

Deviance in science – Towards a Criminological Understanding.

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Scientific misconduct - either in the format of fraud or questionable research practices - forms a great threat to research integrity. High profile misconduct in the scientific enterprise has been neglected in criminological studies, not unlikely because “*deviance in one’s own family is the last to be recognized or acknowledged*” (Bechtel & Pearson, 1990, p. 667). How can it be explained that highly intelligent, educated, honored and respected academics deliberately choose to gain prestige in a deviant way?

In this presentation I argue that a criminological understanding of deviance in science is necessary in order to explore the ecology of today’s scientific practice as a knowledge economy, and the elements that are catalyst for misconduct.

Our starting point lies in analyzing concepts such as integrity and misconduct, taking into account definitional issues and different levels of conflicting organizational, institutional and cultural values in modern science. Further our aim is to contextualize scientific fraud or misconduct in relation to corporate, governmental, professional and/or white collar crime - continued by an exploration of the applicability of criminological insights (social control, rationalization, strain, ...) to the understanding of deviance in science. Our interim findings based on a literature study point to the added value that criminological understanding, hitherto lacking, offers in broadening the perspective on scientific misconduct. Benefits of this approach will be to understand both the causes and motivations of scientific misconduct on an interdisciplinary level and can be applied for prevention strategies and policy in higher education.