

Ethics of a Journal's Surplus

Martin Paul Eve

Senior Lecturer in Literature, Technology and Publishing

Birkbeck, University of London

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I wrote the following letter in [this week's Times Higher Education](#). I post it here for those who can't get past the paywall.

As debates rage on how to spend the £1.2 million surplus of The Sociological Review ("[Journal board in dark over £1m surplus](#)", 19th February 2015), it is disappointing that there is no comment on how this surplus was possible or whether it is ethical. The short answer is that it was made off the back of for-profit scholarly publishing paid for by university libraries worldwide. However, often these libraries will subscribe to TSR at the expense of not being able to afford other publications for their students and researchers. It is all very well to suggest rebuilding sociology at Keele University, or using this money for intra-disciplinary activities. This will come as small consolation, however, for the libraries whose students and staff are unable to read research material because their budgets for knowledge are swallowed by profits that others then decide how to spend.

Martin Paul Eve Lecturer in English literature University of Lincoln

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