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EDITORIAL

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Academic publishing is a curious example of how private businesses cash in on public funding and free labour of academics. The academic publishing world is dominated by five editorial groups: Elsevier, Springer, Wiley-Blackwell, Taylor & Francis and Sage publication. These five publishing houses published more than half of all the academic peer-reviewed papers in the world in 2013, while in 1973 their share was merely 20 % (Larivière et al. 2015). In the field of Social Sciences, the concentration is even stronger: 70 % of peer-reviewed articles in the world were published by the five publishing groups in 2013 (Larivière et al. 2015). The profits these companies are making are sky-rocketing. For instance, Elsevier, which produces approximately 400,000 articles annually in its 2,500 journals and which has yearly download numbers amounting to 900 million, reached a profit margin of 37 % and earned over £2 billion in revenues in 2015 (RELX Group 2016). Profits are made from the subscription fees that the University libraries are asked to pay for the access to academic journals (deals which are often hidden by non-disclosure agreements) and which have also been raised artificially through the practice of bundling important journals with less important journals, without the choice of subscribing only to the popular journals.

Profits are importantly made from the fact that a large part of the journal work is done for free by the journal editors-in-chiefs, referees and the authors themselves. Many are thus selling the fruits of their labour for free, as part of their roles as more or less precarious academics in the prospect of getting a permanent position in the future. At the same time, public funding is being cut in many countries in the name of economic austerity, which has led to cuts in journal subscriptions that further limit academics' access to knowledge and threatens key principles of science: free access, openness and accumulation of scientific knowledge based on peer critique and review.

In light of these developments, it is no wonder that there are ongoing campaigns to boycott the big publishing business on the one hand, and increasing pressures for open access publishing, on the other hand. Nowadays, many funders, such as national research foundations and EU funding instruments, require that research findings are made available to all. The corporate publishers have responded by implementing open access for individual articles but by making the authors pay article publishing charges, which range, for instance, from 50 to 5,000 USD per article with Elsevier depending on the quality and popularity of the journal (Elsevier 2016). This has led to yet another means through which public funding is being channelled to the corporate publishing sector. It also diminishes the opportunities to do the actual research. When funding needs to be allocated for article publishing charges, it is taken away from the other parts of the budgets including salary costs. Article publishing charges for open access is then another means to increase precarity within the academia.

So, what is the role of NJMR in all this? How can we run a completely open access journal for the authors, as well as for the University libraries? It is possible because the journal is funded by public grants we receive and need to continuously apply for from The Joint Committee for Nordic research councils in the Humanities and Social Sciences (NOS-HS), by the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies (TSV) and smaller funding from the Nordic universities, the migration research centres and from The Society for the Study of Ethnic Relations and International Migration (ETMU ry). This funding covers our reasonable costs of production at our open access publisher Versita, now De Gruyter Open, and for a relatively small time-share of our Managing Editor.

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Although being a no-cost journal for the authors, all the articles we publish have gone through a double blind peer review and rigorous round(s) of reviews by the editors-in-chief and/or Special issue editors, who all need to juggle all the other demands of neoliberal academia: teaching, writing their own articles, applying for external funding and managing research, administration and so forth. Hence, from the authors' perspective, it might seem that we are taking a longer time to review and publish as compared to the corporate journals. However, this critique overlooks the particular structure NJMR has, the fact that it is a completely Open access without article charges and the fact that the quality of our journal depends on the goodwill of peer-reviewers and a lot of free labour by the editors. It also overlooks our aim to strive for scientific quality rather than rapidity. Just as the authors do not necessarily know about the costs of academic publishing as they are not aware of the subscription fees their University libraries need to pay – for them it seems that their publications are 'free'; in a similar way, the authors do not necessarily know about the amount of free labour put into the publishing processes. Yet the choice to publish in one journal or the other is like any consumer choice; it has direct economic and political implications on the future of academic publishing as a field and on the scientific field at large.

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