

Editorial

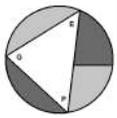
Towards a Fair Practice of Academic Publishing: Innovative Practices for Authors and the Audience in the Field of EthnoGeoPolitics and beyond

Babak Rezvani & Caspar ten Dam

One of the main objectives of our journal *Forum of EthnoGeoPolitics* (FEGP)—from the present issue onwards in a new, smaller page-size format—is to give a voice to authors in a fair manner. Despite financial hardship, FEGP has managed to remain an open-accessed journal without charging the authors any fees.

The current established practice of academic publishing, and the policies which many publishers and even universities implement, are not very fair to authors; the altmetric and bibliometric systems of performance do not make the situation any better. As a non-profit organisation, the Association for the Study of EthnoGeoPolitics (EGP) opposes the exploitation of scholars and at the same time wants to encourage and facilitate academic research and review papers as well as analytical articles, in many languages, freely available to a broad audience.

The current practice of academic publishing harnessed by bibliometric systems is particularly unfair to scholars whose subject matter has a



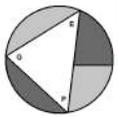
smaller audience or whose institute is internationally less renowned, and in general to those who do not speak English as their first language or are bilingual in it at a native level. Counting India within this category of Anglophones, still about two thirds of humanity are no native speakers of English. This is an undeniable fact.

Even though not all publications of EGP are free (such as its book publications through its publishing house *EGxPress*), EGP intends to remain true to its aims of reaching a large audience and fairness for the authors. Large publishing companies usually offer a tiny percentage of incomes to the author as royalties after hundreds of copies are sold. EGP prefers other models and offers a higher percentage of the revenues acquired from the sold copies to the author.

In order to respect author's ownership and at the same time protecting the intellectual properties of EGP and authors both, EGP has a shared Copy Rights policy (see further the recurrent section 'Call and Guidelines for Contributions' in our journal's issues).¹

To reiterate, after submitting an article to FEGP the author shares its copyrights with EGP. EGP may reuse the material freely and the author may do the same after prior notice to EGP and a statement in the new article that it has been published earlier in FEGP or another publication of EGP.

The authors may submit their own earlier published material to FEGP when they have its copyrights or have the permission of the copyrights holder, and should cite the original publication. One reason that we allow this practice is to enable the author to reach a broader audience.



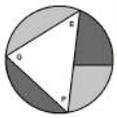
As one of the main goals of FEGP is to encourage and facilitate debate and discussion, we hope to offer a venue for further debate and discussion and hope to receive new perspectives. FEGP publishes also any letters to the editors and short commentaries.

Getting published in FEGP, an open-comment and transparently peer-reviewed journal, reflects the high, thought-provoking quality of the contributions in question. Nevertheless, it does not mean that the author's views and conclusions are endorsed by FEGP's editorial board. Our board thus tries to keep the journal as a politically neutral platform—despite the often highly charged and sensitive subject matter as typical in the emerging field of ethnogeopolitics.

Everyone is entitled to his or her views and may express it on his or her own title. FEGP neither endorses nor takes responsibilities for authors' statements and views. FEGP publishes any article as long as it does not contain rude language, instigate violence or insult people based on their religion, language, ethnicity, skin colour or nationality. The only criteria to be published in FEGP are the quality of arguments in general and the robustness of research methods and results in particular. All articles in FEGP should meet these professional quality standards.

We have to say that we do not oppose bibliometric and altmetric calculations and lists per se. However, we do opine that they do not capture all indices of quality and we find that a better quality may not always be expressed by a higher index.

For example, a paper with a narrower geographic or thematic focus has a smaller audience, which may lead to fewer citations, yet such a paper

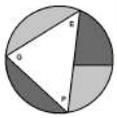


is not qualitatively inferior to those with a lot of citations. On the contrary, subjects with narrower focus usually have a smaller audience whose expertise is nevertheless often very high. We already have initiated publishing contributions in languages other than English. All ‘main articles’ in FEGP are peer-reviewed. Although, we yet have to have more main articles in languages other than English; we do welcome such contributions.

As our readers may notice, we have brought some changes in the layout of our journal and have adjusted it to a size more common for journals and books. A main obvious reason for this reduced layout-size is that it is conducive to purposes of storage and indexing at libraries. Amongst other reasons, this size is more easily readable in tablets—and two pages could be printed on one regular page when one needs a paper print of it. As a progressive journal we would like to take our responsibility in adopting a sustainable mode of development and protection of natural resources.

As we try to enhance our visibility and user friendliness to the reader, we may still bring some further changes to our layout. One advice that we often get is to distinguish clearly between citable and non-citable items, in order to enhance our altmetric and bibliometric indices (and possibly also impact factor). However, in our vision all articles are citable and citing them depends on their usefulness for the argument of the articles and authors that cite them.

Another, practically parallel advice we get is to make distinct sections for peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed articles. Yet we must point



out that the peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed articles are already clearly distinguished by the addition of super-titles like ‘Main Article’ atop of these. Another advice is to distinguish sections based on the language of articles. It still remains to be decided whether we will introduce (sub-)sections and reorganize our journal accordingly. Although we are aware of some arguments that such distinctions may enhance readership and citation, we still cannot fully agree with these as solid arguments. Nevertheless, we do not exclude these or any other kinds of reorganisations of our journal in the future, if it happens to enhance FEGP’s visibility, readership and hence reputation.

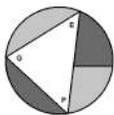
As said before, becoming more reader friendly is a valid argument to reorganize our journal differently and we welcome any suggestions in this regard—be it visual, organisational or conceptual.

Be that as it may, it remains to be seen if FEGP alone can change the current, all-too-often lopsided, indeed exploitative practices of publication in academia. At least we do our best to change or at least modify these practices towards a fairer system for both authors and the audience. We certainly hope that more journals and publishers—and indeed universities and research institutes—accompany us in this effort.

*Babak Rezvani, Editor-in-Chief & Caspar ten Dam, Executive Editor
September 2019*

Endnote

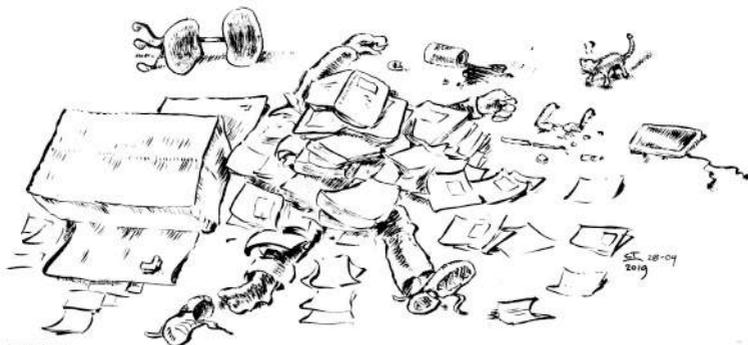
1. See for more details on the submission process of manuscripts to our journal *Forum of EthnoGeoPolitics* the section ‘Call and Guidelines for



Contributions' in this and other issues, and
www.ethnogeopolitics.org/publications.

NB: do you have any comments on the Editorial? Please send these to info@ethnogeopolitics.org, or through the contact form at www.ethnogeopolitics.org.

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