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World events, ethics, and growing pressures on scholarly publishing: editorial

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Research and scholarly publishing in uncertain times

To many, the world seems to be on the edge of a crisis. Polarisation in politics, society, and economic matters continues to have a negative impact within regions and globally. Wars continue to be fought, with troops, drones, and artificial intelligence (AI) in some regions, and on an economic level elsewhere. Information is often a mix of factual as well as misinformation, disinformation, and mal-information, making the identification of reliable information an ongoing challenge.

All of this creates an atmosphere of perpetual uncertainty. In their 2026 *Global Risks Report*, the World Economic Forum (WEF) reported that uncertainty is the key theme that will affect society for the next decade. In this recent survey of 1,300 people identified as experts among academics, business leaders, organisations around the world, and citizens, the WEF found that two issues concerned people most: 1) Geoeconomic confrontation, and 2) State-based armed conflict (WEF, 2026). Other issues, including AI, fears of K-shaped economies polarising wealthy v. poor (e.g., Greenhouse, 4 June 2026), and mis- and disinformation, were further identified as global risks. The picture painted by the WEF suggests there is significant social risk in multiple areas (WEF, 2026).

While we might be tempted to think that world events have nothing to do with research and scholarly publishing, the opposite is true and the pressures on research and publishing are increasing. Cate et al. (2026) reported that politics have interfered in universities where research does not support government policy, giving examples in the United States, such as federal restrictions on who can access certain scientific databases, as well as personal experiences of exclusion of research based on country of origin. The authors observed that geopolitical events can affect the research content and integrity, as well as authorship (Cate et al., 2026). The authors point to associations, such as the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), for guidance.

Ethical principles and pathways

COPE offers principles to support editorial teams who are presented with issues around scholarship and geopolitical events:

Editorial decisions should not be affected by the origins of the manuscript, including the nationality, ethnicity, political beliefs, race, or religion of the authors. Decisions to edit and publish should not be determined by the policies of governments or other agencies outside of the journal itself, except where a decision might place the journal in violation of applicable law. (COPE, 2024)

Information Research subscribes to COPE's advice. Importantly, the journal system enables anonymised submission, such that authors are not identifiable. Queries about the desirability of research from certain countries, for instance, can occur; however, COPE is specific about how to handle this. Authors should not be excluded for their nationality. This principle for inclusion applies across our journal, with our editorial team, editorial board, reviewers, authors, and readers participating from across the world.

Thank you to new and retiring staff members

As with any organisation, there is also constant change. We have both retiring and new members to mention.

First, we offer a round of applause for the many years of help by Regional Editors who are now retiring: Gerd Berget, Veronica Johansson, and J. Tuomas Harviainen.

Emeriti Tom Wilson and Elena Maceviciute, as well as J. Tuomas Harviainen and Gerd Berget, have joined the Editorial Board. We welcome these new members to our Editorial Board, where their knowledge and experience will be invaluable.

We have welcomed new Regional Editors to our team. Jesse Dinneen, Bhakti Gala, and Jonas Söderholm have most recently joined us. We also have a new Book Reviews Editor, Lisa Hussey. We look forward to the new ideas and energy they bring to the journal.

We have expanded our team of copy editors, who do heroic work in the background as they help with the preparation of articles for publication. Our copy editors now include Joanna Adewunmi, Hamed Ahmadinia, Jennier Brotherton, Pavithra Gurushankar, Lara Hierro, Katherine F. Raymond, Krishna Samal, Austin Stroud, Silvia-Adriana Tomescu, and Lucy Tsun. We would be lost without their efforts.

We are particularly grateful to Amanda Cossham, whose role as Regional Editor has expanded to include Copy Editor Training.

A full list of our Regional Editors, Copy Editors, and other team members is available at <https://publicera.kb.se/ir/about/editorialTeam>

Our updated Editorial Board is also listed at this same URL (though soon to have its own webpage – watch this space!). Our Editorial Board members offer essential support to the journal.

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