Nordic Journal of African Studies

Publication Ethics and Malpractice Statement

The *Nordic Journal of African Studies* is an interdisciplinary open access journal published by the Nordic Africa Research Network. We are a fully free, "diamond" open-access journal, with no fees charged to authors or readers.

This document describes the journal's aims and scope; other general information about the journal and its leadership, practices, and policies; and our ethics guidelines. It was last updated on **March 31, 2026**. Please refer to our website (https://njas.fi/) for our most up-to-date guidelines.

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Aims and Scope of the *Nordic Journal of African Studies*

We welcome papers that present new empirical and theoretical knowledge in the fields of African social science, history and cultural studies, African language studies and African literatures, as well as book reviews. The journal is divided into four editorial fields:

- African Social Sciences
- African Cultural and History Studies
- African Language Studies
- African Literary Studies

Below are descriptions of the scopes of these fields. Cross-disciplinary papers are also welcome, and may be handled by a team of editors.

Social Sciences

The Social Sciences section of *NJAS* welcomes proposals of original research articles, offering an insight into current relevant social issues and phenomena across the African continent and in relation to the rest of the world. Article proposals should be structured around the analysis of empirical data and/or the presentation of case studies. Occasional exceptions (upon editors' decision) can be made for review articles or editorial pieces of particular significance. We welcome submissions engaging a variety of disciplinary angles – across social sciences such as anthropology, sociology, human geography, political science, development studies, political economy, and beyond – and of theoretical approaches. We pursue diversity in geographical coverage and subjects explored. We accept submissions in English and French.

Cultural and History Studies

The Culture and History section welcomes analytical research articles which are theoretically embedded in contemporary scholarship. The submitted manuscripts are ideally based on original empirical research obtained through ethnographic fieldwork or archival and/or museum collection research, or a combination. The case-studies are considered in light of social and cultural processes in contemporary or diachronic perspectives. We are open to a diversity of disciplinary angles, most particularly, but not exclusively, cultural anthropology, social and cultural history, historical anthropology, cultural studies, gender studies, and museum anthropology. We welcome article submissions that are more theoretical in scope, albeit grounded in empirical data. We are open to articles on very diverse subjects and regions in Africa, and we accept submissions in English and French.

Language Studies

The Language Studies section is most interested in publishing language and linguistics papers giving analyses of linguistic phenomena that make a novel contribution to currently relevant questions in linguistic theory (which may also include topics in sociolinguistics); papers that present a substantial amount of new data on an important topic in an un(der)described language (with or without a particular theoretical orientation but, in any case, with a firm grounding in the study of linguistics and basic linguistic theory); and papers that

deal in original ways with topics in language policy that are based on the results of extensive research or that otherwise offer novel and well-argued perspectives on these topics. We accept submissions in English, French, and Swahili.

Literary Studies

The Literary Studies section welcomes articles focusing on African and Afrodiasporic literatures across diverse cultural, geographical, and linguistic contexts and that make a novel contribution to the current scholarship in African and Afrodiasporic literary studies. The section is particularly interested in articles that do not only offer a close reading of a literary text or a set of texts but that use the text analysis as a way of intervening in relevant theoretical discussions in the field. We also encourage contributions that acknowledge not only the social relevance of literature but also pay attention to the question of literary form. We accept submissions in English and French.

Correspondence

All correspondence concerning general journal matters should be sent to the Editors-in-Chief, whose email addresses are given below. Manuscripts for publication and all related communication should be sent via our online platform (OJS). Before sending any material, please read the instructions to authors.

Dr. Rasmus Bernander and Dr. Carmeliza Rosario

Email: *rasmus.bernander(at)sprak.gu.se* and *carmeliza.rosario(at)uib.no*

History of the Journal

NJAS was founded in 1992 by Prof. Arvi Hurskainen of the University of Helsinki. Prof. Hurskainen also served as the journal's first Editor-in-Chief In the early years, two issues were published per year. From 2000–2004, three issues were printed annually. Since 2004, the journal has been purely electronic, and a new online issue appears four times per year. Between 1992 and 2017, the journal was published by the Nordic Association of African Studies (NAAS). In 2018, publication of the journal was transferred to NARN, the Nordic Africa Research Network.

Editorial History

- Dr. Thera Crane & Dr. Jonna Katto, University of Helsinki, Editors-in-Chief (2022–2026)
- Prof. Annika Teppo, Uppsala University, Editor-in-Chief (2018–2022)
- Prof. Axel Fleisch, University of Helsinki, Editor-in-Chief (2008–2018)
- Dr. John Stotesbury, University of Joensuu, Editor-in-Chief (2006–2008)
- Prof. Arvi Hurskainen, University of Helsinki, initiator of *NJAS* and the first Editor-in-Chief (1992–2006)

Governing Body and Editorial Team

Journal management comprises one or two Editor(s)-in-Chief, an Editorial Collective consisting of the Editor(s)-in-Chief and one responsible subject editor from each section of the journal, an Editorial Board consisting of the Editorial Collective, the Associate Editor, if appointed, all other subject editors, and other stakeholders as designated by the Editor(s)-in-Chief, and the journal Advisory Board, consisting of external experts. The journal may also employ an editorial assistant. The editorial board (with contact information) and advisory board are listed at https://njas.fi/njas/about/editorialTeam; the responsible section editor from each section is listed first.

Open Access Statement and Copyright Restrictions

NJAS is an open access journal following the diamond-standard model. This means that all content is freely available immediately upon publication, without charge to the author, the user, or the user's institution. In accordance with the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI) definition of open access, users are allowed to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of the articles, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without asking for permission from the publisher or the author. In all cases, credit must be given to the articles' authors. The user may not print or otherwise redistribute any of the articles for commercial purposes, as stated in the Creative Commons CC BY license. All articles published in NJAS starting with the third issue of 2023 are published with the CC BY license. All prior articles are published under the Creative Commons License CC BY-NC license. Licensing information is indicated on each article. Unless otherwise specified, this copyright license is granted to the author(s) of the article. If authors would like portions of their articles published under more restrictive licenses (e.g., original artwork), they can contact the editorial team and we will work out an article-specific plan. As of the third issue of 2023, images and figures are copyrighted as indicated in their captions (no copyright information indicates that the copyright is the same as rest of the article).

Authors grant NJAS the right of first publication of their work. We encourage authors to distribute and publicize their work widely and to deposit versions of their work (submitted version, accepted version, published version) in repositories, with no embargo period. See Sherpa Romeo for our repository policy. As the copyright holders to their works, authors are furthermore permitted to enter additional, non-exclusive agreements for the publication of their work, provided that these additional publications contain clear acknowledgement that the work was first published in NJAS. Such acknowledgement must include all relevant publication information (full citation information and/or original DOI). The same conditions apply to later commercial publication of works that were originally published in NJAS and to which authors hold the copyright.

Author Fees

No author fees are charged.

Publishing Schedule

We publish at least four issues each year, typically appearing in March, June, September, and December.

Archiving

Our articles are archived under the PKP Preservation Network to ensure perpetual access to their contents.

Revenue Sources

This publication has regularly received financial support on an annual basis from the *Nordic Committee for the Publication of Periodicals in the Humanities and Social Sciences* (NOP-HS), our current source of funding for publication costs. The Editorial and Advisory Board work on a volunteer basis.

Advertising and Direct Marketing

We do not allow advertising in our journal or on our website. We may share relevant information about (e.g.) books and events via our social media channels.

We have a mailing list to alert authors, readers, and reviewers when new issues are published. At our discretion, we may directly solicit papers for regular or special issues, although this is not our regular practice.

Peer Review Process

At *NJAS* we use independent, double-blind peer review to ensure that the articles we publish are of a high international standard. Receipt of manuscripts will be acknowledged by email. The editor-in-chief assigns articles to the relevant subject editors, and may issue desk rejects if articles clearly fall outside the journal's scope or other requirements. Articles that are considered by subject editors to be of sufficient quality and relevance to consider for publication will be sent out for peer-review. Articles accepted for publication will have been reviewed by at least two expert readers, one of whom may (but need not) be a member of our advisory board. Final acceptance of articles is conditional upon suggested revisions being satisfactorily executed, and a second round of review may be required. Subject editors and the journal's editor(s)-in-chief are responsible for the final decisions on articles, after taking external reviewers' reports into account. Authors (and not NJAS, associated organizations, or the article's reviewers) are responsible for the contents of articles and for the accuracy and completeness of reference lists.

Book reviews and introductions to special issues or sections will not be subject to the peer-review process. If the peer review process differs from the above description for other articles, we will note this difference in the final publication.

The full editorial procedure and publication workflow are described at https://njas.fi/njas/about/submissions.

Publication Ethics

NJAS is continually developing its theory and practice of publication ethics, with the following key principles in mind:

- Promoting diversity and just South–North research relations through our work with authors, our selection of reviewers, and the composition of our Editorial and Advisory Boards;
- Providing reputable, high-quality review processes and publication services without any cost to authors or readers; and
- Aiming to be a model of fair and ethical publishing practices, blending a rigorous review process with human kindness and consideration.

We recognize that these goals are ambitious and that the issues involved, especially for a Nordic-based journal dealing with topics related to the African continent, are multifactorial. This document therefore represents a work perpetually in progress. Below we describe our ethical guidelines as they relate to the journal's key stakeholders: authors, reviewers, and the governing bodies.

When developing and implementing ethics policies, we follow COPE guidelines for journal ethics.

Our specific policies are outlined below.

Process For Identification of and Dealing with Allegations of Research Misconduct

If ethical concerns about the submitted manuscript are raised during the review process or after publication, we follow COPE guidelines for dealing with allegations of misconduct. In the general case, a member of the editorial board, with the oversight of the Editor(s)-in-Chief, will contact the author to explain the concern and request that the author provide relevant details. Failure on the part of the author to do so may cause the review process to be suspended until the issue is resolved. After publication, articles may be retracted or errata may be posted (see below).

Readers or other parties wishing to bring potential ethical issues to the attention of *NJAS* may also contact the Editor(s)-in-Chief directly. Contact information is available at https://njas.fi/njas/about/contact. Complaints can be made anonymously or by known complainants. Knowing the identity of complainants can sometimes help us to better understand and proceed with investigations and responses. In all cases, we are committed to preserving the anonymity of anyone raising ethical concerns. We will investigate all issues raised provided that they are serious, within the purview of the journal's offices (and not, e.g., simply differences of opinion), sufficiently specific to allow for a fair investigation, and related to articles published in the last two years, except in cases of severe malfeasance. See also https://publicationethics.org/resources/discussion-documents/4-addressing-ethics-complaints-complainants-who-submit-multiple.

The Editorial Board of *NJAS* may, at our discretion, share information with the editors of other journals, if it relates to the integrity of research, to pertinent information about review processes, or other issues related to potential misconduct. Following the relevant COPE guidelines for the sharing of information, we will share the minimum amount of factual information needed to deal with the matter, and we will take the greatest care to protect confidentiality as far as possible, treating all communications as sensitive.

Instructions for Authors

Submitting a manuscript to *NJAS* means that the authors have conducted the relevant research and written the submitted article themselves. Any ideas or quotations from others must be properly cited. In addition, we expect that data are collected ethically and that any research participants are acknowledged, as appropriate and respecting principles of privacy.

Authors should follow our submission instructions: https://njas.fi/njas/about/submissions, as well as our formatting, style, and reference guidelines: https://njas.fi/njas/guidelines.

Journal editors may choose not to consider submissions that deviate significantly from these guidelines.

Authors can follow the progress of their papers on our OJS platform. The publication workflow is described at https://njas.fi/njas/about/submissions. Each paper will be assigned at least one subject editor, and authors can be in contact with the subject editor if they have any questions. Messages regarding ethical practices can also be directed to the editor(s)-in-chief.

In cases of possible misconduct and other ethical issues, we follow the recommended COPE guidelines. Below, we give more specific information on our ethics policies for authors.

Authorship and Contributorship

Each author listed in a manuscript submitted to *NJAS*, must have

- significantly contributed to the acquisition of data, or the analysis and interpretation of said data;
- worked on the drafting of, or contributed to the revision of, the article; and
- approved of the final version of the article submitted for publication.

If an author is found to have been added to or omitted from the list of authors without consent, publication will be suspended until the article has been amended as needed.

Use of Artificial Intelligence in Writing:

Article texts should be the work of the authors themselves. If any parts of article texts have been composed with the aid of artificial intelligence tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Grammarly's Generative AI tools, etc.) beyond basic spelling and grammar checkers, this use must be acknowledged in the article body and justified in a separate letter to the editors. NJAS reserves the right to use AI detectors and to reject articles that use AI for composition without clear acknowledgement, or that we do not deem to be the authors' own work due to the use of AI (or to any other plagiarism issues).

Conflicts of Interest / Competing Interests

Authors are expected to disclose any potential conflicts of interest or competing interests, including potential funding-related interests. Undisclosed conflicts of interest in a submitted manuscript may lead to the author being requested to provide a signed statement about all relevant conflicts of interest before the review process can proceed. In a published article, the addition of or correction to a competing interests statement may be required.

If authors suspect reviewers or other individuals involved in the review process of having conflicts-of-interest or engaging in other unethical behaviour related to the paper (e.g., using its contents before publication and/or without attribution), the author(s) should contact their coordinating subject editor or the Editor(s)-in-Chief with their complaint in enough detail for us to investigate. We will follow the relevant COPE flowchart and keep the author(s) informed of our findings and decisions.

Data Sharing and Reproducibility

Reproducibility is a vital part of the scientific process, and data fabrication in a submitted manuscript is cause for serious concern. If there is evidence that a manuscript contains fabricated data, the author will be contacted. Unless a satisfactory explanation is provided, the author's institution or regulatory body will be contacted for further investigation. If the author is found guilty the manuscript will be rejected, and if the author is found guilty after the manuscript has already been published, the journal will publish a retraction.

Ethical Oversight

We expect that all material submitted to *NJAS* is the result of research carried out according to ethical principles, keeping in mind both guidelines from the authors' institution(s) and the specific ethical concerns related to each site of research. Data from studies with human participants must be carried out with informed consent, and data should be anonymized to the extent it is feasible and appropriate to do so, bearing in mind the situationally appropriate balance between acknowledgement and anonymity.

If ethical concerns about the submitted manuscript are raised during the review process, a member of the editorial board, with the oversight of the Editor(s)-in-Chief will contact the author to explain the concern and request that the author provide relevant details; we may also, for example, request proof of research board approval (as relevant) or of informed consent if we deem this is needed to make a judgement (see https://publicationethics.org/resources/flowcharts/suspected-ethical-problem-submitted-manuscript). Failure on the part of the author to provide the requested information may cause the review process to be suspended until the issue is resolved.

Ethical concerns raised after the publication of the article (only within two years of the article, except in cases of egregious misconduct) should be brought to the attention of the Editor(s)-in-Chief, who will follow the same procedure. If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved, we may retract the paper.

Intellectual Property

When submitting a text to *NJAS*, the author asserts that their work is original. The full text of a submitted article should be of the author's own creation and in the author's own words. Any ideas or words borrowed from other authors' works should be clearly marked and cited as such. Images, graphs, and figures from other works can only be used according to the specific copyright specifications of those works; these usually involve obtaining permission from the publisher. It is fully the author's responsibility to obtain and indicate permissions.

The requirement of originality also refers to so-called "self-plagiarism". Any words or information taken from authors' previous works should be properly cited. If an author is submitting a portion of a previously

unpublished dissertation, it should be substantially reworked as a standalone journal article, and its status as a portion of a dissertation should be clearly indicated on the submission's cover sheet.

In the case that the journal is alerted of potential plagiarism in a manuscript, *NJAS* will follow the COPE guidelines in order to investigate such allegations in an appropriate manner. If an allegation is found to be valid, the author of the manuscript will be contacted and asked to explain their misconduct. If the manuscript has yet to be published, honest mistakes and inexperience is reason to consider whether revision or rejection is necessary. However, if the explanation is unsatisfactory, the manuscript will be rejected and the author's superiors may be contacted. If the author fails to respond to such allegations, regardless of whether their manuscript has been published or not, the journal will reach out to the author via alternative channels and contact the author's institution if necessary.

Post-Publication Discussions and Corrections

We follow COPE's retraction guidelines. If, after publication, information surfaces that indicates that an article should be retracted (e.g. significant plagiarism, unethical research practices, etc.), *NJAS* will publish a notice of retraction and indicate clearly on the article itself and in relevant databases that it has been retracted. In extremely serious cases (e.g. the article is defamatory or creates significant risk to a person or group of people) we reserve the right to remove an article from our website entirely.

For smaller issues (problems with data or analysis, incorrect authorship information, etc.) that nevertheless require post-publication revisions, we will work with authors, as far as possible, to publish errata. The publication of errata is at the discretion of the Editorial Board.

Instructions for Reviewers

Expert reviewers are crucial in ensuring the quality and relevance of the articles we publish. We recognize that this is a great service to journals that many academics perform, typically without additional financial remuneration, and we are always grateful for our reviewers' willingness to lend us their time and expertise.

Reviewers can read about the scope of our journal and its sections at https://njas.fi/njas/scope. More detailed reviewer instructions are given in the review process itself. We typically ask reviewers to return their assessments of submitted articles within four weeks. If reviewers know that it will be difficult to meet the deadline, we ask them to let us know well in advance.

If reviewers are unable to review an article for any reason, we are always grateful for suggestions of alternative reviewers.

We expect our peer reviewers to perform their work to the best of their ability, and to write the kinds of helpful, factual, thorough, and fair reviews that they would hope to receive for their own work, even in cases in which they estimate the submitted article to be of low quality. We therefore ask reviewers to write reviews in a polite and professional tone, while giving a truthful and balanced assessment of the article's potential. Some of our authors may be relatively new academic writers, and thoughtful rejection letters can benefit both new and seasoned authors as they develop their research careers.

Reviewers should refrain from derogatory or defamatory language. *NJAS* reserves the right to edit reviews for tone (or to request that reviewers make such changes themselves). If we edit reviews for tone, we will notify reviewers of the changes we made, and we will take care not to change review contents. We may also fix minor typos or grammatical errors that do not affect review contents. *NJAS* editors always take reviewer judgments very seriously. The Editorial Board will make the final determination on publication of an article, and we may exercise discretion as to which reviewer comments require changes to a manuscript, but in general, reviewer assessments carry great weight, and we are thankful to our reviewers for the care they take in composing them.

If reviewers have any potential conflicts of interest or competing interests, they should let the corresponding editor know immediately, so the Editorial Board can determine whether this might be disqualifying. (See also the section on "Competing Interests" in the relevant COPE guidelines.)

If, during the course of a review, reviewers suspect any unethical practices or research misconduct, they should get in touch with the corresponding editor and/or the Editor(s)-in-Chief of *NJAS* as soon as possible, so that we can initiate the proper processes. If *NJAS* suspects or receives allegations of misconduct on the part of reviewers, we will follow the relevant COPE processes.

We suggest that reviewers also refer to the COPE guidelines for ethical peer review: https://publicationethics.org/resources/guidelines/cope-ethical-guidelines-peer-reviewers.

Instructions for the Editorial Board

The Editorial Board, in consultation with the Editor(s)-in-Chief, has the final responsibility for determining the publications that appear in *NJAS*. We also have responsibility to ensure, to the best of our ability, that the articles we publish are original and accurate, and to take appropriate steps when allegations of misconduct arise. All Editorial Board members should be familiar with COPE's toolkit for journal editors. In cases of potential misconduct, Editorial Board members should inform the Editor(s)-in-Chief immediately, and the Editor(s)-in-Chief should be aware of or be part of all related correspondence.

In addition to observing the principles outlined above in all interactions with authors and (potential) reviewers, Editorial Board members are expected to uphold the standards of the journal in all their journal-related activities, treating everyone with respect, and following the same conflict-of-interest guidelines as reviewers. If editors have a potential conflict-of-interest with a particular article, they should recuse themselves from dealing with that article.

Editors are expected to treat all materials submitted to the journal as confidential, ensuring their anonymity before sharing with peer reviewers, and respecting authors' intellectual property rights to the fullest extent. As necessary for fair and rigorous review processes, editors may discuss articles, their metadata (authors, institutions, submission timelines, etc.) and their contents, as well as topics regarding the review process, with other members of the Editorial Board and, when needed and with the oversight of the Editor(s)-in-Chief, with advisory board members.

The Editorial Board has regular meetings (at least three times / year) and also stays in frequent contact with the Editor(s)-in-Chief. These encounters include formal and informal training in and discussion of journal ethics issues.

If Editorial Board members submit papers for consideration in *NJAS*, they do not have access to any confidential aspects of the review process, which will be conducted by a different Board member (or a guest editor, if needed), following the same processes as for any other submission. The Editor(s)-in-Chief will oversee the process closely to ensure that there is no favouritism in the reviews. Following COPE guidelines, NJAS will publish a short note along with the article, detailing the peer-review procedure.