

## PLAGIARISM IN LITHUANIAN ACADEMIA: FORMAL DEFINITION AND INFORMAL ATTITUDE

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**Abstract:** The paper presents some research results derived from a national project “Scientific research ethics in Lithuania: analysis of the situation” (MIP-37/2010, 2010–2011). It aims to identify gaps between the formal definition of plagiarism and actual understanding of the phenomenon in Lithuanian academic community. Therefore, content analysis of the definitions of plagiarism in approved Ethic Codes ( $N = 21$ ) of Lithuanian science institutions and the academic community’s (ranging from professors and principal researchers to lecturers and technical assistants ( $n = 424$ )) attitudes concerning plagiarism expressed in a questionnaire survey was carried out. Ethic Codes were analysed using a semantic form of “plagiarism” as a coding unit. Results of this analysis demonstrate that discursive presentation of the phenomenon is more frequently related to students’ academic activities rather than academics’ research. Moreover, the Codes do not give clear-set directions how to avoid plagiarism and, thus, imply very little about plagiarism management at both the level of students and academics, although the consequences of identified plagiarism are much more clearly defined to the former than the latter. The results of content analysis of the answers to an open-ended question about the main research ethics problems observed in Lithuanian academia suggest that plagiarism can be regarded as an issue with a broad understanding, including copyright, forced authorship inclusion etc. However, the data are not sufficient to make a conclusion to what extent it is problematic and whether and to what extent consequences of the phenomenon are perceived. This calls for further research into the issue and a need for open discussion on it in the academic society.

### Introduction

A query of the term “plagiarism” in a database of scholarly papers such as EBSCO yields over 3000 items. The papers cover a vast field of plagiarism issues, from the ones of “what was borrowed and never paid back” or simply copied in deep belief of following a proper tradition in *belles-lettres* (see e.g. Goodale, 1938; Masterson, 1940; Parker, 1945; Chester, 1949; Furtado, 1950; Jameson, 1993 etc.) to the ones focusing on contemporary challenges faced by journal editors, students’ plagiarism and its preventive means in the context of ICT development (Elmore, 2010; den Ouden and van Wijk, 2011; Insley, 2011).

Plagiarism, which is defined as “the presentation of the work of another person as your own ideas or intellectual property” (Elmore, 2010: 20) in this paper, constitutes one of the key forms of scientific misconduct. With a variety of twists such as paraphrasing, ghost-writing, forgetting the quotation marks, obscuring the sources etc. (Martin, 1994; Liles and Rozalski, 2004), plagiarism is reported to be one of the most widely spread violations of academic ethics among students (see Honig and Bedi, 2012) and seemingly one of the best known to the public due to, e.g. extensive media coverage on recently revoked doctorates from Hungary’s president Pal Schmitt in 2012 or the German Defence Minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg in 2011 (who later resigned from their positions).

Plagiarism is not only an academic issue. It concerns public interest at large. As any other major research misconduct, it discredits the acknowledgements given by higher education institutions to their graduates, diminishes public trust in professional qualifications and social institutions in general. Moreover, cases of scholars' plagiarism undermine reputation of the researcher, weaken universities' chances to attract external funding and waste resources for research (cf. Hudson, 2008). Plagiarism hurts the plagiarised author, deceives a reader and gives undeserved merits to the plagiarist (Bouville 2008: 315–317), which can incite society's feeling of social injustice and, in radical cases, cynicism and alienation among its members. Hence, many academic institutions have made attempts to define research misconduct in honour codes, set policies and procedures for dealing with research misconduct, raise awareness of plagiarism by special courses and tutorials, introduce plagiarism detection software, establish academic ethics committees to both reduce cases of plagiarism and foster research integrity alongside with institutional excellence (Maurer et al., 2006). Yet, as Cole and McCabe (1996) note, these measures sometimes may account for confusion, concluding that "an honor code is an important, but not essential, tool in promoting academic integrity". In this respect, social cognitive theory or social learning theory (Bandura, 2009/1986) may be more explanative: observation of others' behaviour, lack or presence of articulated standards and weak or strong self-regulation and self-efficacy can respectively determine whether research integrity is upheld or transgressed. McCabe and Trevino's (1993) study has identified that "the perception of peers' behaviour was the most influential contextual variable, suggesting that social learning theory may be particularly useful for understanding academic dishonesty behaviour among college students" (p. 533).

This conclusion parallels researches by Kaptein and Schwartz (2008) on effectiveness of business codes in business context. Their research has yielded conflicting results, which raises a question about the role of the context in studying plagiarism and its causes. Causes for plagiarism have been in the researchers' focus for several decades. Yet, as Honig and Bedi (2012), Elliott et al. (2013) and others point out, the major body of this research is centred on cases of students' plagiarism while attention to academics' plagiarism is rather scarce and knowledge in this field is missing.

Another issue that we aim to address in this paper is the importance of a contextual perspective, particularly, a cultural one, in researching plagiarism. There is a body of research on the impact of the cultural background of students and their engagement in plagiarism behaviour (for some examples see Martinet al., 2009; Sisti, 2007). For example, Martin (2012) challenged a prevalent assumption that, e.g. Asian students tend to plagiarise more often than Western students because of the differences between cultures of collectivism and individualism. His study provides evidence that popular expectations that Asian students are more prone to replicating rather than producing innovative ideas based on educational material because of the importance of common norms, respect and (consequently) fear to contradict an elderly person (or one higher in social or institutional hierarchy) were ungrounded and stereotypes-based. According to Pupovac et al. (2008), "[p]revalence of plagiarism largely depends on the cultural characteristics of the academic setting and the degree to which plagiarism is implicitly allowed or explicitly accepted in the academic community and wider society" (p.

14). They proceed that post-communist countries which typically have a high rate of corruption and are “characterized by a high level of tolerance toward cheating” (ibid.) as well as lack of individual responsibility can have a higher rate of violations of research ethics. Although this idea is supported by other similar studies (Ivanauskas, 2006; Pučėtaitė and Lämsä, 2008; Ryan, 2006; Vasiljeviene and Freitakienė, 2002; Žiliukaitė et al., 2006) it is little empirically evidenced. Therefore, in this paper we take Lithuania as a case of a post-soviet context and attempt to bring some knowledge on the factual situation concerning plagiarism. In Lithuania this is the first study of its kind.

To sum up, this paper attempts to make a contribution to the academic discourse on plagiarism in several respects. First, it fills the knowledge gap about the understanding of plagiarism in a Lithuanian academic society as a post-soviet one. Second, it sheds some light on the content of academic ethics codes in Lithuanian universities and research institutes as measures of managing plagiarism. Third, it aims to compare the rhetoric of research ethics codes and academia’s awareness of the issue, which can be regarded as a factual reflection of the rhetoric.

## Methodological notes

The paper presents the results from a national project “Scientific research ethics in Lithuania: analysis of the situation” (MIP-37/2010, 2010–2011) which have been presented in several other publications (Novelskaitė and Pučėtaitė, 2012; Novelskaitė and Pučėtaitė, 2011; Novelskaitė et al., 2011). The project was based on several empirical studies: descriptive analysis of the EU documents regulating research ethics issues and the related Lithuanian legal regulations, a questionnaire survey in Lithuanian academic community, descriptive and content analysis of internal organizational documents regulating research ethics at Lithuanian scientific organizations and a series of semi-structured interviews with members of the ethics committees acting at the scientific organizations.

In this paper, for the purposes of revealing specifics of a formal definition and informal perceptions of plagiarism in Lithuanian academic community, two of its aspects were taken up for a more detailed scrutiny. First, we focused on the definition of plagiarism in organizational documents of Lithuanian academic organizations. Definitions were treated as the formal aspect of the issue. To identify to what extent formal measures are used to deepen academia’s awareness of plagiarism (and its forms) and encourage them to abstain from plagiarism conduct, Ethic Codes of the universities and the research institutes ( $N = 21$ ; see Table 1 for details) were analysed. Analysis was carried out at the end of April 2011.

The content analysis was accomplished in several stages. Initially different parts of speech with the root *plagia\** (*\*-rize*, *\*-rist*, *\*-rism*) (the corresponding words in the Lithuanian language are *plagi\*-juoti*, *plagi\*-atorius*, *plagi\*-atas*) were used as units of analysis. As a result, quantitative characteristics of the issue were identified. Next, a sentence involving the unit (i.e. *plagia\**-) found on the first stage was considered as the second unit of analysis and, following that, the third unit of analysis was a paragraph. The last two steps of analysis were aimed at identification of how the term “plagiarism” is defined and in what context it is presented for the target group(s) of the Code. Thus,

Table 1

*Ethic Codes of Lithuanian science institutions, 2011*

	Type of the university*	Ethic codes**					Size/text length (No of characters with spaces)		
		N	Approved	Under construction	Non-existent	N.i.	Min	Max	Average
1.	State universities	14	14***	1	—	—	3 269	17 239	9 834
2.	Non-state universities	9	3****	—	5	—	6 711	16 400	12 934
3.	State scientific research institutes	12	4	3	4	1	6 138	11 917	9 770
	<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3 269</b>	<b>17 239</b>	<b>10 265</b>

\* According to Lithuanian *Law on Higher Education and Research* (2009-04-30 No. XI-242), “there are two groups of higher education and research institutions: higher education institutions and research institutes” (Ch. II.5). More specifically, these are universities (“The university shall carry out university studies, conduct research, experimental (social, cultural) development and/or develop high-level professional art” (Ch. II.8.1)), colleges (“The college shall carry out college studies, develop applied research and/or professional art” (Ch. II.9.1)) and research institutes (“A state research institute shall conduct long-term research and experimental (social, cultural) development, important for the State, the public or economic entities, in the area defined by the founder (members of a legal person)” (Ch. II.10.2)). At the time of the analysis, *The information system of Lithuanian Education and Science Ministry* ([http://www.aikos.smm.lt/aikos/svietimo\\_ir\\_mokslo\\_institucijos.htm](http://www.aikos.smm.lt/aikos/svietimo_ir_mokslo_institucijos.htm)) provided a list of 14 state universities and 9 non-state (i.e. public establishments) ones, 24 colleges, 12 state scientific research institutes and 2 state science establishments and 4 private scientific research establishments. For the aims of the study the list of organizations was appended by other 33 organizations, which were found in *The Catalogue of Lithuanian Enterprises: Lithuanian Yellow Pages* (<http://www.imones.lt> (accessed on August 30, 2011, keywords used in the query: “Fields of activity: scientific research, institutes”, 75 entries found) as organizations accomplishing scientific research activities and by 37 professional associations of scientists and researchers from different fields of science. (The list was compiled from different sources on internet: 30 organizations were found following links from Lithuanian Scientists’ Association ([http://www.lms.lt/?q=lt/mokslo\\_draugijos](http://www.lms.lt/?q=lt/mokslo_draugijos)), 6 organizations uniting professional researchers from different fields of social sciences (sociology, psychology, political science, economics, philosophy and theology) were found on internet with definite search words. From these, 35 associations ([http://www.emedicina.lt/index.php?s\\_id=25&lang=lt](http://www.emedicina.lt/index.php?s_id=25&lang=lt)) uniting medical professionals (including scientists) were skipped from the list after considering legal developments of research ethics in the field.) Thus, the project sample encompassed 134 organizations in total. For the purpose of the herein presented analysis only academic establishments providing study programmes at first-cycle, second-cycle and tertiary levels are included.

It is worth mentioning that, according to the Order of Minister of Education and Science (2005-12-05, Nr. ISAK-2485), higher education schools had to develop and pass lecturers’ ethics codes by March 1, 2006 (Ch. 2).

\*\* Data for June 2011.

\*\*\* Lithuanian University of Health Sciences still had 2 Ethic codes—one of the former Kaunas University of Medicine and the other of the former Lithuanian Academy of Veterinary.

\*\*\*\* LCC International University provided a document under the title “Elements of Informed Consent, Academic Integrity and Discipline Policy”, which was not adequate to regard it as an organizational Ethic code; this document was not included into the analysis.

not only quantitative, but also qualitative analysis of a formal definition of plagiarism was accomplished.

Secondly, individual wording and descriptions of plagiarism (among other problems related to research ethics) provided by members of Lithuanian academic community as answers to an open-ended question “In your opinion, what are the most significant research ethics problems in Lithuanian scientific community and in the entire Lithuanian science system?” are taken as an informal attitude towards plagiarism. More specifically (and similarly to the content analysis of Ethic Codes), content analysis of the records expressing an opinion ( $N = 913$ ;  $n_{\text{answered}} = 424$  (46%)) was accomplished in two steps: first, the words with grammatical root *plagia-*\* as the primary analysis units were identified and counted; second, taking messages that include the notion of plagiarism as the secondary units of analysis, context of the reference to plagiarism was analysed. Again, both quantitative and qualitative analysis of informal attitudes towards plagiarism was accomplished.

## Results 1: Formal definition

In quantitative terms, the number of words with the root *plag\**- is rather low in the analysed Ethic codes: it varies from 0 (found in the Codes of 3 state universities and 1 non-state university) to 5 (2 state universities and 1 state research institute); most frequently the word was mentioned once (in the codes of 4 state universities and 3 research institutes) or twice (in 4 state universities and in 1 non-state university) in the text of the code. It is not surprising that the number of references to plagiarism relates to the entire size of the code: the longer the Code, the more numerous mentioning of plagiarism.

Several definitions of plagiarism can be found in the codes. The most frequent one (8 cases) appears under the title “Ethics of Scientific Research (And Art) Activities” with the grounding statement running: “scientific activity must be grounded on ideals of fair research and striving for truth”. It defines plagiarism as “presentation of others’ text, ideas or discoveries like one’s own” and calls it one of the violations of the fundamental ethical principles (in addition to fabrication of empirical data, forced authorship etc.). Such a definition is presented in codes of 6 state universities and in code of 1 non-state university and 1 state research institute. Only one code of a state research institute presents a different definition under the same structure on the entire text: plagiarism is “presentation of text, data, research methodology, idea or discovery published by others as one’s own and falsification of scientific data or their unfair interpretation”.

A slightly different definition of plagiarism is found in the list of violations of the “respect for intellectual property” principle which stands for academic fairness. This definition suggests that plagiarism is “falsification or unfair interpretation of scientific data, forced inclusion of co-authorship to junior colleagues or subordinates”. Such a definition, connecting broader copyright issues with plagiarism, is presented in 1 code of a state research institute and 2 codes of state universities. Finally, still one code of a state research institute defines plagiarism as “publication of scientific data without providing references to the sources is treated as plagiarism” under the section of copyright ethics issues.

As the organization's code of ethics applies to all members of the organization (but for several cases where just particular groups are targeted by the code), all the above presented definitions should be known and followed by everyone in the organization (i.e. scientific, pedagogical and administrative staff as well as students). However, 5 codes give particular attention to students providing an additional definition to the given above under the title "Norms of students'/studies' ethics". Here plagiarism is defined as "presentation of others' ideas as one's own" and illustrated by several "typical cases", which are: (a) Cases when others' text is presented without marks of citation—quotation-marks or any other kind of segregation from the entire text (e.g. in a separate paragraph, italics); (b) Cases when others' idea, illustrative material or data are paraphrased or cited without providing an exact source; (c) Cases when knowingly a wrong page of the source or date of a web-site accession is presented. To be precise, several additional details should be mentioned. First, the last "typical case" (i.e. (c)) is provided only in 1 code (out of 5 mentioned here). It is obvious that the case is targeted at avoiding mistakes rather than plagiarism. Second, the definition and the cases are presented as one of "the crudest violations of the principle of academic fairness" in 3 codes, meanwhile self-obligation "not to plagiarise" (i.e. not to engage in "typical" plagiarism activities) is named in the 2 remaining ones. Third, the analysed 5 codes belong to 1 state research institute, to 1 non-state university and to 3 state universities. Finally, students are self-obliged "not to provide help to other persons who are engaging in an unfair academic action: plagiarism, cheating or falsification" (5 codes). Beside, lecturers (and researchers, PhD students' supervisors) "must show a principled reaction to the cases of students' unfairness such as plagiarism, cribbing, falsification of data,..." and others (10 codes), meanwhile the entire community is obliged "not to permit appearance of plagiarism, data falsification, ... etc. ... in their personal and their apprentices' works" (2 codes) as well as "not to fabricate nor manipulate empirical research data, scientific studies, plagiarize nor cheat in other ways in scientific activities" (2 codes).

The findings demonstrate several things. First, although the analysed codes slightly differ in the formal definition of plagiarism and related issues (e.g. supervision), there is no obvious difference between state and non-state universities, between universities and research institutes. These findings are not original: Forster with colleagues (2009) found "substantial levels of common sentences used by the firms, including a few cases where the codes of ethics are essentially identical" (p. 129, 138) in the compared codes of ethics developed by 597 companies till 2008.

Second, more or less precise definitions of plagiarism are provided exclusively in chapters related to research and students' activities. This finding denotes that several niches of plagiarism are not covered by the Codes (for example, plagiarism in teaching materials). This breach is especially important in the context of plagiarism prevention and academic socialization in general as teaching materials are the ones which every student faces first getting into academia.

Third, the analysis shows that plagiarism prevention is tackled by the Codes either anonymously (i.e. by an entire community) or giving particular attention to a specific group, i.e. students. This finding echoes the above mentioned remarks by Honig and Bedi (2012) and Elliott et al. (2013) who draw attention to rather frequent explorations

of students' academic misconduct (including plagiarism), leaving practices on higher levels of academic hierarchies little reflected and explored. Hence, our conclusion from this rather simple analysis is that lack of findings on academics' plagiarism can be partially determined by the academic society's unwillingness to target the awareness of senior or established researchers by describing the issue of plagiarism in ethics codes.

Finally, considering a present discussions of the term *plagiarism* (e.g., Bouville, 2008; Clarke, 2009), the analysed Codes of Ethics provide just a very general characterisation which does not cover specific issues encompassed by the phenomenon. Thus, the Codes in Lithuanian academia cannot be regarded as an exhaustive instrument of education and prevention of plagiarism.

## Results 2: Informal attitude

Previous analysis of the survey data revealed that there is lack of knowledge about existence of the Ethic Code in Lithuanian academic organizations among their members, and the extent of knowledge is related to the person's position in the organization (i.e. the higher the academic position the more chances that the person knows about the Code; the chances increase if the person in addition holds a managerial position in the administration) (Novelskaitė and Pučėtaite, 2012). However, an initial quantitative and qualitative review of the answers did not reveal any obvious differences in comments made by the respondents with or without administrative positions or between the answers of those who knew or did not know about existence of the Ethics Code in their organizations. For example, quantitative calculations demonstrate that respondents who had administrative positions at the time of the survey composed 22% of the study participants; their answers to the question under analysis compose 28% of all given answers; their answers compose 30% of those who mentioned the term *plagiarism* (cf: corresponding proportions for those who had no administrative positions are, respectively, 64%, 72% and 70%). Although it was obvious that thoughtfulness of answers positively relates to the academic position and that professors and associate professors are slightly more inclined to present their answers to the open-ended questions, the differences in quantitative terms are not significant (Table 2).

After the initial identification of the first unit of analysis, i.e. the answers involving references to plagiarism, 98 answers (i.e. 23% of 424 answers) were selected for further analysis. It is worth mentioning that an actual proportion of the answers drawing attention to plagiarism and related issues must be larger because (a) the total number of the answers (i.e. 424) also includes such void outgivings as "don't know", "have no opinion" or "cannot answer" and (b) in order to escape from equivocal interpretations, only direct references to plagiarism were included in the analysis meanwhile such outgivings as "there is no clear legal basis defining copyright issues" or "desperate cribbing, stealing others' ideas or even thoughts [are the main problems]" or "presenting ideas and results as one's own, without giving references to the actual authorship" and alike were not included.

In quantitative terms, it is interesting that most frequently plagiarism was mentioned in the answers of technical assistants, researchers and assoc. professors (33% and 31% of all answers provided by representatives of the groups). Slightly less frequently the

Table 2

*Distribution of the study population by the main academic position and responding to the analysed question*

Academic Position (the main)*	Survey population		<i>In your opinion, what are the most significant research ethics problems in Lithuanian scientific community and in the entire Lithuanian science system?</i>			
			Answers in total		Commentaries including notions of plagiarism	
	N	%	n	%	n	%
Professor	73	<b>8</b>	56	<b>13</b>	14	<b>14</b>
Principal Researcher	35	<b>4</b>	18	<b>4</b>	5	<b>5</b>
Assoc. Professor	156	<b>17</b>	91	<b>22</b>	28	<b>29</b>
Sr. Researcher	116	<b>13</b>	69	<b>16</b>	11	<b>11</b>
Lecturer	146	<b>16</b>	78	<b>18</b>	18	<b>18</b>
Researcher	27	<b>3</b>	13	<b>3</b>	4	<b>4</b>
Assistant	69	<b>7</b>	27	<b>6</b>	5	<b>5</b>
Jr. Researcher	78	<b>9</b>	33	<b>8</b>	6	<b>6</b>
Technical assistant	24	<b>3</b>	6	<b>1</b>	2	<b>2</b>
Other	59	<b>7</b>	33	<b>8</b>	5	<b>5</b>
N.i.	130	<b>14</b>	—	—	—	—
<b>Total</b>	913	<b>100</b>	424	<b>100</b>	98	<b>100</b>

\* The answers below in this article are cited with information about the status of the respondent. Letter P stands for “Professor”; AP stands for “Associate professor”; L stands for “Lecturer”; JR stands for “Junior researcher”. If the respondent possessed an administrative position, abbreviation “admin.” is added to the information. Knowledge about existence of the Ethic Code in the organization is marked as Y<sub>EK</sub> (“yes, the Code exists”), N<sub>EK</sub> (“no, the Code does not exist”), DN<sub>EK</sub> (“don’t know whether the organization has the Code”).

references were found in the answers of principal researchers, professors and lecturers (correspondingly, 28%, 25% and 23% of all answers in the groups). The least numerous references to plagiarism were found in answers provided by other (e.g. PhD students, administrators, engineers etc.) respondents and sr. researchers (correspondingly, 15% and 16% among all answers in the group).

Following the answers, plagiarism is “copying or re-narration of foreign and Lithuanian authors without referencing or giving inaccurate references to the sources” (AP, admin.; JR, DN<sub>EK</sub>) or “presenting other authors’ results as one’s own” (AP, admin., N<sub>EK</sub>), “plagiarism of results from literature and their presentation as one’s own results” (L, DN<sub>EK</sub>). The third aspect of the definition (which, rephrasing Bouville (2008, p. 314), would be called “not real plagiarism”; see Clarke (2009) for a detailed discussion of the term) is provided in addition to copying of other authors with references and translations from other languages without citing by a professor who had no administrative position but knew about organizational Code of Ethics: “self-plagiarism is the largest problem in Lithuania—massive publication of the same studies in tens of publications, books, chapters, conferences etc.” Meanwhile other respondents insisted

on that “there is no clear definition of what plagiarism is” (AP, admin.). Moreover, “there is no developed system of plagiarism prevention; identified cases of plagiarism are not punished, which induces others to continue such activities” (L, Y<sub>EK</sub>). Thus, “we do not have any legal basis for revoking degrees acquired by plagiarism” (P, DN<sub>EK</sub>); in the absence of a legal mechanism “mere rhetorical, declarative provisions exist” (L, admin., DN<sub>EK</sub>).

In several other answers plagiarism was related to students’ works as a problem at “master level and other works” (L), to which “attention is not paid” (L, Y<sub>EK</sub>), and that “publicly known cases of plagiarism and falsification are not discussed in institutions, are not presented to students, to future doctoral students” (AP, admin, Y<sub>EK</sub>).

However, in general, most frequently plagiarism was mentioned as the only or one of the most significant research ethics problems such as fabrication, bias, corruption etc. in Lithuania. Just in several answers plagiarism was denoted either as an “always arising question” or as “the most important, but not the most frequent problem”, which is “heavily controlled” or “tolerated” since “plagiarised works are accepted as original scientific studies”.

Summing up the presented findings, it can be concluded that in general almost 1/4 of the survey participants denoted plagiarism as one of the most important research ethics problems in Lithuania. Since opinions were expressed by respondents from different levels of an academic hierarchy, the findings indicate that the community is aware of the problem and perceives a need to change.

## Conclusions

Analysis of Ethics Codes of 14 state and 3 non-state universities and 4 state research institutes in Lithuania revealed that a formal definition of plagiarism is not provided for all members of the community: some academic organizations still had no Codes in the middle of 2011; in some Codes plagiarism was not mentioned at all; the definition was not provided in all codes. Such results imply lack of a definition and clearness of the issue in Lithuanian academic community, which appears in answers of its individual members. Thus, the conclusion is simple: taking for granted that academia has deep awareness of the forms of plagiarism is deceptive and may not ensure self-regulation; clear formal rules are called for by the members.

Hence, a direction for further research is to estimate the need for the rules and development of corresponding initiatives. On the other hand, content analysis of the formal definitions of plagiarism and academic community’s attitudes to the phenomenon also reveals that, at least in particular cases, members of the community define plagiarism in broad terms (i.e. including translations and self-plagiarism) than organizational Ethic Codes. This finding presupposes a slightly opposite conclusion: members of the community possess the knowledge and the knowledge is not limited to formal definitions. Nonetheless, as rather frequent references to plagiarism as the most (or one of the most) important problems of research ethics in Lithuania suggest, the definition is not the main thing; other measures such as courses, open discussions on plagiarising and institutional procedures after detecting plagiarism are missing.

The results of analysis demonstrate that formal definitions of plagiarism appeal to two interrelated but different audiences: a rather anonymous academic community and students. Moreover, the definitions provided for relatively separate audiences are not the same and, following them, different groups of the academic community receive different amounts of information (and control). This is slightly echoed in several remarks by the community members who described plagiarism as one of the main research ethics problems in Lithuania. Possible outcomes of such a (relative, though) subdivision of the external locus of control, i.e. more stringent control of the community members who belong to the lowest stratum (i.e. students) and bypassing the highest levels of hierarchy are just speculative at the moment and need further empirical explorations.

Notwithstanding, it must be noted that the main shortage of the presented study is that the analysis of a formal definition and informal attitudes reveals only normative (which usually tend to be ideal and metaphysical) and subjective aspects (which is usually based on very personal experiences and feelings) of the issue. A factual situation as characterised by frequency of plagiarism, its forms and motivations etc. is not elucidated in this study. One of the reasons for this is that the data are taken from a research which originally focused on research ethics in general, which determined particularly formulated questions in the questionnaire survey and asking about plagiarism as one of potential ethical problems in research. Hence, identification of causes of academics' plagiarism in Lithuanian academic community lies in the future research field. Moreover, any justifiable claims that Lithuanian academic community as a post-soviet society faces many more cases of plagiarism than Western societies needs both a different comparative research and, on the other hand, deeper investigation into the interrelations between reported plagiarism and other, even ironic comments in open-ended questions of the survey, which can be done in the future as well.

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### Acknowledgements

Dr. Aurelija Novelskaitė thanks Advanced Certificate in Research Ethics for Central and Eastern Europe Program organized by Union Graduate College of Mount Sinai School of Medicine (Schenectady, NY, USA) and Vilnius University (Lithuania) for partial funding of the accomplishment of the study. Special thanks go to the professors M. Strosberg, E. Gefenas, S. Philpott and others who strongly encouraged and supported A. Novelskaitė's works in the field of research ethics.

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