

Public statement – Resignations from the Editorial Board of the Journal of Economic Surveys

In January 2024 we stood down from our roles as members of the Advisory Board, Editors-in-Chief, Managing Editors, Journal Administrator and Associate Editors for the Journal of Economic Surveys.

Out of respect for Authors and Referees and recognising the importance of academic publishing in our profession we have retained editorial duties of the papers assigned to us while we served on the Editorial Board of the Journal.

We no longer believed that the corporate policies and practices of the Journal's publisher, Wiley, as we perceived them through several statements made by Wiley and the draft of a new editor agreement submitted to the attention of Editors-in-Chief and Managing Editors by Wiley, were coherent with ours.

We made the decision reluctantly after very careful thought, consideration, receiving legal advice and being unsuccessful in having our lawyer partake in negotiations on the submitted draft to identify a mutually acceptable balance.

The non-negotiable documentation submitted to our analysis appeared to emphasize quantity over quality of the papers submitted and strongly favoured cross pollination among the various Wiley publications also in relation to papers that we would have not considered favourably for the Journal of Economic Surveys increasing – in our perception – risks of proliferation of poor-quality science.

More generally, we felt a lack of appreciation for Editorial Board members' bona fide contributions. Bona fide contributions include our scholarly knowledge, professional relationships, time, as well as Editorial Board members' names. We make these contributions to academic publishing to discover and disseminate quality scientific research and generate knowledge to enhance decision- and policymaking.

As highlighted in several (publicly available) media by Wiley:

- Wiley's performance metrics for journals are *"growth in submissions"* and *"growth in published articles"*; Wiley also appears ready to affirm that *"it's all driven by volume ultimately"*.
- Wiley considers it *"important to keep authors at the center of journal strategy"*.
- Wiley has an *"Open Access ("pay to publish")"* business model and a *"Cascade strategy of finding initially rejected articles another more appropriate home within Wiley's portfolio"*.
- *"(O)utside independent editors"*, as Wiley refers to us, are expected to develop and adopt *"a journal (...) strategy that puts the author first"*, to *"help authors get published"* and *"(e)nsure that authors are left with a positive experience when they submit to (our) journal"*.

It was our perception that – under the newly proposed draft agreement – continuing to serve as members of the Editorial Board would have exposed us to potential reputational risks and, in the case of Editors-in-Chief and Managing Editors, also to potential significant (and unreasonable) financial risks. In our view, the documentation proposed inappropriately managed risks, in particular, risks arising from research integrity threats.

As we believe should appear reasonable, considering the goals we pursue by contributing to academic publishing, it is fundamental for us that the publishers we collaborate with are:

- focused on concrete ways to (i) tackle so-called "paper mill" submissions and (ii) manage increased risks of computer-generated text and artificial intelligence;
- ready to discuss with us the risks of open access publishing and how to mitigate them; and consequently;
- ready to reassure the academic community of the integrity of all their journals in concrete and unmitigated terms.

Unfortunately, at this stage, we feared that the new terms of engagement brought to the attention of Editors-in-Chief and Managing Editors by Wiley were not adequate in ensuring these fundamental prerequisites for a serene collaboration as, in our perception, confirmed by Wiley's widely available statements (as summarized above).

We make this public statement to:

- (i) raise editors' awareness about the changing risks of editorial duties;
- (ii) urge debate about the direction of academic publishing which we believe has an increasing risk of undermining the integrity of discovery, generation and dissemination of quality scientific research and knowledge; and
- (iii) highlight that editor agreements that expose editors to unlimited liability for work that is ultimately *pro-bono*, are – in our opinion – unacceptable.

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the Journal of Economic Surveys, and in particular, all our Referees for the time and scholarly knowledge they gave to the Journal, and we thank Authors for submitting their research. The Journal of Economic Surveys could not have achieved the international peer reputation it has established without the goodwill and human capital of the economics profession!

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