



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A03080045

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In August 2003, we received allegations of plagiarism against the subject.¹ Several of the allegations were of the type commonly referred to as "self-plagiarism." NSF does not consider self-plagiarism to be research misconduct.² The two remaining allegations are both verbatim plagiarism, but from different sources. The first allegation is that the subject copied a verbatim explanation of a mathematical technique he utilized.³ The second allegation is the subject's use of equations without proper attribution.⁴

For the first allegation, the subject referenced the paper from which the text was taken, and he argued his use of that text to describe the decomposition was so technically constrained that it is considered to be a generic description. The subject provided 10 examples of similar language from unrelated papers. We agree with the subject and conclude the first allegation of plagiarism is not substantiated.

For the second allegation, the subject used a set of equations as a point of further analysis and discussion. Although the subject had referenced a publication as the source of that set of equations, the complainant argued another researcher was the first to publish that exact solution. The paper the subject referenced was published earlier and was more general, but it appeared only in a non-English journal, so it is likely many readers, including the complainant, were unaware of it. The professional society⁵ in this research area that published the papers also received the second allegation and looked into it. It was aware of the same facts and concluded there were insufficient grounds to find plagiarism. We agree with the subject and the professional society in concluding the second allegation of plagiarism is not substantiated.

Thus, we conclude neither allegation of plagiarism against the subject has substance. Accordingly, this case is closed.

¹ (footnote redacted).

² 45 CFR § 689.1(a)(3) defines plagiarism as misappropriation of another's ideas or words.

³ (footnote redacted).

⁴ (footnote redacted).

⁵ (footnote redacted).