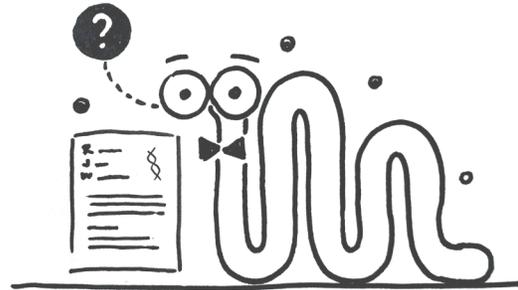


Research Justice Worksheet



Free Radicals believes that it is possible to create a more socially just, equitable, and accountable science that works towards positive social change. Transforming the current structure of scientific research towards a community- and justice-based model of inquiry will be an integral step towards creating this liberatory future. This worksheet is meant to provide scientific researchers with a practical, interactive guide for reflecting on the ways that their research engages with social justice issues.

This draws heavily on Deboleena Roy, Charlotte Cooper, Sandra Harding, and Sophie Wang.



Step One: Locating Your Research

“Locating” your research involves paying close attention to the personal, community, institutional, cultural, and historical contexts within which your research takes place. The process of locating one’s research helps to reveal the often subtle (and sometimes not-so-subtle) ways that injustice can be intertwined with scientific inquiry before the research process even begins.

- What communities or institutions are you a part of? How might your experiences within these communities affect the types of research questions that you ask?

- How might your social position bound and frame your knowledge of the world?

- How is your research influenced by the framework of knowledge (and knowledge valuation) that society operates within at this historical moment?

Step Two: Defining the Purpose

Defining the purpose of your research invites you to critically consider the driving forces behind your study, the potential real-world impacts of your research, and the ethics of your experimentation.

- What are the potential applications of your research (in both short and long terms)? Who is most likely to benefit from these applications? Who is most likely to be harmed?



- Who is funding your research and why are they funding it? Every funding agency has a research priority agenda. Is their agenda an ethical and just one?

- Does your research reinforce or dismantle existing systems of inequality?

Step Three: Interrogating Your Hypothesis

Interrogating the hypothesis of your research involves acknowledging any assumptions you're making, and analyzing the sources and types of knowledge that your hypothesis is founded upon.

- What evidence do you have for your hypothesis?

- Does your hypothesis draw only upon Western scientific literature?

- Does it incorporate knowledge from different disciplines or communities?



Step Four: Analyzing Power Dynamics

Analyzing and articulating dynamics of power throughout your research process is essential for helping you notice any injustices within your research process. These power dynamics could be within your research team or relate to the influence your research has in society at large. Be attentive to various forms of work supporting your research that may not traditionally be seen or rewarded as work, such as mentorship and outreach, or supporting data collection.

- How was your research designed and executed, and who participated in these processes? Historically, lots of scientific research has been undertaken without community participation in the scientific process. Is this the case with your research?
- How do the processes of experimentation or research findings shape the lived realities of researchers, subjects, and all other players in the research process?
- Who benefits and who is harmed by your research? Directly or indirectly? Will someone profit off of the research? Who?
- Whose points of view were respected and validated? Who was cited? Who was given credit or compensation for their role in the research?



- How will your research be disseminated? Are the data or research findings accessible to communities impacted by the research? Is it behind a paywall? Is it translated into different languages?

Step Five: Reflecting and Acting

Self-reflection is the first step toward a socially just, equitable, and accountable science. We must continue to push our research to be more community-centered, more transformative, and more just. Engaging your research in this way is not a one-time exercise, but an iterative process that takes shape over your whole career.

- What were the intended and unintended consequences of your research?

- What could or should have been done differently within your research process?

- How will you transform your future research for justice?

To learn more about research justice, we have gathered a collection of informative resources at our website: www.freerads.org

REFERENCES

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2. Roy, Deboleena. "Feminist Theory in Science: Working Toward a Practical Transformation." *Hypatia*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2004, pp.255-279., doi:10.1111/j.1527-2001.2004.tb01277.x.

