

American Committee on Asian Economic Studies

Greetings from the [American Committee on Asian Economic Studies](#) and its publication, the [Journal of Asian Economics](#).

This missive delivers ACAES news followed by an editorial on anti-competitive practices in the journal publishing industry.

ASSA 2019 Panel. The topic of our joint session with the American Economic Association at the 2019 Allied Social Science Association Annual Meetings to be held in Atlanta, January 4-6, is “Application of Behavioral Economics in Asia”. The full program is posted [here](#).

***Journal of Asian Economics* Special Issues.**

- In conjunction with our upcoming ASSA panel, we invite papers for a special issue on behavioral economics. The deadline for submissions is November 30, 2018.
- Our December 2018 issue on high frequency financial analysis is being guest edited by Professor Mardi Dungey of the University of Tasmania.



RePEc Citations Impact Factor. The *Journal of Asian Economics* has achieved a [RePEc 10-year simple impact factor](#) of 3.92 (as of this writing, but it can change day to day). With this, the Journal has climbed to a position of 154 of nearly 2000 journals ranked by RePEc making it the top journal in the field of Asian economic studies by this metric.

SSCI Inclusion. As of 2018, the *Journal of Asian Economics* is included in the Social Sciences Citation Index of Clarivate Analytics. Although I appreciate that SSCI inclusion will help the Journal in attracting submissions from Asia-based economists, I confess I have been meeting congratulatory words with a snarl. That leads to the editorial part of this message.

Editorial: Anti-Competitive Practices in the Journal Publishing Industry

Academic institutions often reward publication in journals that are indexed in [SSCI](#) and Elsevier's [Scopus](#), especially here in Asia if not so much in the US. As economists, we should be mindful of the motivation behind these corporate constructs. Elsevier publishes its own journals to which it has an interest in steering submissions. Clarivate Analytics sells its journal ranking information. Both use an opaque process to decide on inclusion and cultivate an air of elitism around their products.

The exclusivity surrounding SSCI and Scopus creates barriers to entry for new journals and protects the status of established club members. Understanding, as economists do, that competition and free entry would foster a more vibrant market for publication venues, we should not endorse this protectionist system -- especially when in our field we have a much better citations metric available in RePEc.

RePEc is better for a number of reasons. First, any journal can be included simply for the asking. Not only does this encourage start-up of new journals, it also results in a more comprehensive measure of citations from now nearly 2000 economics journals and working paper series as opposed to the few hundred economics journals from which citations are gathered by SSCI and Scopus. Second, RePEc is updated on a continuous basis whereas SSCI and Scopus are updated only once a year. Current metrics for SSCI and Scopus reflect citations in 2017 to articles published in previous years. That means that as of early September, RePEc captures an additional eight months of citations data, and by the time SSCI and Scopus announce their next updates in June of 2019, RePEc will count an additional 18 months of data. Finally, RePEc counts citations over a 10-year period to articles published over the same 10-year period whereas SSCI and Scopus count citations in one year to articles published within periods of only 2-5 years. This rewards publication of articles that churn through the latest hot thing rather than those that will withstand the test of time.

If SSCI and Scopus truly screened for the best journals, perhaps a reward system

based on these products would be understandable. But they do not. SSCI excludes, for example, the *Journal of Globalization and Development* which ranks now at 170 and would clearly be a relevant outlet for work on Asia. Scopus excludes the four *American Economic Journals* which rank between #3 and #54 on RePEc. Yet Asia-based economists are generally not incentivized to publish in these excellent journals. And of course, nor were they incentivized to publish in the *Journal of Asian Economics* until just this year when suddenly with the wave of a wand that has changed. Meanwhile, many poorly cited journals are included in SSCI and Scopus which leads to perverse incentives.

Why do institutions in Asia put in place incentive systems that encourage anti-competitive behavior in the journal publishing industry and misincentivize scholars to publish in journals of decidedly mixed standing? I suspect it is because decision-makers are grasping for an easy dichotomous standard of publication assessment. The desire to resort to such a simple standard may be amplified by concentration of authority over tenure and promotion and compensation decisions at higher levels rather than at peer levels.

To conclude, I urge my colleagues in Asia to push back against an incentive system that is bad for individual scholars and bad for the academic profession.

Sincerely,

Calla Wiemer

President, American Committee on Asian Economic Studies

Editor-in-Chief, *Journal of Asian Economics*

Follow us on [Facebook](#).