

Editorial note: Academic integrity

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A continuing increase in scientific misconduct and fraud, among researchers with great prestige as well as ordinary students, has repeatedly shocked the academic world. Therefore the students of the Von Humboldt College, the honours program of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Utrecht University, dedicated their project in 2012-2013 to the subject of academic integrity. We as aspiring scientists should never forget that research can only be called 'science' when methodologically and ethically just performed. Furthermore, all our research is fed back into society as an increase of knowledge. Even if our questions merely have limited (exploratory) value and the results do not immediately resolve big issues, we still have to adhere to the methodological rules. Otherwise we undermine our entire purpose: understanding the world we live in. Any increase in understanding enriches us all. Any failure in accurately and truthfully conducting research or presenting our results holds us all back.

This issue of *Social Cosmos*, exclusively containing literature reviews, is dedicated to the problem of academic dishonesty. The articles presented have been categorized in four sets, preceded by a more theoretical article describing the relation between scientific misconduct and the societal context. This article is followed by the first set of two articles about ethics in research, the first describing some well known historical examples of ethically problematic research, the second one describing the problems of covert observational research.

The main body of this issue is concerned with descriptions of and perspectives on scientific misconduct and fraud – and circumstances conducive to this – in different settings. We focus on several institutional settings, concerning the pharmaceutical industry and sports scholarships, and then proceed to discuss the role of ethical misconduct related to students and researchers themselves.

We hope to give the reader not only a clear perspective on controversies and conducive environments, but also an understanding of the basic, essential importance of conducting research in an ethical just manner.