

Editor-in-Chief's Note

ABOUT ISSUE 4 OF 2023 AND NON FOR PROFIT ACADEMIC PUBLISHING

Academic publishing plays a crucial role in fostering communication and advancing the development of modern science. It serves as the cornerstone of the scholarly exchange of ideas and research findings, facilitating the dissemination of knowledge to a global audience, engaging scholars in fruitful discussions, and creating clear and transparent competence between innovators.

By making research accessible to the broader academic community and the public, academic publishing allows for the validation, replication, and expansion of scientific discoveries. Peer-reviewed publications ensure the quality and reliability of the information, promoting transparency and accountability in the scientific process. Moreover, academic publishing promotes collaboration among researchers, encouraging critical analysis of findings and ultimately driving innovation and progress across various fields of study. In this way, it serves as a linchpin in the continuous growth and evolution of human knowledge.

Open Access publishing is of paramount importance in transforming the current model of academic publications for several compelling reasons.

Firstly, open access publications make research findings readily accessible to a global audience. This accessibility helps democratise knowledge, enabling researchers, students, and the public to benefit from the latest discoveries, irrespective of their institutional affiliations or financial means.

Secondly, open access promotes transparency and accountability. It allows for greater scrutiny and validation of research, as anyone can access and evaluate the work. This transparency is vital for maintaining the integrity of the scientific process.

Furthermore, open access publishing accelerates the pace of innovation and scientific progress. Removing access barriers fosters collaboration, encourages interdisciplinary research, and allows for the rapid dissemination of critical information, particularly in fields where time is of the essence.

Finally, open access can alleviate the financial burden on researchers and institutions. Traditional publishing models often involve costly subscriptions and paywalls, which can limit the dissemination of research and hinder researchers with limited budgets. Open access mitigates these financial barriers and ensures that research is accessible to all.

In essence, the move toward open access publishing is pivotal for advancing science, fostering collaboration, transparency, and inclusivity in the dissemination of knowledge, ultimately accelerating progress and benefiting society as a whole.

Nevertheless, there is a spoonful of tar in a barrel of honey - Open Access publications mean no payment for publishers from readers, no subscriptions, just free and no barrier availability of publication. But how to cover the expenses?

The work of managing editors, language editors, peer review editors, guest editors, and other professionals in academic publishing is both crucial and demanding. They are responsible for maintaining the quality and integrity of scholarly publications, a task that often requires attention to detail, precision, and adherence to rigorous ethical and editorial standards. It is important to recognise the significance of their contributions and ensure that they are fairly compensated for their efforts, as their work is essential for advancing knowledge and disseminating high-quality research. Fair compensation not only acknowledges the difficulty of their roles but also incentivises the continued dedication and expertise they bring to the academic publishing process.

During the Soviet Union era, editors faced significant challenges due to their unpaid work. They often served a single institution's interests, resulting in a narrow scope of academic publishing. The lack of proper compensation led to financial struggles for editors, discouraging talent from pursuing such roles. Quality control suffered, as resources for peer review and language editing were limited, and in-house journals sometimes fell short of genuine academic standards. Moreover, isolationist policies hindered access to international academic discourse, impeding intellectual growth and cross-disciplinary collaboration.

Debates upon for-profit and non-profit academic publishing are endless.

For-profit and non-profit academic publishing represent two distinct models within the realm of scholarly communication.

For-profit academic publishing companies operate with a primary focus on generating revenue. They often charge substantial fees to access their journals, articles, and other academic resources. These companies may also require authors to pay publication fees, known as article processing charges (APCs), which can be a barrier for researchers, especially those from resource-constrained institutions. While for-profit publishers can invest in marketing and technology, they have been criticised for sometimes prioritising profits over open access and affordability.

On the other hand, non-profit academic publishing prioritises the dissemination of knowledge over financial gain. Organisations such as universities, academic societies, and open-access initiatives often lead non-profit publishing efforts. They aim to make research more widely accessible and affordable, with a focus on public good rather than profit. Many non-profit publishers provide open-access journals, which are freely available to readers, and they may rely on grants, subsidies, or volunteer efforts to sustain their operations.

Both for-profit and non-profit publishing have their advantages and drawbacks. For-profit publishers can invest in quality control and technology, while non-profit publishers prioritise accessibility and affordability. The choice between these models often depends on the goals and values of the academic community, as well as the specific field of study. The ongoing debate and evolving landscape of academic publishing continue to shape the future of how research is disseminated and shared.

Open access publishing and article processing charges (APCs) are closely linked. APCs serve as a financial mechanism that supports the open access model. In open access publishing, research articles are made freely available to the public, and to offset the costs of publishing and maintaining journals, authors or their institutions often pay APCs. These charges fund the peer-review process, editorial services, and the infrastructure necessary for open access publication. Thus, APCs are integral to the sustainability of open access publishing, ensuring that research remains accessible to a global audience without paywalls or subscription fees.

For instance, in AJEE, we have a publication fee (article processing charge) for each article published in Open Access. We publish under a CC BY 4.0 license, permitting copying and distributing the material in any medium or format in an unadapted form only, for noncommercial purposes, and with proper attribution to the creator.

This one-time fee covers peer review administration, professional article production in various formats, and dissemination, in addition to other publishing functions. Here is a list of the supported activities carried out by us with this funding.

AJEE staff support and trainings

AJEE is proud to be a member of COPE, ELI, and ALPSP. AJEE successfully cooperates with the European Association of Science Editors. The School for Editors in 2022-2023 was attended by the Journal's staff to enhance their qualifications (Dr. Yuliia Baklazhenko, Dr. Olha Dunaievskia, Polina Siedova, Yuliia Hartman, Olha Samofal). AJEE staff are members of the Ukrainian regional chapter of EASE (Prof. Iryna Izarova is the chair, and Dr. Yuliia Baklazhenko, Dr. Olha Dunaievskia, Polina Siedova are members).

Submission to Prepublication Checks

Articles submitted to the Journal first undergo an editorial process, which assesses article scope and eligibility, checks for plagiarism and AI detection, and verifies whether the underlying data and software have been made available. Before, during, and after these checks, the assigned editor also responds to editorial inquiries and provides authors with information on what is required for the full prepublication checks to begin. Since May 2023, AJEE has been cooperating with Scholastica for submission and peer review services.

Prepublication Checks to Publication

The AJEE assigned editor provides a comprehensive service consisting of rigorous prepublication checks to ensure adherence to all editorial policies, reporting guidelines, and ethical considerations. Before an article is published, the production team provides proofs and performs quality checks on citations, references, image resolutions, and ensures that persistent identifiers are correctly assigned and resolved.

Peer Review Management

Authors suggest expert reviewers using a built-in peer reviewer selector tool, which is verified by the assigned editor. If deemed suitable, the reviewers are invited to review on the authors' behalf. When a review is submitted, the editorial team checks it and its accompanying peer review status.

Services after Publication

Once an article is published, AJEE creates a dedicated page for each article that displays article-level metrics for authors and readers to see and measure the impact of their work (Dimensions). AJEE ensures that all articles are fully discoverable. For articles that pass peer review, AJEE sends content to all the major bibliographic indexers across our subject areas (Scopus, Web of Science, Heinonline, DOAJ). The Journal has been accepted for indexing by these major databases. For readers, all articles can be live-tracked and easily found through customisable article alerts and feeds.

AJEE Website Development

AJEE has a scalable, custom-built publishing infrastructure supporting the open research publishing process, including registration, submission, publication, post-publication peer review, and article versioning. This technology is regularly improved and customised to meet the needs of authors and reviewers, ensuring high-quality publications. AJEE continually innovates its web-based publishing technology to make articles more dynamic,

interactive, and reproducible, enhancing the overall user experience and making its content widely discoverable.

Marketing and Business Development

AJEE uses social media, digital media, newsletters, and webinars to promote and highlight the work of authors, reviewers, and editors. A proactive communications team collaborates with authors and institutions to disseminate authors' research to the scientific community and the wider society. AJEE's editor on social media promotes articles and initiatives through editorial campaigns and events to specifically spotlight authors' work. We use the following social media platforms:

on Twitter: https://twitter.com/ajee_journal

on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/access-to-justice-in-eastern-europe/?viewAsMember=true>

on Academia.edu: <https://independent.academia.edu/AJEEJournal>

on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Access-to-Justice-in-Eastern-Europe-102418504898401/>

Author and User Support

AJEE welcomes open debate and discussion, supporting and managing an open and transparent commenting functionality on published articles for registered users. We provide resources to authors and reviewers to help conduct research, promote research, and track the impact of their work.

Every issue, AJEE waives 20% of its content and offers waivers or discounts to authors from Ukraine and low-income states to support the transition to full open access. The fee is transparently displayed to demonstrate the cost of publication to authors.

We want to share our experience for the following reasons. Creating more sustainable models of publishing is imperative to support the dissemination of research. It is not solely the responsibility of publishers and scholarly journals; universities should offer increased funding to authors to encourage open access publishing, thus reducing financial barriers and promoting the wider accessibility of research findings. This financial support can empower researchers to choose open access options, leading to broader dissemination and increasing the impact of their work. Furthermore, grant agencies and institutions should allocate specific grants for open access publication, fostering open science principles and encouraging researchers to make their work openly available. Sustainable open access models can then invest in upholding the quality and integrity of research by supporting rigorous peer review processes and editorial services, ensuring that open access publishing remains a reputable avenue for scholarly communication.

Certainly, here are some recommendations regarding the necessity of creating more sustainable models of publishing and providing increased support for open access publishing:

1. **Recommendation for Universities:** Universities should consider increasing financial support for their researchers to cover article processing charges (APCs) for open access publishing. This support can help reduce the financial barriers that authors often face and promote the wider dissemination of research findings. It is not a secret that universities benefit from the indexing of articles in well-known databases, which currently focus on high-quality content requiring thorough peer review and pre-press services
2. **Recommendation for Grant Agencies:** Grant agencies should introduce specific grant opportunities dedicated to funding open access publications. These grants

can incentivise researchers to embrace open access, aligning with the principles of open science and fostering greater transparency and collaboration in the academic community.

3. **Recommendation for Sustainable Open Access Models:** Sustainable open access publishing models should prioritise the maintenance of research quality by investing in rigorous peer review processes and editorial services. This ensures that open access publishing remains a reputable and credible avenue for scholarly communication.

By implementing these recommendations, universities, grant agencies, and open access publishers can collectively contribute to a more sustainable, accessible, and high-quality scholarly publishing ecosystem.

We do not support for-profit academic publishing; however, we do insist on fair compensation for the work of editors and all the editorial staff. Non-profit should not equate to jobs without salaries and should encompass professional development, affiliation and engagement. Despite this, editors should not be dependent on article processing charges and should be fully independent in their decisions if this is the model of journal financing.

In particular, I want to draw our audience to some very important articles from Ukraine and Kosovo, published in this issue.

This scholarly article, titled **‘The Concept of ‘Militant Democracy’ in the Context of Russia’s Armed Aggression Against Ukraine,’** written by **Oleksandr Bakumov**, explores the application of the concept of "militant democracy" in the context of Ukraine's democratic transition and the external armed aggression it has faced from Russia. The article delves into the historical development of this concept, which emerged after World War II to safeguard democracies capable of defending themselves. The work focuses on the relevance of this concept to Ukraine, given its ongoing conflict with Russia since 2014. The author provides proposals for constitutional and legislative improvements in Ukraine, drawing from global experiences and practices, to strengthen the country's democratic resilience in the face of external threats.

One more article, **‘The Impact of the Armed Conflict on Labour Law: The Case of Ukraine,’** written by **Sergii Venediktov**, explores the profound effects of the armed conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation on Ukrainian labour law, focusing on the unique challenges faced and potential solutions based on Ukraine's experiences. It emphasizes the importance of adaptable, context-specific legal approaches to labour regulation during armed conflicts.

In this issue of AJEE, we feature more highly interesting and noteworthy articles. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the authors who have contributed, as well as to the peer reviewers who have helped maintain the high quality of our content. At the same time, I would also like to extend my thanks to our dedicated team, including managing editors, language editors, and assistant editors. Let us take pride in our collective work, knowing that this important job is both necessary and deserving of recognition and compensation.

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