

AUTHOR'S RESPONSE

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After reading all the comments, I have come to the conclusion that we are all “thinking in the same direction”: We understand and appreciate the benefits of open science, especially open access, and we are aware of the need for institutions (e.g. museums) to open themselves to the public, at the same time, we also recognize the potential risks that such demands for “opening up” and accessibility may cause.

It also seems to me that a consensus has been reached on the importance not only of initiating a discussion on these “seemingly technical” issues, as Orlanda Obad of the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research calls them, but also of educating everyone involved. This has already been done within the Swiss Anthropological Association, and moreover, a working group dedicated to these issues has been established. The Croatian professional association of ethnologists and cultural anthropologists (Croatian Ethnological Society – HED) has also recognized the need to formulate guidelines applicable to different work contexts, not only academic ones. A lack of familiarity with the technical aspects of data-opening processes calls for additional education, and the fact that the average researcher or museum worker, amid an increasingly dense and intense project-driven professional life, can hardly find a lot of additional time for data processing calls for a broader discussion. This discussion should also include considerations of the necessity of hiring new types of experts – data stewards – as noted by Koraljka Kuzman Šlogar, long-time head of the Research Archive at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research. However, I believe it is also important to acknowledge our own fears and discomfort when exposing ourselves and our own, often imperfect, research practices (I am not claiming that such data should be open to everyone). Other authors have also observed a certain selfishness or reluctance to share data, even “after death,” particularly among ethnologists and cultural anthropologists (see Obad’s comment in this discussion). This also points to what we would like to believe is a deeper relationship we have succeeded in building with our interlocutors. Koraljka Kuzman Šlogar is right to point out that mistakes are part of the process from which future researchers could learn and better understand research procedures, and she calls for reducing vanity and strengthening the researchers’ sense of responsibility with regard to such aims. At the same time, she is fully aware, as are the other authors of the comments, that “eth-

nographic records are not neutral 'data,' but traces of relationships, thus their use entails responsibility toward the people and contexts from which they originate." Such relationships with interlocutors can only be created if we truly manage to initiate them in the first place. Therefore, the dependence of researchers on their interlocutors, as Anne Lavanchy and Wiebke Wiesigel, scientists who, among other things, are part of the Ethical and Deontological Think Tank (EDTT) working group of the Swiss Anthropological Society", note, highlights relations of power in which the researcher is not always the one who holds power. I am certain that most ethnologists and cultural anthropologists have personally experienced rejection by interlocutors, often without any explanation. Difficult field researches, where it takes a great deal of time and effort before an interlocutor decides to share their story with us, are part of our profession, and perhaps this is precisely why some of us feel the need to keep these data for ourselves. My fear of opening data is perhaps most strongly tied to the concern that, because of open data, at some point in the future we will begin receiving embellished, self-censored narratives.

An important question raised by Anne Lavanchy and Wiebke Wiesigel concerns the assumed "audience" of open data. Indeed, I did not elaborate on this aspect further, primarily because at this moment I cannot clearly imagine nor articulate the full range of potential future audiences interested in such data, but I am aware that this audience includes artificial intelligence as well, and the FAIR principles of data openness clearly state that data must be searchable for both humans and machines. Therefore, AI is certainly a user of open data. Of course, the audience may also consist of various groups of people. In this sense, I consider the research and conclusions reached by Koraljka Kuzman Šlogar, Anamarija Žugić Borić, and Antonia Hladilo Duspara regarding the users of the Research Archive of the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research (2023: 87) to be important. In their study, they conducted a survey among the users of the Research Archive Facebook profile, which had been created and managed with the explicit aim of developing and engaging a new audience. The results of this analysis showed that, apart from the expected audience of ethnologists, ethnology students, heads of cultural-artistic associations (KUDs), and musicologists, 36% of the profile's followers (and the authors question whether these are also Research Archive users or represent a different category) had no professional connection to the content being posted. The authors rightly conclude that it was the strategy used by the Research Archive Department staff that created new users (of the FB profile), that is, a new audience (ibid.: 87). By analogy, I believe that over time, although of course not in an identical way, open repositories of data and metadata could create a new audience about whom I currently know nothing. I agree with Anne Lavanchy and Wiebke Wiesigel that the visual data we collect is equally important, especially since it is often published or exhibited. The issue of photographers'/videographers' copyright and photo/video consent should also be included in a broader discussion of ethical protocols for researchers, particularly in relation to openness. Furthermore, it is evident that the data market will continue to develop and grow, as will the possibilities of "data leaks." Potential users of open data may also include organizations or people

who commission particular reports or research projects, and who may demand access to the data whose collection they funded. We may not be particularly concerned about someone “in Brussels” or at the Croatian Science Foundation reading certain anonymized statements (since the likelihood of identifying interlocutors is low), but what if the party which commissions a project is a local community and the interlocutors are members of that same community? What if the interlocutors’ narratives, even when anonymized, allow for recognition and, for example, do not align with the goals of the commissioning party (e.g., in cases where a report is prepared for an application to obtain the status of intangible cultural heritage or some similar local initiative)? There are many possible scenarios, and it is difficult to anticipate them all. The market for personal research data will certainly not be governed by the same rules as that for non-personal data, such as those sent by smart devices, but likewise, we do not know how technology and artificial intelligence will develop in the future, and, more importantly, how society itself will evolve. Therefore, I believe that now is precisely the moment when all processes involved in opening data must be considered very carefully, as Kuzman Šlogar emphasizes in her commentary.

The comment made by Anne Lavanchy and Wiebke Wiesigel on who has the right to use data within large research teams and projects is also important. In such situations, it is indeed a common practice for the project leader to also be the supervisor of the doctoral student working on the project, and this hierarchical relationship can further complicate the doctoral student’s position regarding the rights to use data collected during the research. To whom does this data belong, and what happens to it if, for example, the doctoral student leaves the institution where the data were collected? During the FP6 project Languages in a Network of European Excellence (LINEE), the coordinator (from Switzerland!) clearly emphasized at one of the meetings that the data belong both to the project and to the researcher who collected them. This explicitly means that a doctoral student who collected data and then leaves to work at another institution after the project ends has the right to use those data, of course with citing the project or even the data identifier referred to by Kuzman Šlogar. Since 2022, applications for research projects funded by the Croatian Science Foundation have been required to include a Research Data Management Plan, which is deposited in the open repository of the institution where the project is being carried out. The examples of such Data Management Plans published by the Croatian Science Foundation as guidance for applicants show a variety of possible approaches to data management, from complete data openness to data destruction, which can also become an option (Zeitlyn in Obad’s comment in this discussion), and of which disciplinary interlocutors are well aware.

However, research data are not collected only in academic contexts; they also form an integral part of the documentation of museums, conservation departments, and even consulting firms that conduct research for contracting parties. For this reason, I consider it highly valuable that the issue of data openness was addressed by Lidija Nikočević, former director of the Ethnographic Museum of Istria / Museo etnografico dell’Istria, and Aleksandra Vlatković, documentation specialist at the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb. Aleksandra Vlatković has shown that museums

are increasingly opening up and making their collections accessible online, and more recently also through open depots. However, she emphasizes that this is never “full accessibility,” which, in her view, should be accompanied by clear guidelines as well as an ethical and legal framework advocated within the FAIR initiative.

Orlanda Obad very fittingly quoted the anthropologist James McMurray who noted that, “due to the very nature of anthropological work, at the moment of signing informed consent, *ex ante* no anthropologist can themselves be assumed to be fully informed at that point, let alone in a position to bring others up to speed”. Therefore, Obad concludes that “informed [...] consent provides some protection to the interlocutor, but not absolute protection” (see Obad’s comment in this discussion). I believe this is precisely where there is room for the researcher’s potential intervention as they should look after the interlocutor even when the interlocutor themselves may not see the need for it, for example, when they believe they are sharing non-sensitive information.

Open science presents researchers with many new challenges. It offers numerous good practices and possibilities, but it seems to me that the perspective it promotes is still somewhat limited, as it neither anticipates (nor concerns itself with) the potential long-term negative consequences that certain disciplines may face, such as changes in the nature of the researcher–interlocutor relationship, or changes in the quality of the data that interlocutors will be willing to share with researchers, if at all. Staff at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research are developing an institutional Open Science Policy and considering how best to implement the national open science guidelines given the specificities of our discipline and institution. I think it is important that we, as ethnologists and cultural anthropologists, think in two directions. The first concerns the creation of a database (and knowledge base) for future generations of researchers and users, while simultaneously developing strong mechanisms to protect the discipline from continuous attempts to force it into molds intended for the natural and social sciences. The second concerns designing ways to protect our interlocutors’ narratives from potential future misuse, particularly those that may arise from technological and AI developments that we cannot yet foresee. As Nikočević points out, “reconciling and combining these two principles undoubtedly remains one of the major skills and responsibilities of researchers.” However, it is unrealistic to expect everyone to be able to exercise this skill to the same extent, and for that reason I believe that continuous education of all researchers is necessary, along with the provision of basic guidelines at the professional level.

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