



Open Science in the Technology Transfer Office

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OBJECTIVE

To describe perspectives of technology transfer experts (TTEs) at Canadian universities on tensions between open science (OS) and intellectual property (IP) in neuroscience commercialization.

BACKGROUND

- Emerging frameworks for OS aim to expedite and democratize knowledge translation.
- Programs such as the Canadian Open Neuroscience Platform marry OS principles with brain health and research.
- Many brain research centres exploring open policies find contention where OS and IP frameworks overlap.
- These responses raise ethical concerns about knowledge ownership, stigma, and utilitarianism in commercial pipelines.
- Although TTEs guide research outputs through this evolving landscape, their perspectives have yet to be elucidated.

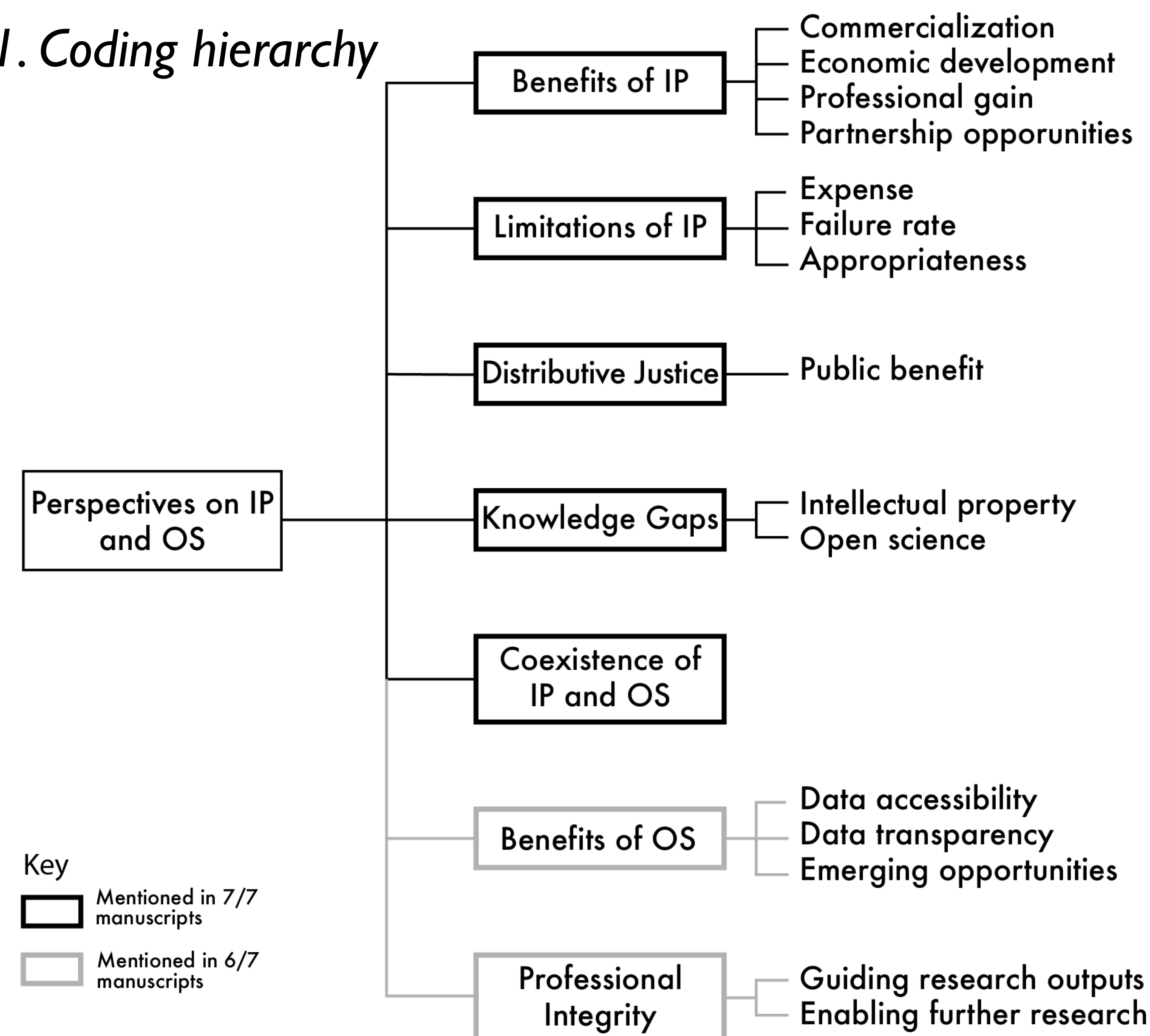
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METHODS

- 7 semi-structured interviews and focus groups with 8 TTEs representing 4 major Canadian universities.
- Transcripts analyzed with inductive and co-collaborative thematic coding techniques.
- Hierarchical articulation of major and minor themes.

Fig 1. Coding hierarchy



ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTES

“Patents are sort of a required element for life science research to be actualized in products. Because [development is] so expensive, you need some sort of property right to protect the investment.”

On Benefits of IP

“Filing for a patent is quite expensive, especially when you pursue protection in numerous countries simultaneously... I’ve seen expenditures as high as \$200,000 to \$250,000.”

On Limitations of IP

“Maybe we should work with foundations on a global health basis to get this developed and made freely available to communities that need it... the public good, it should be part of the conversation.”

On Distributive Justice

RESULTS

Of 7 major themes identified, 5 appeared in each transcript.

- Benefits and Limitations of IP* were the two most prominent major themes.
- Distributive Justice* linked innovation to the common good.
- Knowledge Gaps and Coexistence* identified needs for education and policy work.

DISCUSSION

- Participants viewed IP as a **strategic tool** for product, business, and economic development.
- Successful commercialization was seen as a matter of **returning benefits of innovation** to the public.
- Although often unfamiliar with OS platforms, participants **supported the overarching principles**.
- The paradigm of “OS versus IP” was criticized as a false equivalency, with great potential seen for the frameworks to **constructively intertwine**.
- Rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, optimal commercialization pipelines may leverage **unique strengths** from OS and IP frameworks to match the research context.