



Editorial

The Journal of Socio-Economics: A letter from the incoming Editor

I am honored to become the Editor of the *Journal of Socio-Economics*. In this letter I want to share with you some of my plans for the journal and some information that will be useful for prospective authors.

Over the last few months I dedicated a lot of time to think how to improve the *Journal of Socio-Economics* and to take the first steps in this direction. Several people helped me with this and I want to thank them. I am especially grateful to Bradley Ruffle, a colleague and a friend, and to Jenny Henzen and Sejal Prathyuesh from Elsevier.

On behalf of the entire community of the *Journal of Socio-Economics* readers and authors I want to thank Morris Altman, who edited the journal since 2002, to John Tomer who did a great job as the Book Review Editor and to the Editorial Board members, many of whom served for many years. They deserve our gratitude for the time and efforts they invested in the journal, which allowed it to grow and become one of the top journals in its field. Indeed, a ranking published a few years ago (Azar, 2007) showed that the *Journal of Socio-Economics* is one of the top three journals in the fields of behavioral economics and socio-economics, together with two other Elsevier journals, the *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, and the *Journal of Economic Psychology*.

While the *Journal of Socio-Economics* has already improved in recent years, the reason I was happy to take the time-consuming task of the journal's Editor is that I think it is possible to significantly improve the journal further. The challenge to take the *Journal of Socio-Economics* further up, increase its quality, and make it more attractive for authors and readers is exciting and I am enthusiastic about being able to lead this process. I was very happy to see that many excellent researchers share this enthusiasm in the journal's potential and therefore agreed to join the journal as Associate Editors or as Editorial Board members. The success of this endeavor will depend also on the cooperation of ad-hoc referees and of authors who will submit to the journal their best research, and I believe that with such cooperation the journal can improve significantly.

An important part of improving the *Journal of Socio-Economics* is making it more attractive to authors, and to do so I put an emphasis on making the review process quick. In particular, I try to keep the first response time (from submission to the first editorial decision being conveyed to the author) below three months for almost all submissions. In order to provide quick service to authors, but also retain a careful and helpful review process, I decided to add to the journal Associate Editors. Dividing the work between more people allows to better evaluate the submitted papers, provide more detailed and helpful comments, and keep turnaround times short. I believe that the quality of the Associate Editors and the Editorial

Board is very important and my selection of whom to invite to join reflects this belief. I also think that young, energetic and promising scholars can do an excellent job even if they do not yet have dozens of publications, and some of the people who joined reflect this. More people will be added in the future and some people who served on the journal's board for many years were replaced. Their contribution is gratefully acknowledged but it is time to share the burden with others and let some younger scholars contribute their share. Because I believe that short turnaround times are important to authors, and because making the journal attractive to authors is crucial for raising the level of submissions and consequently of published papers, an important consideration I had when choosing whom to invite to join the journal was their efficiency and timeliness as referees.

I view geographical diversity as a desirable characteristic of the journal and the Editorial Board and the list of Associate Editors reflect this. The people who already were appointed to be Associate Editors, for example, come from Australia, Austria, Canada, Germany, Israel, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden, UK and USA. The Editorial Board includes people from additional countries.

All new submissions starting in mid-December 2012 come to me for initial screening and assignment. Some submissions that I believe do not fit the journal due to their topic or quality will be rejected without being sent to referees. This helps to save the scarce resource of referees' time and at the same time save the authors time in cases where it is clear that the decision will be negative anyway. Most submissions that pass my initial screening are assigned to one of the Associate Editors, who serve as action editors with full responsibility for the submissions they handle. They may also reject papers without sending them for review, and otherwise, they choose referees and make a decision about the paper when the referee reports are received.

Being an Associate Editor myself at the *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* and in the *Journal of Economic Psychology* I know that finding people who are willing to referee a paper is not easy sometimes, and this can delay the review process significantly. Refereeing takes a lot of time and we are all busy people, and the incentives to referee are often smaller than the incentives to do other tasks, such as writing our own papers. Nevertheless, the peer review system depends on referees and it is only fair that authors who benefit from the time of others who referee their papers will also cooperate and referee when they are asked to do so. I therefore expect people who submit to the *Journal of Socio-Economics* to referee for the journal when they are invited, and to do so in a timely and careful manner. Fortunately, the EES submission system we use

retains all the information about the review process of papers, and it is easy to evaluate which people indeed contributed as referees and did a good job, which will be taken into account, for example when deciding who to invite to join the Editorial Board.

I encourage you to submit your best research to the *Journal of Socio-Economics*. You will enjoy from publishing in a good journal that is going to become even better and that is included in several major databases including EconLit, PsycINFO, RePEc and ScienceDirect. Moreover, the journal is published by a leading publisher, Elsevier, which means that it enjoys from Elsevier resources for authors and readers as well as from the distribution and promotion capabilities of a large publisher.

The *Journal of Socio-Economics* welcomes submissions that deal with various economic topics but also involve issues that are related to other social sciences, such as psychology and sociology. Thus, contributions in behavioral economics, economic psychology, experimental economics, socio-economics, and judgment and decision making are especially welcome. The journal is open to different research methodologies, as long as they are relevant to the topic and employed rigorously. Possible methodologies include, for example, empirical work, experiments, surveys, theoretical models, meta-analyses, case studies, and simulation-based analyses. Literature reviews that integrate findings from many studies are also welcome, but they should synthesize the literature in a useful manner and provide substantial contribution beyond what the reader could

get by simply reading the abstracts of the cited papers. In empirical work, it is important that the results are not only statistically significant but also economically significant. A high contribution-to-length ratio is expected from published articles and therefore papers should not be unnecessarily long, and short articles are welcome. Articles should be written in a manner that is intelligible to our generalist readership. The journal also publishes special issues; suggestions for topics and guest editors should be sent to the Editor. Book reviews are generally solicited but occasionally unsolicited reviews will also be published. Contact the Book Review Editor, Mark Pingle, for related inquiries.

I look forward to seeing your submissions, and welcome also comments and ideas you may have.

Reference

Azar, Ofer H., 2007. Behavioral economics and socio-economics journals: a citation-based ranking. *Journal of Socio-Economics* 36 (3), 451–462.

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