Promoting equitable research partnerships in primatology

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Like other sciences, primatology has its roots in colonial endeavors (Haraway, 1989; Hobaiter et al., 2021; Lappan et al., 2021; Rodrigues et al., 2022). In this editorial we briefly review ongoing colonial attitudes in primatology, including exploitative science, white savior ideology, and green violence. We explore how primatologists can collaborate more equitably and examine some of the challenges involved. We then focus on the role of journal editors in promoting equitable research, report on Inclusion and Diversity statements in articles published in the *International Journal of Primatology*, and end by describing the next steps for the journal.

Ongoing colonial attitudes in primatology

Most wild primates inhabit low- or middle-income countries, while research published in primatology is largely led by researchers from high-income countries (Setchell & Gordon, 2018). In many cases, primatologists from high-income countries travel to low- or middle-income countries to collect and export raw materials, in the form of data and biological samples, returning to their home institution to analyze them, with token or no involvement of national or local researchers or institutions, or of local people. These patterns reflect colonial patterns of resource extraction, often directly paralleling colonial relations, and have been termed exploitative, colonial, helicopter, parachute, or parasitic research (Dahdouh-Guebas et al., 2003; de Vos, 2020). Such international patterns can be replicated within a country, where researchers from more privileged areas work in marginalized regions (internal colonialism; Ras, 2020). Moreover, in international partnerships the national partners are often an urban elite who are fluent in the same language as an external partner, or who have studied at a Global North university, again reflecting colonial mentalities and practices. Similar unequal partnerships occur in conservation, with serious implications for our ability to address conservation challenges (de Vos & Schwartz, 2022).

Asymmetrical power relations between researchers from high- income and low- or middle-income countries stem from major disparities in access to funding and other resources including literature, broadband internet, up-to-date software packages, and

well-equipped laboratories (Atickem et al., 2019; Mekonnen et al., 2022). These asymmetries combine with systemic biases based on individual and institutional identity and are exacerbated by the hegemony of the English language in science (Amano et al., 2023) and a heavy dependence on funding from high income countries and therefore on their priorities. All these issues lead to biases in project leadership, who sets the research goals, who participates and how, and who benefits from research. Benefits can take the form of ownership of data or samples, papers published, access to the benefits of open access publishing, career progression, and ability to set the research agenda of a project, or the discipline. In some cases, disparities in access to resources can lead researchers in low- and middle-income countries to depend on foreign counterparts

Many visiting researchers from high-income countries are tempted to offer training as an opportunity to share their own skills and knowledge, and funders may incentivize this. However, one-way views of capacity-building reinforce structurally racist norms and power dynamics, perpetuate the notion that local researchers lack skills rather than access to resources, and undervalue the skills and experiences of other partners. These power dynamics play into harmful 'white savior' ideology, where white people assume that they know what is needed to help people of color, denying the agency of the recipients (Cole, 2012), and thus entrench and justify inequalities. In fact, visitors learn as much, or more, from partnerships as their hosts do (Marsh, 2007). In other words, capacity-building is mutual, and a focus on capacity-sharing or capacity exchange better reflects reality (e.g., Mercer et al. 2023)

The contributions of local researchers and other local experts to a research project can be further devalued by a narrow definition of 'intellectual' contribution to research when we determine authorship (Setchell, 2019). Such essential contributions include logistical expertise in setting up field sites and projects, legal and administrative expertise in obtaining visas, permits, and permissions, expertise in finding, tracking and habituating the study species, botanical expertise in identifying and cataloging plants, and linguistic expertise in translating and coordinating plans with others when the primatologist does not speak the languages of the community. Moreover, long-term

national field assistants have a deep familiarity with the study animals and with local communities (Montgomery, 2015). Although all these major intellectual contributions are integral to study design and project leadership, they are often only mentioned in the acknowledgements of an article (Bezanson & McNamara, 2019). Moreover, where local researchers are credited as authors, they may be 'stuck in the middle', as in other disciplines (Hedt-Gauthier et al., 2016), suggesting that they do not have the opportunity to lead projects and limiting their career prospects. In some cases, outsiders claim credit for 'discovery', erasing local expert knowledge, and echoing colonial practices (parodied by Musambi, 2019).

Primatological fieldwork is often conducted alongside the poorest and most marginalized human communities. Although many primatology projects seek to benefit the communities with whom they share space, limited resources and a lack of expertise in local development issues mean such attempts can be paternalistic. In addition to the (neocolonial) exploitation, marginalization or erasure of local knowledge and labor (e.g., Rubis & Theriault, 2019), our projects may have negative impacts on the communities living at and around the sites where we work. For example, enforcement of protected areas limits people's access to resources, depriving them of subsistence livelihoods, and often excludes them from important cultural sites (e.g., Dominguez & Luoma, 2020; Emini et al., 2023; Pemunta, 2019; Pyhälä et al., 2016; Remis & Jost Robinson, 2020). Increased enforcement of protected areas and the need for quick and measurable 'results' to satisfy donors place pressure on rangers, often from local communities themselves, to increase rates of arrest for minor infractions rather than focusing on intervening at a higher level in illegal wildlife trades (Duffy, 2022). These approaches to enforcement can result in hunters being fined or jailed, greatly increasing pressures on their immediate and extended families. Protecting animals often means people cannot defend their crops or their homes from wildlife (Neumann, 2001). Misconceptions of the gendered nature of resource use can obscure the impacts of conservation on women (Daspit, 2011; Jost Robinson et al. 2022). Common narratives linking conservation to human development are simplistic, partial, and inaccurate and have negative effects on Indigenous Peoples and local communities, as well as on conservation (Woodhouse et al, 2022). Conservation, including primate

conservation, has a long history of such 'green violence', including exclusion, dispossession and human rights abuses, building on the legacies of colonialism and extending into the present (e.g., Brockington, 2002, Brockington & Igoe, 2006; Dowie, 2011; Duffy, 2010; 2022; Duffy et al., 2019; Mwangi, 2019; Trogisch, 2021).

It is tempting to separate ourselves and our own actions and motivations from green violence. However, the negative effects of conservation on local communities present a huge barrier to partnerships and can pose a risk to the members of those communities who work with us. Moreover, we are social actors in the community in which we live and work (Hill & McLennan, 2016; McLennan & Hill, 2013) and perceptions of our intentions matter more than those intentions themselves. For example, when we visit protected areas to conduct research, we are very likely to be perceived as being allied, or at least aligned, with the protected area and enforcement, regardless of our own views.

In addition to adverse effects on local researchers and local people, inequity in primatology has negative implications for science and conservation (**Figure 1**). Both science and conservation suffer because they are perceived as being for the privileged few, while being irrelevant or harmful to others. Science benefits from a diversity of experience and approaches, enriching our theory, methods, and interpretation, inspiring innovation, and improving our understanding (Harraway, 1989). Excluding local researchers therefore restricts our understanding of primates. Conservation requires deep understanding of the historical, geopolitical, and cultural contexts in which conservation issues are immersed. Ignoring these contexts leads to negative perceptions of conservation and, by extension, the animals and their habitat we seek to protect (Blair, 2019; Waters et al., 2022). Unless we engage positively with humans, animals have no long-term prospects.

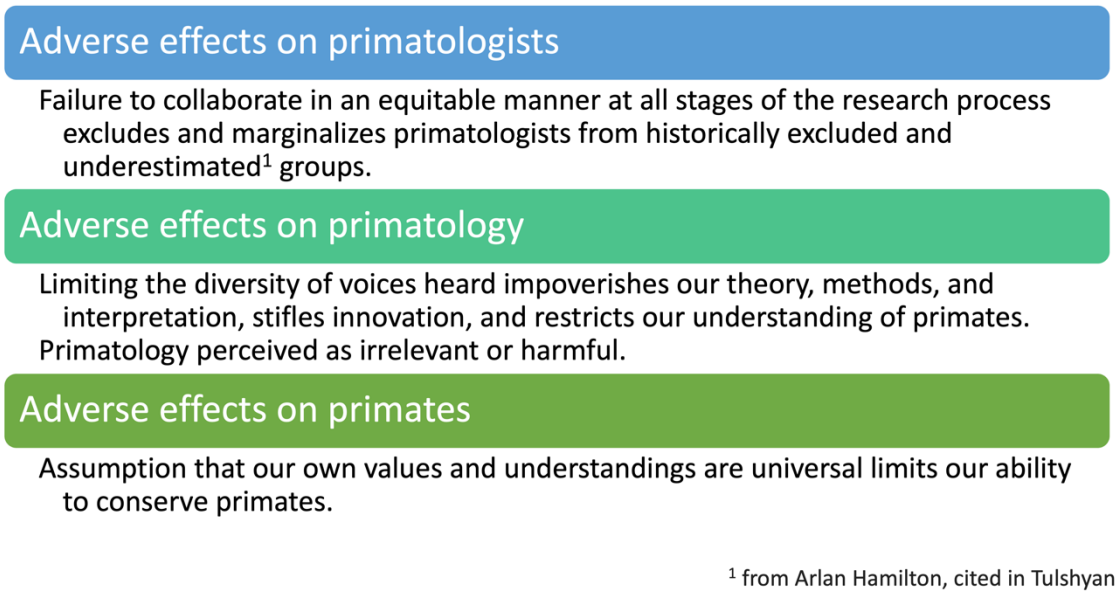

Figure 1: Some of the implications of inequitable practices for primatology

Critiques of science and conservation as colonialist and exploitative have a long history, going back to independence struggles (Adams & McShane, 1997; Adams & Mulligan, 2003; Blanc, 2020; Duffy, 2010; Garland, 2008; Mbaria & Ogada, 2016). However, calls to address inequities in international science and conservation have proliferated recently (e.g., list in Appendix 1 in Ramírez-Castañeda et al., 2022), suggesting a move in the direction of more equitable partnerships. Ignoring these issues is an expression of privilege and power.

Moving towards an equitable primatology

> *'Disrupting these structural imbalances requires a constant effort by everyone—but especially by those who have historically held positions of privilege globally and/or locally—toward decentralizing one's own perspective and creating spaces for new perspectives in science' (Ramírez-Castañeda et al., 2022, p3).*

Exploitative science is a complex issue and symptomatic of deeper and systematic injustices. Moving towards a vision of a genuinely just primatology, where all parties

have equal power to participate, is challenging and requires us to rethink almost everything we do. Equitable partnerships are just one part of this paradigm shift. Moving towards equitable partnerships in primatology will involve shifting power and the ability to set the research agenda away from the Global North in favor of equitable leadership. Models of participation and empowerment in other disciplines can help us to redress power imbalances. For example, models of participation in health and social care and in development projects often use the metaphor of a ladder (originally from Arnstein, 1969), progressing from no participation in a project, via education, information, consultation, engagement, co-design, and co-production to co-creation (**Figure 2**). Finding our own position(s) on this ladder can help us to envision how we can do things differently, and move towards equal partnerships.

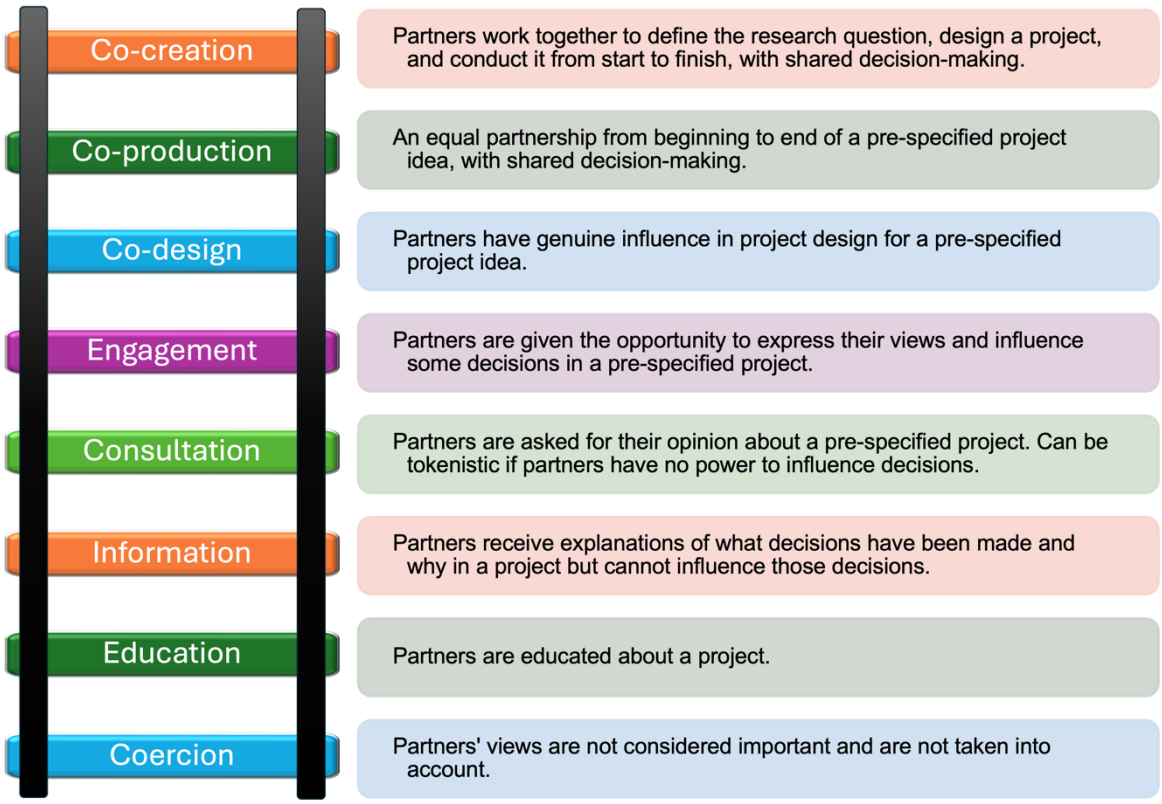

Figure 2. A model of participation in a research project, adapted from https://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/_assets/COPRODUCTION/Ladder-of-coproduction.pdf and Vargas et al. 2022.

Primates occur naturally in 90 countries and in a great variety of settings. Research partnerships in primatology are highly diverse and include foreign and national researchers at all levels from student to professor and from different disciplines, short- and long-term assistants recruited from communities local to a study site and from elsewhere, and the local communities themselves. Some projects are run on very tight budgets, while others are comparatively well-funded. The definition of 'local' varies with the perspective of the viewer and reflects a hierarchy of privilege and power. From an international perspective, a 'local' researcher may be a member of the urban elite, working in the capital city. From a national perspective, however, 'local' may mean a person living in a rural area. The complexities of each situation and differing patterns of power and access to resources mean that there are no 'one-size-fits-all' solutions to achieving equitable partnerships. Instead, transformation requires ongoing, deep interrogation of our practices.

Confronting structural racism, working towards ensuring meaningful research partnerships and addressing power imbalances is the responsibility of everyone involved in research, including researchers, funders, institutions, learned societies, journal editors, and publishers. For example, some funding agencies now require local collaboration (e.g., the National Geographic Society requires applicants to include at least one local collaborator who is significantly involved in the project on the team when working on a project outside their home country or community). Communities who have been subject to or asked to participate actively in research have produced codes of research ethics (South African San Institute, 2017). Governments in some range countries require national collaboration in international research at either the institutional level or through training of individual students through collaborations with faculty or local civil society organizations (e.g., Brazil, Cameroon, Madagascar, Tanzania, Indonesia). Many primatologists have benefitted from such arrangements. To meet these requirements on the ground and not only on paper it is imperative that we work actively with all participants in a research team at the conception and funding stages of a project. International agreements also promote benefit-sharing, such as the Nagoya protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which

aims to ensure that the benefits associated with genetic resources, and the traditional knowledge associated with these resources, are shared equitably. While compliance with such requirements often increases the costs of conducting research, they are increasingly prevalent and should be integrated into our research standards.

There is a great deal of guidance on equitable partnership available for researchers in biology, conservation, psychology, and other international disciplines (e.g., Armenteras, 2021; Haelewaters et al., 2021; Parker & Kingori, 2016; Ramananjato & Blanco, 2024, Ramírez-Castañeda et al., 2022; Rayadin & Buřivalová, 2022; Trisos et al., 2021; Urassa et al., 2021). Much of this can be applied to or adapted for primatology. However, it is crucial to understand that working towards equity is a commitment to a journey, not a task that we can complete. There are no quick fixes, although we do need action. Moreover, it is easy to think that we are working for equity when we are in fact unintentionally reinforcing the system we hope to dismantle. Token (or performative) engagement, rather than systematic overhaul, legitimizes the existing system (Ahmed, 2017, 2021), and we must beware of equity traps and tropes (Dugan, 2021). Intentionally ethical, critical, reflective practice is essential to address asymmetries of power and privilege and avoid paternalism. We need to learn how both we ourselves and our discipline fit into history to understand the contexts we work in, and deliberately aim to combat inequalities rather than to reproduce them. Commitment to working with national partners in international projects, and with local partners at our study sites is a first step. To avoid white saviorism, we must emphasize capacity-sharing and mutual learning between equal partners.

Equitable research partnerships seek to meet everyone's goals, not only those of the most powerful team member(s). In other words, we need to fully include all partners in decision-making throughout the process of a project, from conception to dissemination and beyond, such that all partners are able to shape the project from beginning to end (Covert, 2019). Five interlinked themes can help us to work towards this goal, applied throughout a project: a) an understanding and acknowledgement of disparities in privilege (the unearned advantages we benefit from due to aspects of our identity), b) an understanding of the history and geopolitical context of our study location, c)

equitable benefit-sharing, d) a reassessment of the expertise we value, and e) regular, honest and transparent communication throughout a project (**Figure 3**).

Figure 3: Summary of themes underlying equitable partnerships discussed in the text

a) Understanding and acknowledging disparities in privilege

Moving toward equitable partnerships involves understanding and acknowledging our own positions in complex systems of privilege, and realizing the extent to which we have adopted behavior we observe in others, internalized societal justifications for inequality and accepted the effects of geopolitical histories. The questions in **Figure 4**

are designed to prompt reflection, help us to identify our own internalized normalizations of inequalities, and question the values and worldviews underlying our choices and actions. When we answer one of those questions, the next question we should ask ourselves is 'why?'. For example, we trust some people's data more than those of other people because we prioritize some knowledge systems over others, see some people as more credible than others, and so on. We can reflect on our own practices, to try to consciously and deliberately avoid replicating those biases. For example, our biases influence our choice of project partners and can even lead us to assume that no potential partners exist in the country or region we work in

Accepting that science is not a meritocracy can be challenging and uncomfortable for those who benefit from power and privilege. The multidimensional and intersectional nature of privilege (Crenshaw, 1989) means that we do not necessarily recognize power when we possess it. For example, privilege associated with being from a high-income country intersects with other aspects of identity, such as gender, academic status, origin, and age to create complex patterns of oppression and discrimination.

Figure 4. Questions we can all ask ourselves to reveal inequities in primatology. In each case, the next step is to ask ourselves why we answer the way we do. These questions are designed to help us reflect on how we have internalized justifications for inequality and accepted the effects of geopolitical histories.

b) Understanding the history and geopolitical context of our study

Our fieldwork must be informed by an understanding of the wider historical, social, and political context (Genda et al., 2022; Hill & McLennan, 2016; Waters et al., 2022). This understanding is an essential aspect of preparation for fieldwork and becomes even more important in areas with a history of violent conservation. It applies whether we are working within our own community or as a visitor to other communities, as there are historically entrenched power dynamics in all communities. We need to critically evaluate the narratives that we use to justify our actions, place local communities at the center of decision-making (Woodhouse et al, 2022) and adopt critically reflexive

practice (Chua et al., 2020; Massarella et al., 2021). A political ecology perspective can help us to understand the multi-layered and complex drivers of a particular context, help us to examine the evidence underpinning our assumptions, and reveal blind spots in our understanding of issues (e.g., Duffy, 2022). The requirement of critical reflection and a nuanced understanding of wider structural issues is particularly important to projects addressing conservation but applies to all themes in primatology if we are to work for equitable partnerships.

c) Sharing benefits equitably

At the inception of a project, we must take the time to have honest conversations with partners about how they would like to benefit from their contributions and seek to meet everyone's goals. We must be aware that partners come to a collaboration from multiple different cultures. We must listen deeply, and seek to understand and respect different values, cultures, and norms (Marsh, 2007). An anthropological perspective is invaluable in bridging cultural divides.

We need to plan for ethical benefit-sharing at multiple levels, from the individual collaborator to institutions and communities, and at different timescales. Depending on the scale of the project and who our partners are, they may wish to be a co-investigator on funding applications and an author on publications, and/or to benefit through paid employment, opportunities for professional advancement, or other opportunities. Research institutions may wish to benefit from investment in equipment. Communities hosting lengthier projects may wish to benefit through investments in infrastructure or increased economic activity. Realism and honesty are important here to avoid the frustration of promising more than we can deliver.

We may be tempted to invoke a higher purpose than material gain, such as the pursuit of science or conservation goals, to justify inequity. However, this is an expression of privilege. Norms of neutrality in science serve to support vested interests (Turnhout, 2024), and we must consider the consequences of conservation interventions for the people living alongside the wildlife we seek to conserve.

When it comes to preparing manuscripts for submission, we must use authorship criteria proactively to include project partners, rather than as reasons to exclude them (Morton et al., 2022). We must recognize and account for the influence of power asymmetries on negotiations over authorship and author position. Although some prominent authorship guidelines require all authors to participate in drafting and editing a manuscript, we must adapt these to avoid unfairly excluding contributors based on their knowledge of written English or level of formal education, as proposed for other disciplines (Smith et al., 2022). Inclusive authorship also involves expanding the very useful CRediT authorship contribution system (Allen et al., 2014) to include essential contributions that are currently missing (Cooke et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2014). Authorship alone does not signal equitable partnership, and we must work to achieve equity in authorship position, both by acknowledging existing leadership roles and by adjusting power balances to create opportunities for local researchers to take the lead on projects. We can also make further use of joint first and last authorship positions to better reflect equitable partnerships (Morton et al, 2022).

d) Valuing all expertise

Closely linked to sharing benefits equitably is the need to re-evaluate the aspects of work and expertise we value. In addition to expanding our recognition of expertise when it comes to authorship, we must also interrogate our use of terms like 'expert' when working with Indigenous Peoples and local communities who live alongside the animals we study (Kimmerer & Artell, 2024). While we may be experts in our subject matter, and some of us have spent decades with our study species, members of local communities may be far more knowledgeable about our study species than we are (Marsh, 2007). Combining complementary expertise can lead to collaborative co-management programs. For example, the Waiwai, an Indigenous community in the Konashen Amerindian Protected Area in Guyana, initiated a collaboration with scientists affiliated with institutions in the USA to determine whether primates in the protected area were healthy, leading to a collaborative surveillance program employing culturally appropriate sampling methods (Milstein et al., 2024). Moreover, seeking to understand,

rather than exploit, Indigenous knowledges can open avenues towards decolonizing our praxis (Rubis 2020).

e) Communicating regularly, honestly and transparently throughout a project

Throughout a project, we must work to achieve transparent, honest and regular communication with all partners. This accountability challenges us to acknowledge and understand how disparities in power, privilege, and access to resources influence our discussions. We must discuss any changes to the project, to ensure that we maintain benefits for all. Communication is likely to involve multiple languages and require attention to cultural norms and differences in how we communicate. Again, this requires commitment to deep understanding of and respect for cultural differences. Interactions are not always easy and can be emotionally challenging. We must also include team members who are not in the same location as we are, using appropriate and agreed means of communication. This can be challenging where project partners have limited internet connections.

We must share and discuss the results of a project with all partners as we produce them. In some cases, sharing a draft of a report and inviting feedback is appropriate. In other cases, we need to translate findings into appropriate languages and formats to enable discussion.

When we share the outcomes of a project with project partners, sharing a scientific article is appropriate in some cases, with translation into appropriate languages where needed (the *International Journal of Primatology* welcomes full translations as electronic supplementary material). In other cases, a scientific paper is not the most relevant format for our partners, and we must discuss and agree the most appropriate way to disseminate results, then do so (the *International Journal of Primatology* also welcomes other summaries of articles as electronic supplementary material).

Facing the challenge

Globally dominant societal forces and systematic injustices underlie and reinforce inequitable partnerships in primatology. This can make us feel powerless to effect change. However, aiming to make progress (i.e., moving up a step on the ladder in **Figure 2**) rather than solve the whole problem can help here. Those of us with institutional power and in leadership positions can use that power to push for inclusion and promote local leadership (e.g., Covert, 2019). Working together, for example through our primatological societies, sharing strategies, and supporting one another can also help. We need to be humble and open to critique and feedback, even when it is uncomfortable. We need to share stories, seek recommendations for how to improve, share what worked in our specific context, and discuss why, as well as sharing failures. We should also be aware that major structural barriers to equitable partnership, which differ with the circumstances of each partner and project, mean that the efforts primatologists are making to effect change may not always be visible from the outside. Above all, we need to listen to marginalized and underrepresented voices, and act on what we hear (e.g., Bezanson et al., 2024).

Promoting equitable research partnerships at the *International Journal of Primatology*

> *'the notion that no locally based individuals made a "substantial contribution" (per authorship criteria) to the acquisition of data is pure fiction' (The Lancet Global Health (2018, e593).*

Editors are the gatekeepers to scientific publishing. This gives us responsibility and power, which we can use to promote change. Editors investigate concerns with scientific integrity in manuscripts submitted to their journals, and failure to recognize a contribution to a project is an issue of scientific integrity. The 2023 Cape Town Statement on Fostering Research Integrity through Fairness and Equity explicitly links imbalances in research collaboration to research integrity (Horn et al., 2023). In

response to concerns about exploitative research, *Nature Portfolio* journals encourage authors to follow the recommendations of the TRUST Code when developing, conducting, and communicating their study (Nature, 2022). The TRUST Code is a Global Code of Conduct for Equitable Research Partnerships (TRUST, 2018). It is based on values of fairness, respect, care, and honesty, and is substantially inspired by earlier codes, including the San code of research ethics, developed by Indigenous Peoples of Africa (South African San Institute, 2017).

The editors of *The Lancet Global Health* go beyond encouragement, and 'do not consider for publication any studies conducted in a country without representatives from that country on the authorship' (McIntosh et al., 2023, e1007). The *Association of Anaesthetists* reviewed the literature and held workshops to discuss equitable authorship, concluding with strongly stated recommendations for editors, which include 'an expectation of inclusion of local researchers in first and/or last authorship positions reflecting significant ownership and/or leadership contribution to the work presented' and that 'journals should require that authors submit a structured reflexivity statement to describe the ways in which equity has been promoted in the partnership that produced the research' (Morton et al., 2022, p265). This reflexivity statement is extensive and challenging, requiring authors to explain how research partners were involved at each stage of a project, and who benefitted, providing a public accounting of the extent to which their project achieved equitable partnerships. Requiring such transparency implies that equitable practice is a matter of scientific integrity which the readership should be able to evaluate.

As one of the major journals in primatology, the *International Journal of Primatology* is a gatekeeper for enabling people's research to influence the discipline. It is published by a global publisher based in London, Berlin and New York and publishes in English. The *International Journal of Primatology* has taken a set of actions to address diversity and inclusion in the journal (Setchell, 2015, 2024; Setchell & Gordon, 2018; IJP linguistic inclusion policy March 2024), including appointing Associate Editors from from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and North America. Since November 2021, we have invited authors to include an Inclusion and Diversity statement in their articles. In our

Instructions for Authors and our email decision letters, we invite authors to use one or more template statements, to modify these statements, or to write their own statements. Inclusion and Diversity statements aim to raise awareness of issues of exploitative science, and promote equitable partnerships in the conceptualization, design, conduct and publication of research. They also highlight the inclusion of authors who choose to publicly self-identify as an underrepresented ethnic minority in science, a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, or as living with a disability, and gender balance in reference lists. Elsewhere in our instructions for authors, we also write that:

> *'We strongly encourage collaboration with colleagues in the locations where the research is conducted and expect them to be included as co-authors when they fulfill the authorship criteria. List contributors who do not meet all criteria for authorship in the Acknowledgements section. We urge researchers to carefully consider researcher contributions and authorship criteria when involved in multi-region collaborations involving local researchers to promote greater equity in research collaborations.'*

We do not require Inclusion and Diversity statements, but we encourage authors to provide one and hope that this reflection on their practices will influence their future research endeavors. The first article to include an Inclusion and Diversity statement was accepted in June 2022. Since then, 39 of 95 published articles have included a statement (41%), while 56 have not (59%, we excluded book reviews, commentaries, tributes, introductions to a special issue and a review, to focus on empirical articles, data in Online Resource 1). Of the 39 statements, 15 included the template text:

> *'The author list includes contributors from the location where the research was conducted, who participated in study conception, study design, data collection, analysis, and/or interpretation of the findings.'*

A further 12 articles reworded this statement, with no change to the meaning (1), to remove 'or' (2), to remove some aspects of project participation (5), to remove some aspects of project participation and add others (1), to refer to authors as 'affiliated with'

a study location in France (1), and to specify the number of contributors from the study location (2). In one of these last two cases, the statement read:

> *'Twelve authors (including joint first, second, and third authors) are contributors from the location where the research was conducted, and participated in study conception, study design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of the findings'* (Aung et al., 2024).

One set of authors who included the statement also added that '*We are committed to ensuring that the research results are available to those working and living in the study location*.' (Mandl et al., 2023).

One set of authors who did not include the statement noted that '*Additionally, the acknowledgements section includes contributors from the location where the research was conducted, who participated in data collection and fieldwork management*'

The lack of an Inclusion and Diversity statement in an article does not indicate that the statements do not apply to it. Decision emails are long, and authors do not necessarily attend to all the contents, or to the Instructions for Authors, so may miss the invitation to include a statement. Up to March 2024, we did not direct authors to information about the statement if they did not include one. This means that we cannot, yet, calculate a 'parachute index' (the ratio of papers with local authors to papers without them, Culotta et al., 2024).

Overall, the Inclusion and Diversity statements suggest that a minimum of 28% of original articles (26/95) have included contributors from the study location since we introduced the inclusion and diversity statement in late 2021. In combination with our own knowledge, this suggests that there is a lot of good practice in our discipline. However, the template statement is open to interpretation. Including contributors from the study location does not necessarily reflect equitable collaboration. It is not clear what 'contribution' means, and the statement does not explain whether and how issues of power asymmetry were addressed. Moreover, 'location' is imprecise and could be taken to mean anything from a particular study site to a host country. Authorship can be

tokenistic if authors are named but power imbalances mean that they do not have the opportunity to be fully involved in decision-making during a study. Finally, as we have seen, authorship is just one way to share the benefits of a project equitably and may not be appropriate for some project partners.

Despite these caveats, authors' engagement with the Inclusion and Diversity statement shows that it has potential to incentivize, recognize, and share good practice, provide models, promote discussion, and encourage primatologists to explore ways to improve our practice. Since March 2024, where authors do not include an Inclusion and Diversity statement in submissions to the *International Journal of Primatology*, we have directed them to the option in our editorial comments, to further encourage primatologists to engage with issues of equity in research collaboration. Inspired by other journals, we will also move towards targeted prompts that help authors to reflect on and describe their research partnerships during the research process, including those with local researchers and with local communities. This extended statement will be published as an electronic supplement to the article. We hope that these extended statements will act to promote and share good practice and promote positive change. For the moment, these statements will be optional, but we hope that they will become standard, in the same way as Conflict of Interest statements are now standard. We welcome constructive feedback on these plans.

Finally, questioning power dynamics between researchers and institutions in high and low- and middle-income countries and striving for equitable partnerships is important as we attempt to counter asymmetries in the production of knowledge and representation of researchers in primatology. It can contribute to the dismantling of colonial ideologies and begin to redress the dominance of theory and knowledge from the Global North in primatology. However, the prevalent representation of Western science as a neutral, objective representation of reality and the only source of valid knowledge means that addressing issues of epistemic hegemony, and decolonizing our discipline, will require a much more radical questioning of how we produce knowledge and a more fundamental change in our practices (Held, 2023; Nyamnjoh, 2019; Smith, 2022).

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We thank the many primatologists and others who have shared their perspectives with us on these topics. We look forward to many more such conversations.

Supporting Information is available online (Online Resource 1).

Conflict of interest statement

The authors are all editors of this journal.

Data availability statement

All data supporting the findings of this study are available in the supplementary material.

Author contributions

JMS and SK have discussed the issues discussed in this editorial extensively. In preparing this editorial, JMS prepared a first draft and shared it with the other editors of IJP, with a general invitation to edit and comment, and requests for feedback on specific points. The editors edited the draft and provided extensive comments and discussion. JMS then prepared a second draft, incorporating the comments, and shared it with the other editors again, for further comment. After discussion and incorporating feedback, we agreed the final version.

As a group of editors, we are from diverse geographical backgrounds and have experience working in various roles as national and foreign post-docs, field assistants, students, university faculty, and NGO staff in diverse countries. However, our view of primatology is necessarily partial. In particular, none of us has experience of being the local collaborator who is not a researcher.

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