

## BOSTON INSTITUTE for DEVELOPING ECONOMIES, Ltd.

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TO: Dr. Haili He, Elsevier Beijing Ltd., China,

I am puzzled and concerned about your decision to terminate your relationship with the American Committee on Asian Economic Studies and with the excellent editor in chief of the Journal of Asian Economic Studies, Dr. Calla Wiemer. As I understand it, your action will end the sponsorship of the journal by the ACAES which I think is a significant loss. But even more serious will be the loss of an editor who has greatly improved the reputation and actual quality of the journal - no mean feat.

I have been involved with the journal since its beginning and I have been impressed by how much Dr. Wiemer has been able to achieve in advancing the standing of the Journal, attracting a larger number and a higher quality of submissions; and having the articles carefully refereed and improved in the process. As a result of the substantial improvement Calla Wiemer has made in the journal my colleague, Sadiq Ahmed and I were considering submitting our article on "Bangladesh from Basket Case to Success Story" to the Journal of Asian Economics, something I have never before considered.

I have worked with Elsevier off and on over the years in various connections and have always respected its professionalism. I know something about the standing and prestige of journals in both economics and Asian Studies having published in both the major journals of the economics profession - the AER, JPE, QJE, EJ- and the less prestigious ones - like EDCC and journals published in Asia. All editors try to increase the standing and quality of their journal. By definition not all can succeed. I would think you would want to do everything possible to retain the rare editor who has been successful.

My understanding is that you would like to have an editor with greater academic prestige than Dr. Calla Wiemer. That means someone who publishes a lot and who will devote much less time, energy and dedication to advancing the Journal of Asian Economics. The implicit message you are sending to any new editor is not a good one. It is: "all the publisher cares about is your prestige in your profession, so devote your time to your own publications, do not devote your time and energy to the editor's job".

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An alternative strategy would be to take full advantage of Calla Wiemer's abilities and dedication and continue her as editor until she herself is ready to give up the onerous assignment. Her departure then would be a friendly one, the sponsorship of the American Association of Asian Economic Studies would continue, the journal would be even better established than it is now, and a new editor could neglect the Journal and it would still attract good articles.

I very much hope you will reconsider, deferring the appointment of an editor whose primary qualification is academic prestige, until Dr. Wiemer has fully established the Journal as one of quality and academic standing and has decided to end her editorship

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gustav F. Papanek". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Gustav F. Papanek  
President & Professor of Economics, Emeritus

PS: Incidentally I was President of the Association for Comparative Economic Studies which also sponsors a journal and of the Association of Asian Studies, New England Conference.