

EDITORIAL

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Since September 2018, when European Commission and European Research Council (ERC) announced the launch of cOALition S and published Plan S, the publishing world has been in turmoil. The initiative consisted of stipulating that “all scholarly publications funded by public or private grants provided by national, regional and international research councils and funding bodies must be published in open access journals, on open access platforms, or made immediately available through open access repositories without embargo” by 2021 (Plan S 2019a).

By June 2019, at least 19 national or charitable funders have joined the coalition. This includes the most important national funders in the Nordic countries, such as the Academy of Finland, The Research Council of Norway, and Formas, Forte, and Vinnova in Sweden. In the Nordic countries, the response toward and adaption of Plan S vary. The Norwegian government’s goal is that all research articles financed by public funding should be openly accessible by 2024. This was decided before Plan S was initiated. In Denmark, however, the government has rejected Plan S, and in Sweden the largest state funder Vetenskapsrådet has turned it down, while some smaller state and one private funder have signed the declaration. In Finland, the biggest research funder, Academy of Finland, has adopted Plan S.

One motivation, to put an end to the huge profits of the five big editorial groups, Elsevier, Springer, Wiley-Blackwell, Taylor & Francis, and Sage publication (see our editorial Näre & Bendixsen 2017), is a welcome move, but can this be achieved unilaterally as Plan S seems to be demanding? Plan S seems to be driven by interests of the STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) in which the rapid publishing of results is more important than in humanities and social sciences. It is reasonable to ask what the implications of Plan S are for humanities and social sciences?

The ‘S’ in Plan S can stand for ‘science, speed, solution, shock’ according to Robert-Jan Smith, the European Commission’s special envoy for open access (Nature 2018). And

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the first reactions to Plan S were indeed shocking. The first draft of the plan, which did not allow publishing in hybrid journals, would have barred researchers from publishing in 85% of journals, as only 15% of journals work immediately as open access (Jubb *et al.* 2017). After critique and revision, the wording was reformulated so that authors may continue publishing in subscription journals as long as they make a version of the publication available in a repository, but “cOALition S funders will not financially support ‘hybrid’ open access publication fees in subscription venues” (Plans S 2019b). A “hybrid” journal operates on a subscription basis but offers an open access option for any article by paying an article processing charge. This would mean that a researcher who is receiving funding from one of the signatories of Plan S could not freely publish in a “hybrid” open access journal in the future.

The requirements for OA publishing by major funding bodies bring along challenges, in particularly for early career researchers in the humanities and social sciences. In several of these disciplines, to publish in specific journals is considered essential to later have the possibility to achieve a permanent academic position. Many of the journals viewed as essential in certain disciplines are, so far, not open access but hybrid journals. The discrepancy, between the political and funding requests concerning where and how to publish as provided by Plan S on the one hand, and what gives prestige in scholarly publishing in the academic community, on the other, makes career planning acutely difficult for young scholars in precarious positions.

While Plan S partly seeks to end subscription publishing and deals with the publishing companies’ high subscription fees of academic knowledge offered to them for free by researchers desiring to publish in recognized journals, it simultaneously limits strongly the academic freedom of where to publish. Furthermore, the option of making the author pay for the OA article raises questions concerning who will be able to get the necessary funding, not only in terms of North-South differences but will also increase the differences between permanent staff with external funding and precarious post doctors and temporary researchers. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research* has been a forerunner in open access publishing and remains one of the few quality publishing platforms that is free for readers and authors as well. We are dependent on the funding we receive from the Joint Committee for Nordic research councils in the Humanities and Social Sciences (NOS-HS), the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies and NMR member organizations. We are truly grateful for our funders. All the funding goes to paying the publication and our Managing Editor’s meager pay. The editors-in-chief, the editors, and our reviewers all work for free. To divide the work task more equally, we have expanded our editorial team to include Justyna Bell from Oslo Metropolitan University as a new Assistant Editor and Sayaka Osanami Törngren from the University of Malmö and Amanda Cellini from the University of Oslo as new book review editors. We are also grateful that Synnøve Bendixsen has decided to continue as an editor-in-chief.

Like all peer-reviewed journals, we are extremely grateful for all the external reviewers who have read carefully article manuscripts and provided valuable comments to our authors. In the past 18 months, the following people have reviewed for us:

Dalia Abdelhady, Mustafa Aksakal, Rolle Alho, Marco Antonsich, Elina Apsite-Berina, Jens Arnholtz, Aminkeng Atabong Alemanji, Gwenaëlle Bauvois, Brad Beaven, Kerstin von Brömssen, Marco Caselli, Aycan Celikaksoy, Katharine Charsley, Tricia Cleland Silva, Rosie Cox, Esperanza Diaz, Kristin Förde, Nell Gabiam, Anna Gawlewicz, Randi Gressgård, Anne Skevik Grødem, Driss Habti, Lotta Haikkola, Anna Harris, Daniel Hedlund, Vilde Hernes, Helena Honkaniemi, Veronika Honkasalo, Karina Horsti, Karin Hagren Idevall, Lise Widding Isaksen, Abdirashid Ismail, Greti-Iulia Ivana, Jussi Jauhiainen, Martin Joormann, Marry-Anne Karlsen, Peter Kivisto, Eleonore Kofman, Bettina Kolb, Mari Korpela, Tuuli Kurki, Shinozaki Kyoko, Jukka Könönen, Oscar Larsson, Michelle Lawson, Johanna Leinonen, Hilde Liden, Jacob Lind, Jonathan Long, Anna Matyska, Katja Maununaho, David McCollum, Carly McLaughlin, Arnfinn Midtbøen, Erna Nairz-Wirth, Peter Nannestad, Laika Nevalainen, Makiko Nishitani, Camilla Nordberg, Karen O'Reilly, Antero Olakivi, Elisabeth Oxfeldt, Elina Paju, Violetta Parutis, Saara Pellander, Maja Povrzanovic Frykman, Pablo Pumares, Niko Pyrhönen, Sari Pöyhönen, Shahamak Rezaei, Erica Righard, Simon Robins, Louise Ryan, Liza Schuster, Marie Louise Seeberg, Peter Spiro, Anna-Maria Tapaninen, Miika Tervonen, Olga Tkach, Jimmy Turner, Manté Vertelyté, Mälina Voicu, Nerina Weiss, Ayselín Yıldız, and Magnus Öhlander.

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