

Open Access to Publications to Expand Participation in Archaeology

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Open Access to Publications to Expand Participation in Archaeology

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The Norwegian Archaeological Review has published several exciting articles recently that advance our understanding of openness in archaeological theory and practice. There is a gap between the ideas of broadening participation described in these papers and the limits on participation imposed by the publication choices surrounding these papers. This comment investigates the source of this gap, analyses the problems it causes, and suggests steps towards a solution.

INTRODUCTION

The *Norwegian Archaeological Review* (NAR) has published several exciting articles recently that advance our understanding of openness in archaeological theory and practice. Milek (2018) sketches a possible future for archaeology where anyone can participate, for example through citizen science projects, and by involving local communities in archaeological science activities. A key theme is that the knowledge produced by one participant is not privileged over any other. Kiddey (2020) similarly writes in favour of expanding participation in archaeological activities. She provides useful definitions of ‘collaborative’, ‘participatory’, ‘public’ and ‘democratisation’ that highlight the importance of involving diverse groups in archaeological projects in ways that give them opportunities to make contributions that are meaningful to them, not just to the archaeologist. Kiddey employs feminist theory to motivate a diversification of viewpoints in archaeology, citing Longino’s (2002) argument that increasing the diversity of cultural and ideological perspectives in a scientific

community can increase the objectivity of scientific research. Fredheim (2020) adds a note of caution, arguing that some prominent democratising and participatory efforts in archaeology, especially those using digital technologies, are inconsistent with ethics held by many professional archaeologists. He critiques the potential for labour exploitation and the appeal to archaeology’s imperialist and colonial legacy that some citizen science projects use to attract participants. His essay concludes that open archaeology is not necessarily ethical and beneficial, and we should explore both the positive and negative impacts of efforts to encourage public participation. The final paper in this set is by Van Dyke (2020) who reflects on the historical contexts and complexities of working with Indigenous communities of the North American Southwest.

My aim here is to investigate the variety of unstated definitions of ‘open’ that these papers represent. It is straightforward to identify a common theme in how these authors define openness: open means increased participation in the archaeological

process by people who have been historically excluded. This unity around openness as expanded, meaningful participation is what makes this collection of papers so effective and compelling. In this comment I focus on the implicit definitions of openness that we can infer from who can participate in reading these articles. My main claim is that what we count as participation has some unexamined traces of elitism, resulting in a tension between the ideals of openness and the practice of archaeologists. I argue that with a greater awareness of open access options by authors and editors, this tension can be resolved, and the practice of these papers can be fully aligned with their intentions.

Scholarly publication is a complex, specialized, and evolving communication system, so much that it is difficult for many academic participants (as authors, editors, and reviewers) to keep abreast of the options available to them when publishing their work. Because much of the work of publishing a scholarly paper is done by volunteers (authors, peer reviewers and editors are not paid by the companies that publish journals), there are limited opportunities and incentives to gain a comprehensive knowledge of publishing policies and practice. This is to say that although I will critique the publication practices of some of the authors cited here, I recognize that some of these practices were not intentional by those authors, because it is difficult to acquire a full knowledge of the shifting landscape of publication options. These are not practices that are taught as part of a typical university education in archaeology, and must be picked up piecemeal, as needed. Thus, authors, editors and publishers share the responsibility to ensure that we communicate in a way that is consistent

with the values stated in the works we are publishing.

To infer the public participation options for the papers discussed here, we must review the options available to the authors. The publishers of NAR, Taylor and Francis, provide authors with three options for the openness of their articles:

(1) The author can pay the publisher an article processing charge (APC) of USD 2995 (as of July 2020 for an article submitted by a US-based author) and have the published article free to view by anyone. This money goes to the publisher, and is not available to the journal editors, for example to support diversity-enhancing initiatives or mentoring junior authors. This payment means the final published version on the journal website can be freely accessed by anyone. Many peer-reviewed archaeology journals offer this as an option to authors, and a small number operate exclusively like this (e.g. *Internet Archaeology*, *Journal of Open Archaeology Data*, and *Open Archaeology*).

(2) The author can post online their ‘accepted version’ or ‘Author Accepted Manuscript’. This has a specific definition in the publishing industry as the manuscript of an article that has been accepted for publication which typically includes author-incorporated changes suggested during submission, peer review, and editor-author communications. The ‘accepted version’ does not include publisher modifications such as copy-editing, formatting, page layout, and final pagination. So the manuscript at this stage includes all the edits required by the peer reviewers, but is without the journal’s PDF page layout and formatting. This is also known as a pre-print or post-print. For NAR, the locations where the author is allowed to post this version are the author’s homepage, the author’s institutional website,

or a named repository (e.g. arXiv, bioRxiv, SocArXiv, Open Anthropology Research Repository (OARR), PCI Archaeology, Zenodo, etc.). There is no fee for the author to post their accepted version to a pre-print repository, and no fee or login required for readers to access it. The Sherpa Romeo online service enables authors to easily check other journal policies on posting pre-prints (Curry 2017). Some universities have open access policies and systems that partially automate this process for authors. Note that this option is not equivalent to authors posting their paper on for-profit services, such as academia.edu and researchgate.com. These for-profit services require users to create an account and log in to read PDFs, and monetize these data and activities with invasive advertising. Publishers periodically issue take-down notices to these services because authors upload the final, published PDF of their paper, which publishers usually prohibit from sharing via commercial services.

(3) The author does not pay the APC and does not post a pre- or post-print. When published, the article is available in NAR only to subscribers of the journal. Mostly this will be people with an institutional affiliation where the institution has access by purchasing a bundle of journals from Taylor & Francis, NAR's publisher. In most cases the reader has no access information about the cost of this institutional access. There is no cost to the author. People can read the article either by using their institutional subscription, or paying the publisher the individual article access fee, currently USD 44 for 24 h access. Like the APC, this money is not accessible by NAR to support its community. This option is likely to become less common in the future due to Plan S, an agreement by national research agencies and funders from twelve European countries that requires state-funded researchers to publish their work in

Table 1. Availability of a selection of papers on open archaeology in the *Norwegian archaeological review*.

Author & Year	Open access?	Pre-print or post-print?
Pétursdóttir (2020)	No	No
Milek (2018)	No	Yes
Kiddey (2020)	No	No
Fredheim (2020)	Yes	No
Van Dyke (2020)	No	No

open access repositories or journals, due to take effect in 2021 (Else 2018).

Which of these options are represented in the set of articles on open archaeology? Table 1 shows how this set of papers, including an editorial essay summarising them by Pétursdóttir (2020), were available to readers at the time of writing (July 2020). Of the five articles, two of them are available to read without any financial barriers (Fredheim and Milek), and three require the reader to either pay the publisher directly or have access to a subscription to the journal (e.g. via their institutional library). Fredheim (2020) is open access on the journal website, and Milek (2018) is openly available as an 'Author Accepted Manuscript' pre-print at the Durham University open access archive. Kiddey's article has a bibliographic entry in the University of Oxford's open access archive, but no full text is available there. In her article Van Dyke (2020) describes an online open access book of text and video chapters co-produced by Native American colleagues. However, the full text of this article by Van Dyke in the NAR is only available to subscribers. The papers by Fredheim and Milek are freely available for anyone with an internet connection and English language skills to read and participate in the discussion

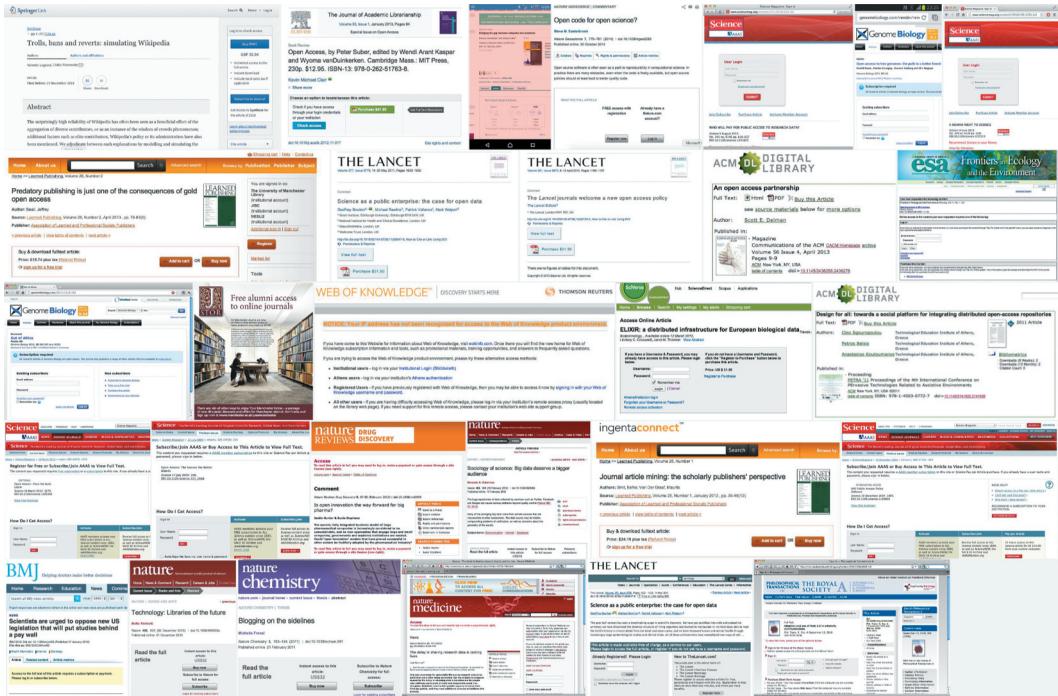


Fig. 1. Mosaic of screenshots of #openirony publications, from the ‘Open access irony awards’ flickr group (<https://www.flickr.com/groups/open-access-irony-award/>), accessed July 13, 2020). Flickr is an online service for sharing photos. Some of the paywalls to these articles have been removed since the screenshots were posted to the Open access irony award group.

about open archaeology (e.g. a high-school teacher and their students).

There is an obvious irony about essays on openness that are published in ways that are not openly available for anyone to read (Schultz 2018). This has been noted in many fields, with more than 20 examples appearing since around 2010, as open access publication options expanded, including in widely-read journals such as *The Lancet*, *Science* and *Nature* (Fig. 1). Examples of these have been shared and discussed on social media using the hashtag #openirony. Typically these discussions are humorous exposures of articles/editorials that are pro-open access, but locked behind paywalls. The main concern that motivates these discussions is that restricted access to public scientific knowledge is slowing scientific progress. While this issue is also relevant

to this set of NAR papers, there are additional concerns about ‘open irony’ for disciplines founded on colonial logics of targeting and essentializing otherness, such as anthropology and archaeology.

How can we make sense of the disconnect between the ideals of openness and expanded participation in archaeology, and the restricted accessibility of the articles recommending these ideals by Kidney, Van Dyke and Pétursdóttir? Participation in reading these papers is only possible for those who have institutional access, or the ability to pay the publisher directly. Can the people who are argued to be essential participants in archaeology, e.g. homeless people in the UK, Indigenous Americans, and people outside of the academy generally, read these papers themselves? Presumably those with

personal relationships with the authors can request a copy directly, but what about those without that privilege, or those born generations from now? How are we to understand calls for increased participation made in texts that cannot be accessed by those whom we are told should participate?

A key problem here is these historically underrepresented groups, for example, homeless people and Indigenous communities, cannot see how they are being discussed in these paywalled papers, and are excluded from the opportunity to contest or participate in the construction of their own identities and roles and generation of archaeological knowledge in this forum. Given this exclusion, we can infer a theory of participation in archaeology by non-specialists that, for some authors, does not include reading and discussing journal articles. The ideal participant, according to this theory, has their experience with archaeology mediated through professionally supervised involvement in field and lab work, or digital labour on crowdsourcing projects, or the co-production of non-technical documentation. They are not allowed to participate in technical and scholarly documents, and perhaps are imagined to lack the skills and the desire to participate in these fora. The same point could apply to archaeological data (Kansa 2012), which are generally not shared with publications (Marwick and Birch 2018), despite the availability of dedicated repositories and services such as Open Context (Kansa and Kansa 2011). Is this because of our failure to imagine how people outside of the discipline might participate in the analysis and visualization of this content?

How can this theory of participation persist, despite the text of these articles calling for increased participation in archaeology? Fredheim's reference of Bourdieu's sociological theory of 'symbolic violence' in his discussion of public participation may be helpful here. This is not a form of physical harm, but a system

of constraints and subordinations achieved indirectly and without explicit and overt force (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). Symbolic violence occurs when a dominant group imposes on subordinated groups an ideology which legitimates and naturalizes the status quo. A full treatment of how paywalls are a form of symbolic violence through the monopolisation of the right to determine what is legitimate knowledge is beyond the scope of this brief comment. However, we can identify here that one dominant group are the authors, editors and publishers, as those that have varying degrees of control over the value of publication. Among the subordinated groups are people historically underrepresented in archaeology, and the status quo is the generation and transmission of knowledge via paywalled journal articles. The ideology is that academic publishing is a prestige commodity created and exchanged (e.g cited) exclusively by and for disciplinary colleagues (cf. Costopoulos 2017). Symbolic violence here is an emergent property of the complicated ecosystem that authors, editors and publishers work in to create journal articles, rather than an intentional outcome of deliberate decisions by authors and editors to limit participation in the discipline. The result of these interactions is the maintenance and reproduction over time of a dominant system of communication that denies participation to most people, without generating strong resistance or even consciousness of the unequal relationships, and internalises acceptance of the dominant values among the excluded. There are numerous additional aspects of scholarly communication, beyond the scope of the publication practices I focus on here, that are important to acknowledge for how they draw contours of exclusion, for example, the need for internet access, and high fluency in English.

It may seem a little unfair, or even hostile, to identify the perpetuation of symbolic violence in a set of articles that are doing more work than most others to address the long history of inequality, exclusion and exploitation in archaeology. But this is just a special case of a broader tension between the ideal of scientific knowledge as a publicly accessible social good, and profit-driven publication practices that turn knowledge into an artificially scarce commodity. A more constructive view of this specific case is that these papers have boldly identified several important steps necessary to make archaeology more open, which motivate us to consider how we can expand participation to every activity that archaeologists engage in. They have helped us identify unrealised potential for expanding participation in archaeology, namely, by making our articles free for anyone to read. One way to realise this potential that is notable because it is free to both the author and the publisher, and does not require specialised skills, is that used by Milek (2018). This is the second open access option described above. Authors can post their ‘accepted version’ to a non-profit pre-print repository that is free for authors to submit to and free for readers to read and download from. Adopting this practice is a meaningful step towards closing the gap between the ideals of many archaeologists and their publication practices. One way to gauge the impact this practice can have is to browse the numerous short testimonials submitted to Harvard University’s Open Access repository (DASH n.d.) that describe how free access to publications has helped people from all over the world, from high-school teachers to policy-makers and parents. These testimonials are moving evidence that open access serves real people with real needs, that posting pre-prints meets unmet demand, and that the demand unmet by conventional journals includes academic and non-academic readers. While opening access to publications in this way is just a modest step among many other

challenges of improving accessibility and participation, my hope is that this basic act will become a normal way to open archaeology to broader participation, helping us to avoid ‘open irony’, and contributing towards decolonizing the field.

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DECLARATION OF INTEREST STATEMENT

I have no relevant financial or non-financial competing interests to report. An open access pre-print of this paper is online at <https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/v9kf>

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