

Editorial

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'Harvards' and 'Have-nots' on a level playing field: *Open Access* as a publication model for contemporary area studies

The special contribution of *Open Access* is the provision of equal access to the latest research results 'for the Harvards and the Have-nots'.¹ Nowhere else is the significance of this democratisation of access to knowledge more apparent than in the research on regions belonging to the 'Global South'. 'Knowledge is power'² and the unequal access to knowledge is part of the power asymmetry between North and South.

For *area studies*, the relationship to the scholarly disciplines in the respective research regions primarily concerns their scholarly self identity, as the most recent debates on the future of *area studies* have impressively emphasised.³ *Area studies*, once developed as a 'child of Empire',⁴ still seems to be much too caught up in the dichotomy of 'us' and 'them'. Consequently, a new, non-European-centric or non-US-centric perspective is being promoted in *area studies*. This is essential not only for research about the regions but also for research done together with the regions.

In practice, however, this postulate is all too often unfulfilled. This particularly concerns scholarly publications: the classic print model creates massive structural barriers to equal participation. Commercial publishers generally transfer the subscription model to the digital versions of the journals on

1 Velterop, J. (2002): *Open Access. All Use is Fair Use*; UNICA Seminar Madrid, October 2002: www.ulb.ac.be/unica/docs/Sch-com-2002-slides_Velterop.ppt (accessed: 28 JAN 09).

2 'Scientia potestas est'; Francis Bacon, in: *Meditationes Sacrae* 11, De Haeresibus, 1597.

3 For example, the Conference of the Institute for Advanced Study 'The Future of Area Studies in Germany' from 14-16 July 2005 in Berlin, the Freiburg Memorandum on the Future of Area Studies in Germany, or the recent *area studies* debate in *Afrika Spectrum* 3/2005 (which also includes a conference report by Marianne Braig and Felicitas Hentschke on the aforementioned Berlin conference, pp. 547-558). Links to these and other contributions in the *Area and Comparative Area Studies* forum are on the GIGA website at <www.giga-hamburg.de> - Tab: 'Research'.

4 According to Colin Bundy, then director of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, at the 2005 Area Studies Conference in Berlin (see footnote 3).

the Internet. As a result, only those who are able to pay expensive subscription or licensing fees have access to the publications. While already in the OECD countries the rising subscription prices for scholarly journals are exceeding library budgets, this problem in 'Third World' countries is even more dramatic. If nothing is done to steer away from these developments, in the future large sections of the global scholarly community will be increasingly cut off from the international expert discussion about their regions.

In view of this situation, the GIGA has decided to change all the journals in the GIGA Journal Family to full accessibility via *Open Access*, without access charges or time delays, starting with the first issue of 2009.⁵ This will thus create a scholarly infrastructure that will overcome the asymmetries attributed to the print and subscription model and establish a publication form that is adequate for the identity of contemporary *area studies*.

An additional point concerns the project's potential for *comparative area studies*. With the GIGA Journal Family concept's combination of the four region-specific journals into an *Open Access* portal that can be equally and freely accessed from all regions of the world, a unique bridging of regional expertise on comparative research and equal exchange between scholars from North America, Europe, and the regions of the 'Global South' is created. A recent analysis conducted by Munck/Snyder using the example of three leading international journals on comparative politics (*Comparative Political Studies*, *Comparative Politics*, and *World Politics*) demonstrates just how necessary this is. In the study, the authors diagnosed bequeathed structures that lead to 'a dearth of articles by foreign-based scholars', summing up that 'comparative politics should not be a US-centric field.'⁶

GIGA's *Open Access* project has been made possible through funding from the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft – DFG). The GIGA's partner in this project is Hamburg University Press, the online publisher of the State and University Library of Hamburg, which is realising the online portal for the GIGA Journal Family. This guarantees, first of all, professional presentation in accordance with international library standards (metadata, *persistent identifiers*, *link resolver* capability, etc.) and,

5 See <www.giga-hamburg.de/giga-journal-family> or <www.giga-journal-family.org>.

6 Munck, G.L./Snyder, R. (2007): 'Who Publishes in Comparative Politics? Studying the World from the United States', in: *Political Science & Politics*, No. 2, Vol. 40, pp. 339-346. The concern of integrating *area studies* expertise more consistently into the disciplinary specialised areas of study can only be fulfilled when the discussion is carried out in a language that is accessible to everyone, even beyond the region. Correspondingly, the GIGA Journal Family is broadening its efforts to publish more in English. Technically, the *Open Access* portal provides much better conditions than the print model for pursuing the ideal of multilingualism. Due to the high costs for translating scholarly articles, however, the realisation of this aim will initially only be rudimentary at best.

secondly, optimal integration into national and international tracing services, archives, and portals.⁷

In addition to *Africa Spectrum*, the *Open Access* project for the GIGA Journal Family also includes the following publications: *Journal of Politics in Latin America* (the successor to *Lateinamerika Analysen*), *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs-China aktuell*, and *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* (formerly *Südostasien aktuell*). The *GIGA Focus Afrika*, which provides brief monthly analyses on current developments in Africa, as well as the GIGA Focus series on Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Global Issues will also be *Open Access* publications as of 1/2009.⁸

The transition to *Open Access* began even earlier in the medical and natural science disciplines, where it is now broadly utilised. The international *Directory of Open Access Journals* (DOAJ) currently lists nearly 3,900 quality-controlled scholarly journals that are accessible free of charge in full text.⁹ A wealth of empirical studies now show that as journals and articles become freely accessible, their visibility, impact and citation data improve.¹⁰

The social sciences are lagging behind the natural sciences in transitioning to *Open Access*, but here, too, rethinking is taking place. Scholarly institutions, research sponsors, and even government institutions are increasingly making *Open Access* publications standard or even obligatory for publicly financed research.¹¹ In Germany, the German Research Foundation (DFG) is

7 Service providers specialised in Open Access interfaces are gaining in significance. For example, OAIster <www.oaister.org/>, with nearly 20 million entries, represents a type of union catalogue for digital resources worldwide. Other important international providers are Scientific Commons <www.scientificcommons.org/> and BASE <www.base-search.net/>. A number of significant social, regional, and political science search and archive structures, primarily in the German-speaking region, aim to ensure the visibility and sustainability of contributions published online, such as the central Internet portal for scholarly information Vascoda <www.vascoda.de>, the Virtuelle Fachbibliothek Politikwissenschaft ViFaPol (The Virtual Specialised Library for Political Science) <www.vifapol.de>, the Virtuelle Fachbibliothek Ibero-Amerika/Spainien/Portugal (The Virtual Specialised Library Ibero-America/Spain/Portugal) Cibera <www.cibera.de> as well as the *Social Science Open Access Repository* <www.ssoar.info> currently under development.

8 See <www.giga-hamburg.de/giga-focus>.

9 See <www.doaj.org>. On its own, Biomed Central, one of the pioneers of the *Open Access* movement, now has 200 *Open Access* journals with strict peer-review processes, many of which are among the most renowned in their respective fields <www.biomedcentral.com>.

10 A comprehensive and continuously updated bibliography of scholarly studies on the effects of *Open Access* on download numbers and *citation impact* can be found at <<http://op-cit.eprints.org/oacitation-biblio.html>>.

11 The Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), one of the most important organisations of the *Open Access* movement, publishes a newsletter that reliably provides information on such developments worldwide. In Germany, the DFG-sponsored Internet platform <www.open-access.net> is the first contact for up-to-date information as

one of the most active supporters of *Open Access* publishing. It not only supports a number of *Open Access* projects, the recommendation for *Open Access* publication has also been firmly anchored in its guidelines for approved research projects since 2006.¹²

Quite a stir was caused when in February of 2008 Harvard's *Faculty of Arts and Sciences* issued an *Open Access* mandate requiring all scholars at the institution to make their research results available via *Open Access* – that is, only to publish in those journals that permit *post-prints* to be made accessible free of charge via Harvard's *online repository*.¹³

One study¹⁴ commissioned by the DFG revealed that reservations about *Open Access* among scholars in Germany are primarily justified by doubts regarding the quality and reputation of new publications. In this regard, the GIGA Journal Family is a pioneer, since in this project well-established journals are breaking away from the print and subscription model and transitioning to *Open Access* publishing. The editorial standards for the selection and peer review of contributions remain unchanged. In this regard, the migration of the established GIGA journals should also contribute to overcoming existing reservations about the *Open Access* publication model in the social sciences. And finally, since we are convinced that many readers will still prefer scholarly articles on printed paper as a bound journal, we will continue to publish the print editions in their regular format and offer them at very affordable subscription prices.

Open Access not only means that the journal articles are accessible in full text for every user via the Internet at no charge, it is also linked to a copyright model that does not primarily protect the earnings of the publishers,

well as for networking among *Open Access* stakeholders (now also in an English version). Another central forum is the Wiki-operated *Open Access Directory* (OAD) <http://oad.simmons.edu/oadwiki/Main_Page>.

12 Here the wording is: 'The DFG expects that the research results financed with its funding will be published and in doing so will preferably also be released in a digital form and made available to be accessed on the Internet free of charge (open access). The respective contributions should either be placed in discipline-specific or institutional electronic archives (repositories) in addition to the publisher's publication or be directly published in cross-referenced and/or renowned open access journals.' (DFG passes open access guidelines; *Information für die Wissenschaft* No. 4, 30 January 2006).

13 The Chronicle of Higher Education (2008), News Blog, February 12: Harvard Faculty Adopts Open-Access Requirement: <<http://chronicle.com/news/article/3943/harvard-faculty-adopts-open-access-requirement>>.

14 Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (2007): Publikationsstrategien im Wandel? Ergebnisse einer Umfrage zum Publikations- und Rezeptionsverhalten unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Open Access (Results of a survey on publication and reception attitudes under the special consideration of open access); Wiley-VCH: <www.dfg.de/dfg_im_profil/zahlen_und_fakten/statistisches_berichtswesen/open_access/download/oa_ber_dt.pdf>.

but instead has the priority of achieving the broadest possible degree of content circulation. Authors transfer the first publication right to the GIGA journals; however, in contrast to standard publishing practices, this is a non-exclusive right. As a result, the texts may be freely circulated and made publicly accessible under the conditions specified in the 'Creative Commons Attribution – No Derivative Works 3.0'.¹⁵ In particular, these conditions include the following:

- a) The first publication must be correctly attributed in the appropriate place by stating the name of the author, editor and title of the series.
- b) No edits or abridgements – either to the text or the title – may be made. If such types of editorial changes are desired, the explicit written consent of the author as the copyright holder is required.

The GIGA is part of the Leibniz Association (WGL), which has long been an active supporter of *Open Access* publishing as a co-signatory of the so-called 'Budapest Declaration'.¹⁶ Through this agreement, *Open Access* publishing essentially takes place in two different ways:

On the one hand, there is the so-called 'Green Road to Open Access', whereby post- or pre-prints of conventionally published works are made available via *Open Access* according to the principle of self-archiving in institutional repositories.¹⁷ This requires that the affected publishers agree to this practice. The other way is the so-called 'Golden Road to Open Access', which goes a decisive step further: *Open Access* publishing as the original release through journals that are conceived of as *Open Access* journals from the very beginning. This is the path that the GIGA Journal Family is taking.

In the classic print mode, publishers and scholars are dependent on one another, but they also have structurally diverging interests. Commercial publishers strive to maximise their earnings and profits through the optimal combination of the sales price and the number of paid subscriptions. Schol-

15 See <<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/3.0/de/deed.en>>.

16 Programmatic principles of the *Open Access* initiative in particular are the so-called Budapest Declaration from 2002 <www.soros.org/openaccess/g/read.shtml> as well as the Berlin Declaration <www.mpg.de/pdf/openaccess/BerlinDeclaration_dt.pdf> from 2003.

17 OpenDOAR <www.opendoar.org/> offers a complete international directory of such repositories with comprehensive search functions. Of course, not only pre- and post-prints but also explicitly *Open Access* journals such as those in the GIGA Journal Family can be accessed via such repositories. The 'OA Network' project <www.dini.de/projekte/oa-netzwerk> sponsored by the DFG aims to network the German repositories, further raise their national and international visibility, and increase the impact of their contributions. To this end, powerful citation and statistics instruments, among other things, are being developed. In turn, the 'OA Network' is participating in the large 'Driver' project www.driver-repository.eu/ funded by the EU, which is sponsoring the development of a European network of document servers.

ars, on the other hand, generally do not receive any direct earnings from publishing their articles in professional journals; their interest is in being read by as broad an expert public as possible, in achieving scholarly impact and in increasing their reputation, thus also increasing their 'market value' in academic application and evaluation procedures, as the case may be. *Open Access* is the publication model that favours the scholars' interests.

Open Access is not a panacea. Of course we know that good journals are not created through the form of their publication but rather through the professional and convincing work of their editors; through the competence and commitment of the advisory board and reviewers; through the fact that scholars from the respective research regions as well as from Europe and North America submit their most intelligent and innovative manuscripts; and through the fact that the readership considers them so interesting and relevant that the journals become – as we hope the GIGA Journal Family will – a central forum of scholarly exchange for them. However, *Open Access* provides a unique opportunity to give journals global coverage, to comprehensively utilise digital technology for the democratisation of knowledge, to overcome existing scholarly asymmetries, and thus engage in contemporary *area studies* as it should be perceived in the twenty-first century.

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