may have the training experience and subject authority to shape it better. It might also be in the interest of the student to co-author with the faculty, since adding a name of repute in the authorship makes it more likely it is to be cited or published. This is of course for quality journals. Some students publish in other kinds of journals or a student may indeed by capable or have other mentorship to assist them in writing a good paper. In such case, if the faculty's contribution is limited to a review or sound-boarding, or any other form of feedback then it does not constitute authorship.

7. **AUDIENCE QUESTION- What is the credibility of an academic paper which is part of a thesis research; published prior to completion of the thesis? Can it be a part of one's thesis eventually? And how does supervisor acknowledgement or authorship work in this context?**
Audience member response: In case of PhD the synopsis is considered to a joint intellectual property of doctoral student and supervisor, hence doctoral student will always be the 1st author and supervisor are second or third authors.

Speaker: Doctorate by research is a thing, and such candidates are generally required to publish during their doctoral studies. Even in JGU, doctoral scholars are encouraged to publish at least two papers during their doctoral studies. So there is generally no problem in publishing a paper based on the subject of your thesis prior to the thesis publication. It is also not a problem if you want to then bring in this prior research, conducted by yourself, into the thesis. In this instance, your publication is body of work that contributes to the literature on which you are building your thesis and can be treated as such. If your research amazing enough to get published in a journal,especially a peer reviewed one, then it lends a credibility to that part of the work and there should be no problem in that being part of the thesis as a chapter. Of course, depending on the journal copyright guidelines on reproduction and your own doctoral studies/institute's guidelines, you might have to rephrase the content slightly, which is also a good opportunity to add or edit things in the first paper.

As for supervisor credits, it depends on whether the supervisor feedback was substantial or how much they worked on the paper. Remember that when a supervisor is co-authoring the paper, it also adds to Supervisor's h-index – so the question that you have to answer is – have they done enough to deserve it? It also depends on the relationship you share with your supervisor. If you are working as a researcher, talk to your supervisor about how and if they want to share credits. However, if you don't want to, you can always publish even without their go ahead, as long as it does not disrespect their contribution, if any.

8. **If senior academics/supervisors ask you to contribute/draft op-eds for them, what kind of expectations should you have with regards to credits and transparency of acknowledgment?**

The problem of ghost-writing exists in all organizations. The easiest way to go about accepting this is if you are paid by someone else to write an article. This is usually a commercial practice practice though, although some research and academic institutes may operate in this manner – calling it a research stipend.

This gets more tricky without any kind of compensation. Realistically, it boils down to the relationship you have with your employer/supervisor and the dynamics of the institution. Some of the stakes to consider – does their (boss') impression of me depend on whether I agree to ghost-write and will it affect me negatively if I don't? If I refuse, is that going to harm me or reflect upon the opinion that my supervisor has? Is there a possibility to have a conversation about acknowledgement or by-line? If it is, it would be pertinent to ask and then leave it upto them (and the PR/News agency) to come back to you with the best way to share credit with you. If you are the one taking this decision, a good way to acknowledge contributors can be by adding a by-line such as "with inputs from NAME, NAME". Sometimes, the News agency or print media may also prefer the article to be published as an opinion piece by an established academic or practitioner, which is what you may not yet be. It is a fact that the readership may not be inclined to hear an authorative opinion from a "younger" person, no matter how rational or well-researched the arguments. This can be a very tricky prospect, and it is generally best to play it by the ear and also understand the

practicalities of the industry(ies) involved. In the end, the one doing the ghost-writing does not have a lot of power to change the situation unless the senior practitioner/ supervisor/academician decides to respect your time and effort. It is also worthy knowing, and this might be some help to both parties, that if the piece is being published online and in a media that is not behind a paywall, google will index the article against your name, whether you have been mentioned as a co-author or even acknowledged in the by-lines. This lends some credibility to when you mention this on your CV as research support, and with links. So as a supportive gesture, academics may consider acknowledging student contributions even in media pieces in some form. At the same time, students are encouraged to publish, or assist in publishing, even when they are in school.

9. If you organize or attend a talk event, and then use some of the discussions presented by other panelists/speakers to write an article/op-ed, should you and how do you credit their contribution?

This question arose from an instance of having witnessed this scenario and the author not having acknowledged the opinions voiced by the panelists. It could be that the op-ed was in the draft stage at the time of the talk, and the opinions are independent but shared between the author and the panelists. However, the speaker cited an instance of having been in a similar position where he and many other practitioners, lawyers and academics were part of a vivid and enthralling discussion that took place on the event platform and also carried on beyond it over tea and dinner. Post this, one of the members (senior academic as well) wrote a blog post on the topic that was the subject of the discussion, citing a lot of ideas and opinions shared during the discussion. What the speaker found commendable was the byline that ran at the end of the post - "Motivation for this post arose from immensely helpful discussion between so and so (names of discussants) held at (specifics of event)". This was a very ethical and gracious way to acknowledge a collective contribution, even if one does not remember who said what, and/or the essence of an idea proffered by a colleague (which, of course, the author fleshed out in his writing) and also to avoid any misattributions or resentments from the other colleagues who were part of this event and may come across this blog post later on. This is for ideas sprung through intellectual discourse.

On the other hand, it is definitely problematic to quote verbatim from the recorded lecture or discussion without clearly attributing authorship to the contributor/speaker.