

How to write and publish papers for international academic journals.  
Practical guidelines and common-sense suggestions for young scholars

Editors Panel Session

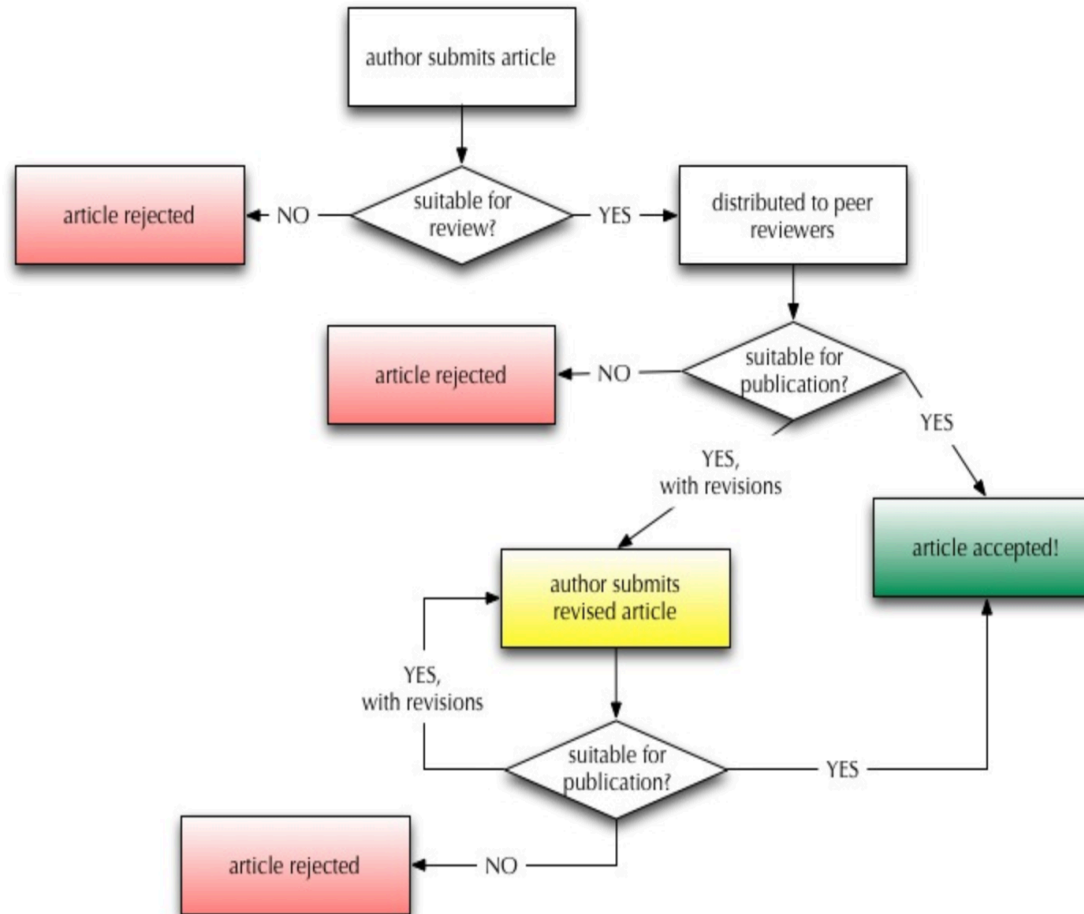
# Panelists

- Tania Burchardt, *Journal of Social Policy*; *Journal of Poverty and Social Justice*
- Enrica Chiappero, *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*
- Severine Deneulin, *Oxford Development Studies*
- Jasmine Gideon, *Bulletin of Latin American Research*
- Tristan McCowan, *Compare*
- Moses Oketch, *International Journal of Educational Development*
- Elaine Unterhalter, *Comparative Education*

# Publish or perish

- Hundreds of papers are annually submitted to academic journals ⇒ acceptance rate for major academic journals can range from 5 to 30 % (much less for top journals)
- Acceptance rate is inversely correlated to the prestige of the journal and positively correlated to the quality of your paper
- Publishing can be a very long process (from six months, on average, to one year and more)
- Publishing can be (and usually is) a challenging, sometimes quite frustrating and stressful experience (that we all have and have had in our academic life)

# How a review process usually works



# General remarks on submission and referee process

- The majority of journals adopts a double blind referee process ( i.e. your anonymously submitted paper will be reviewed by, usually, two anonymous referees)
- in case of divergent opinions, the journal can solicit an additional report from another referee or decide itself about the destiny of paper)
- Typical referee report includes:
  - ⇒ Brief summary of the paper's aims
  - ⇒ Confidential comments to the editor
  - ⇒ Comments to the author

# General remarks on submission and referee process II

Referee reports can classify your paper into three main categories:

1. Accepted, subject to minor revision (revise and send it back the paper as soon as possible)
2. To revise and resubmit with more substantive changes  
(you are usually invited to resubmit within maximum three months with detailed response to each referee)
3. Rejected (learn as much as possible from critiques and comments)

NB: Rarely a paper is accepted without revision at the first round

# General remarks on submission and referee process II

- Journals do not consider any paper under simultaneous review by any other journal or publisher and in most cases will not review a revised version of a rejected paper:

⇒ carefully select the journal (e.g. “submitting tree”)

<https://journalfinder.elsevier.com/>

<https://journalsuggester.springer.com/>

- Check carefully and follow the specific submission guidelines on styling and procedure (including the max length of the paper)

# General remarks on submission and referee process III

- Journals and reviewers usually base their decisions on three main elements: relevance, content and style of the article.
- Submit your paper only when you are fully persuaded that it is really ready to be reviewed and give your (honest) answers to the following questions:
  1. Is the contribution to the literature substantial enough?
  2. Does your paper fit well to the journal's aims and audience?
  3. Are writing and styling suitable?



# More specific comments on style

- Have something to say and say it clearly. High quality is a necessary contribution (but not a sufficient one): there is no trade-off between a high quality analysis and writing
- Importance of simplicity and clarity. Try to be both precise and concise (one idea – one paper).
- Clear exposition requires revising, revising, revising...and revising
- Organise your thoughts and try to achieve a logical order in your presentation.
- As paper's length increases beyond 15-20 pages the chances of acceptance can rapidly decrease (but can be different in different disciplines)

# More specific comments on style II

- Write a stimulating abstract and choose an eye-catching title.
- Introduction: make the main point and contribution of your paper clear; the ideal length of the introduction can be different for different journals/disciplines
- Conclusions: summarise paper's contribution (without repeating what is already in the paper); point out limitations of your results; discuss next steps of your research
- References: keep up-to-date with current literature.

# More specific comments on style III

- Present preliminary versions of your paper at seminars, workshops and conferences.
- ask other scholars for comments (and keep reciprocity in mind!)
- If English is not your mother-tongue, ask a native speaker to revise your paper before submitting.

# In case of rejection

- Take the rejection seriously and make an effort to improve the paper
- learn from the comments of the reviewers and if you these comments are useful (and usually they are) revise your paper accordingly before submitting it again to another journal (you might get the same referees again)
- Take into account the editor advices on other journals that better fit the scope of your paper