Cartelization by Secrecy

Almost any place ordinary people were instructed to fully disclose all relevant information, the involved organizations kept Secrets from the ordinary people. The sure sign to detect such cartel formations is fantastic accumulation of quick wealth and profits by some unassuming super geniuses.

> Research on corporate secrecy has studied the factors supporting secret organizations.[6] In particular, scholars in economics and management have paid attention to the way firms participating in cartels work together to maintain secrecy and conceal their activities from antitrust authorities.

Academic Cartelization

- In large universities, with awesome budgets, haven't you ever wondered who is that useless guy called the Dean? What does he do for his large pay and benefits? He oversees the cartel of all the competing departments; this Dean has large compensation since he maintains the concealment of secrets related to different departments e.g. admission reluctance for certain minorities, lack of academic and scientific integrity to publish more to garner larger and larger endowments and grants! And as we all have seen global sexual abuse of students and faculty. These universities are actually of the form and shape of multiple cartels which by means of Secrecy protect their funding and unnatural selection of students and faculty.
- **Ideological Cartels** e.g. String Theory, Neo-Darwinism, The Relativists and many more. If you want to get tenure you better join certain cartels and tow the line and while you do shut your mouth!

Publishers Cartelization

- Hollywood studios
- Record Labels USA
- Large book and periodicals publishers:

Case 1: In September 2024, Dr Lucina Uddin [3] , a neuroscience professor at UCLA, filed a class action lawsuit against the world’s largest academic publishers—including Elsevier, Wiley, Springer Nature, Taylor & Francis, and others. The complaint alleges that these publishers operate as an illegal **cartel**, controlling the terms of academic publishing in a way that is exploitative, anti-competitive, and ultimately harmful to science, scholarship, and society.

At the heart of the lawsuit is a broken system—one that many of us working in research have long experienced but felt powerless to change.

The case argues that publishers collude to enforce three core rules:

- A **single submission rule** that prevents authors from submitting to multiple journals at once, dramatically slowing down the publication process.
- An **unpaid peer review rule**, whereby publishers agree not to pay reviewers—ensuring that their billion-dollar profits are built on uncompensated academic labour.
- A **gag rule**, preventing researchers from sharing their own work while it's under review, often for months or years.

These practices are not just unfair—they're systematic. The complaint suggests they are coordinated via a trade body and function to preserve market dominance and suppress reform.

But perhaps the most galling element is how **taxpayers pay for the same research three times**:

1. Once to fund it through public grants.
2. Again through free academic labour in writing and peer review.
3. And finally, when universities and libraries buy back the published research at exorbitant subscription fees.

In 2023, Elsevier alone made $3.8 billion in revenue, with profit margins higher than most tech giants. And yet, the system depends entirely on the unpaid work of researchers—many of whom are precariously employed or under immense pressure to publish.

The lawsuit doesn't just seek financial compensation—it asks for **structural change**. It challenges the legitimacy of publishers setting the rules that benefit themselves while limiting the agency of the very scholars who create and verify knowledge.

This case has huge implications for open access, research equity, and the future of scholarly communication. [1]

Case 2: The Norwegian Competition Authority is imposing fines to the total amount of 545 million NOK on Norway's four biggest publishing houses and the provider of the database Bokbasen for being in breach of the Competition Act (**cartel**). These operators have illegally exchanged future book prices and other competitively sensitive information through a subscription to the database Bokbasen.[2]

Industrial Cartelization

- Automobile manufacturing companies: [5]

The Commission's investigation revealed that, for over 15 years, 16 major car manufacturers (including Mercedes, which was not fined) and ACEA entered into anticompetitive agreements and engaged in concerted practices related to the recycling of ELVs.

In particular, the Commission found that the parties colluded on two aspects:

They agreed not to pay car dismantlers for processing ELVs. In particular, they agreed to consider the recycling of ELVs to be a sufficiently profitable business, and therefore not to remunerate car dismantlers for their services (so-called “Zero-Treatment-Cost” strategy). The companies also shared commercially sensitive information on their individual agreements with car dismantlers and coordinated their behaviour towards dismantlers;

They agreed not to promote how much of an ELV can be recycled, recovered and reused and how much recycled material is used in new cars. Their goal was to prevent consumers from considering recycling information when choosing a car, which could lower the pressure on companies to go beyond legal requirements.

- Oil companies
- Construction companies, including tools and technologies: [4]

BRUSSELS, July 20, 2026 (Reuters) - EU antitrust regulators on Monday charged a group of construction chemicals companies and trade associations with taking part in a cartel between 2021 and 2022, putting them at risk of hefty fines.

The European Commission issued the charges via a 'statement of objections' following dawn raids against unnamed companies in several EU countries in 2023.

The Commission, which acts as the EU competition enforcer, said the companies and associations colluded between 2021 and 2022 to increase prices in the supply of chemicals for cement, concrete and mortar, impacting construction costs.

[1] https://creativemediapractice.com/academic-publishing-cartel/

[2] https://konkurransetilsynet.no/five-operators-in-norwegian-book-market-fined-545-million-nok/?lang=en

[3] https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.nyed.520652/gov.uscourts.nyed.520652.1.0_2.pdf

[4] https://www.reuters.com/world/construction-chemicals-companies-trade-associations-hit-with-eu-cartel-charges-2026-07-20/

[5]
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/ip_25_881/IP_25_881_EN.pdf

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