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Title: Towards open access

Year: 2019

Version: Accepted version (Final draft)

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Please cite the original version:

Ojala, J., Hemminki, T., & Nevalainen, P. (2019). Towards open access. *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 67 (1), 1-3. doi:10.1080/03585522.2019.1582799

Towards Open Access

Jari Ojala, Tiina Hemminki and Pasi Nevalainen

In accordance with the rotation principle of the *Journal*, our four-year term for editing the *Scandinavian Economic History Review* is coming to an end. It is time to pass the *Journal* on to the capable hands of the Norwegian team. We would like to thank all our readers, authors, peer reviewers, fellow editors, board members and associate editors, the Scandinavian Society for Economic and Social History, the staff of Taylor and Francis, and the whole global community of economic historians for these exciting years editing the *Journal*. We are pleased that the *Scandinavian Economic History* is in good shape. The numbers of submissions have increased considerably; we publish more content than previously; the *Journal* has been accepted for the Web of Science Emerging Sources Citation index; our digital archives are open for use from 1953 to 1996; and we have been able to streamline the processes, which is witnessed in our webpages, where we are publishing more content as previews. Most importantly, the downloads of our articles have increased substantially in recent years, showing that the community is interested in the research published in the *Scandinavian Economic History Review*.

The new editors-in-chief are Espen Ekberg (Norwegian Business School BI, Oslo) and Francisco J. Beltrán Tapia (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim). The new editorial secretaries are Ingeborg Guldal (NTNU), Frida Jensen (NTNU), Tine Petersen Malonæs (BI) and Eivind Thomassen (University of Oslo). Moreover, Laura Ekholm from the University of Helsinki is the new Finnish country editor. Paul Sharp is continuing as the Danish and Lars Magnusson as the Swedish editor, and Elina Kuorelahti as the book review editor of the *Scandinavian Economic History Review*.

The new editorial team will certainly have an exciting four-year term during which to edit the *Journal*. The economic and business history community is constantly growing. This is witnessed, for example, in new conferences, also in the Nordic countries. As a new initiative, the Scandinavian Society for Economic and Business History (in collaboration with the Swedish Economic History Association) is organising the *First Nordic Economic History Conference* in Uppsala, 10–12 October, 2019. Another new conference is the *Baltic Connections - Conference in Social Science History* to be organized at the University of Helsinki 21-23 March 2019.

The new editorial team will be facing changes in publishing during the coming four years term as the European open access initiative Plan S released in November 2018 could profoundly change the science publishing environment (Else, 2018). The core idea of Plan S is to make radical and rapid changes towards open access publishing and phase out the costs that academic institutions pay to access scientific literature. The major funding bodies in the European Union and in a number of European countries have already signed this plan – including Academy of Finland, The Research Council of Norway, the Swedish Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, and the Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare

(Forte)¹. These funding bodies are aiming at “full and immediate Open Access to publications from publicly funded research” from 2020 onwards².

The idea of open access is indeed welcome, but the short transition period will be a challenging one, especially for hybrid journals like the *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, that also publishes open access content. Namely, we make papers immediately free to read if the author is willing to pay a fee. According to the initial terms of Plan S, however, researchers will not be allowed to publish even in hybrid journals except during a short transition period. This plan regarding hybrid journals has, however, been somewhat mitigated in that those having obtained grants from funding agencies that are committed to Plan S are permitted to publish in hybrid journals if the journal for its part is committed to switch to a full open access model (Rabesandratana, 2018). What this means in the case of the *Scandinavian Economic History Review* remains to be seen.

The change from subscription to open-access publishing, if implemented, will certainly change the publishing environment profoundly. There is, unfortunately, also some alarming news from the negotiations between publishers and university libraries, at least in Finland and in Norway, which are, at least partly, related to the discussions on open access publishing. Namely, it may be that Taylor and Francis journals will not be freely available at university libraries for academics in these countries in the years to come. This is devastating news for the readers and authors of the *Scandinavian Economic History Review* as well as for those of a number of other journals in our fields.

Today there is certainly more need than ever for our society to be aware of economic history – regardless of whether the research is published in open access or not. As one of our editorial board members, Kevin O’Rourke (2018: 31) recently noted when he compared contemporary globalization challenges to earlier ones: “the perspective of the historian is important today, since it reminds us that we and our leaders enjoy free will, which we can exercise for better or for worse. Nothing is inevitable. In dangerous times that is a useful thought to bear in mind”. These wise words of O’Rourke are certainly a good guide to us all.

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This issue of the *Scandinavian Economic History Review* features five research articles and the list of dissertations published in the Nordic countries during the years 2017–2018. We present an analysis of the dissertations immediately after this editorial.

Sandra Hellstrand presents an analysis of the debates on post-guild economic apprentice training in Sweden at the turn of the 20th century. She uses modern theories of human capital and institutions to elucidate how contemporaries perceived apprenticeship as an economic phenomenon at the time. She reveals both similarities and differences between modern theories and contemporary perceptions of apprenticeship. Hellstrand shows that, in these debates, employers focused on apprentices leaving prematurely and unions on the overuse and misuse of apprentice labour.

¹ Swedish Vetenskapsrådet has signed a supporting statement.

² Coalition S web page (<https://www.coalition-s.org/>), cited January 20, 2019.

Cristián Ducoing, Ben Gales, Rick Hölsgens and María del Mar Rubio-Varas in their article construct energy and capital ratios for 100 years; that is, how much energy is used per unit of capital. By comparing these ratios between five Latin American and nine Western-European countries, they show that the energy-capital ratio can be used as a predictor of economic growth. Namely, a decrease in the ratio is a signal of investment in modern, more energy-efficient machinery. These investments, in turn, may promote sustainable economic growth.

Astrid Kander, Josef Taalbi, Juha Oksanen, Karolin Sjöö and Nina Rilla analyse trends in innovation output in Finland and Sweden from the early 1970s to 2013. Although both of these countries are today ranked as highly innovative, their development paths are different. Finland caught up with and overtook Swedish innovation output in the 1990s, whereas Sweden has outperformed Finland since 2000. The authors claim that differences can be explained by different paths of industrial renewal.

Sibylle Lehmann-Hasemeyer and Alexander Opitz present a corporate political activity analysis in the context of Berlin Stock Exchange listed companies in the 1920s with an overview of the political connections of these firms via members of parliament. They show that there is only little evidence that these political connections did actually generate value for companies.

Simon Ville, Olav Wicken and John Dean argue in their article that resource-based industries have been vital even for modern economies during the post war era. Taking Norway and Australia as cases, they show that expansion of the resource-based industries remained a viable path to economic development. They also argue that these two countries have been able to modernise their economies despite investing in resource-based industries and, furthermore, innovation frontiers have been especially important in shaping the natural resource industries.

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