

# Writing for publication

## Practical guidelines and common-sense suggestions for young scholars

HDCA Graduate Workshop – 10 March 2021

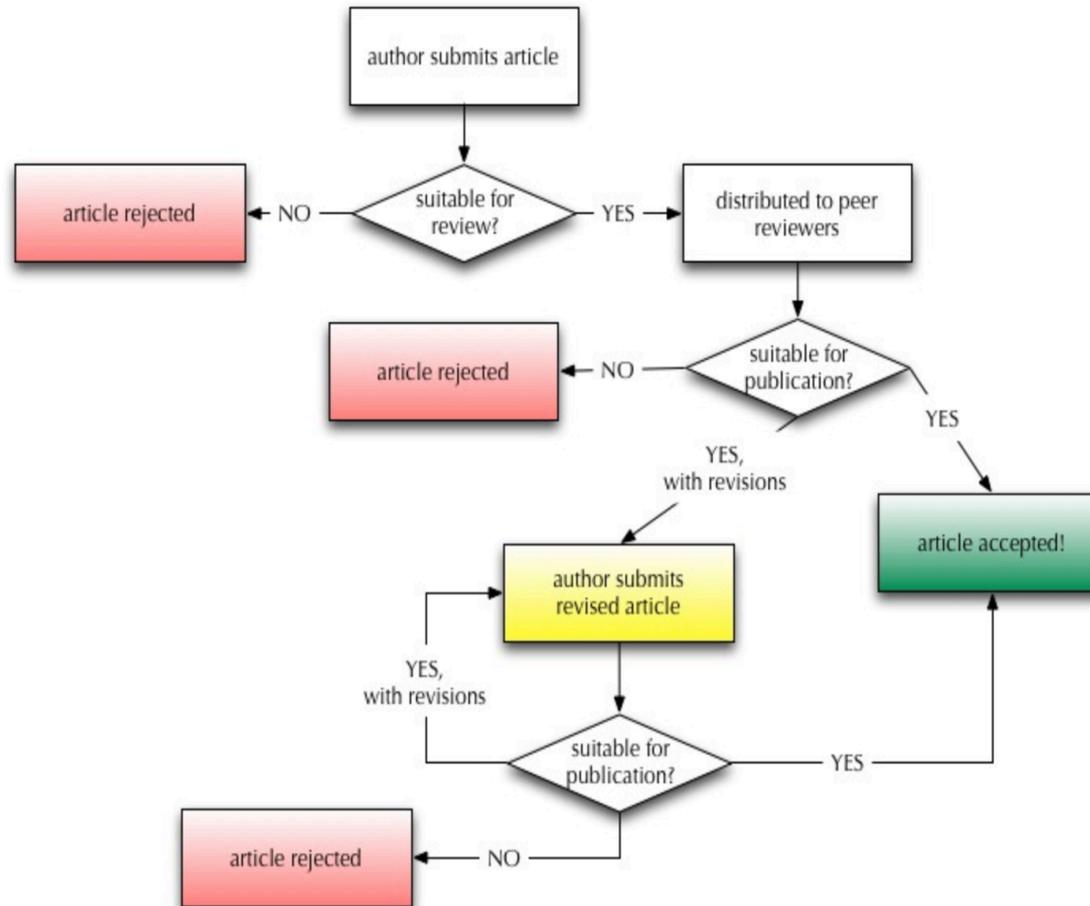
# Aims and contents

1. A few general remarks on how the submission and referee process work in academic journals
2. Journal of Human Development and Capabilities

# 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 even 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). Three main verdicts:

1. Accepted, subject to minor revision (revise and send it back the paper as soon as possible). Rarely a paper is accepted without revision at the first round
2. revise and resubmit with more substantive changes (you will probably be invited to resubmit within maximum three months providing detailed response to each referee)
3. Rejected (learn as much as possible from critiques and comments)

A fourth possible option: reject but encourage to resubmit

# 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. identify a “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 and refer to articles already published in the same journal

# 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.

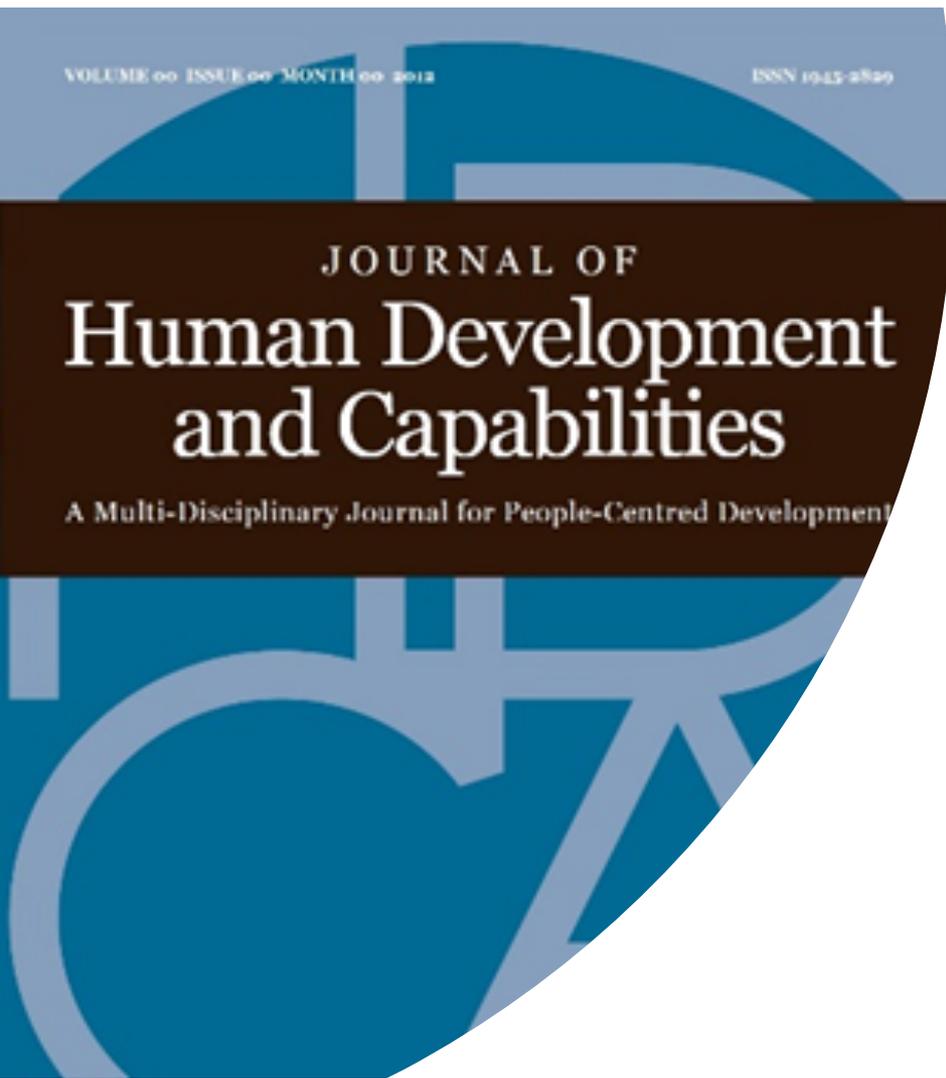
# In case of rejection

- Take the rejection seriously and make any 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

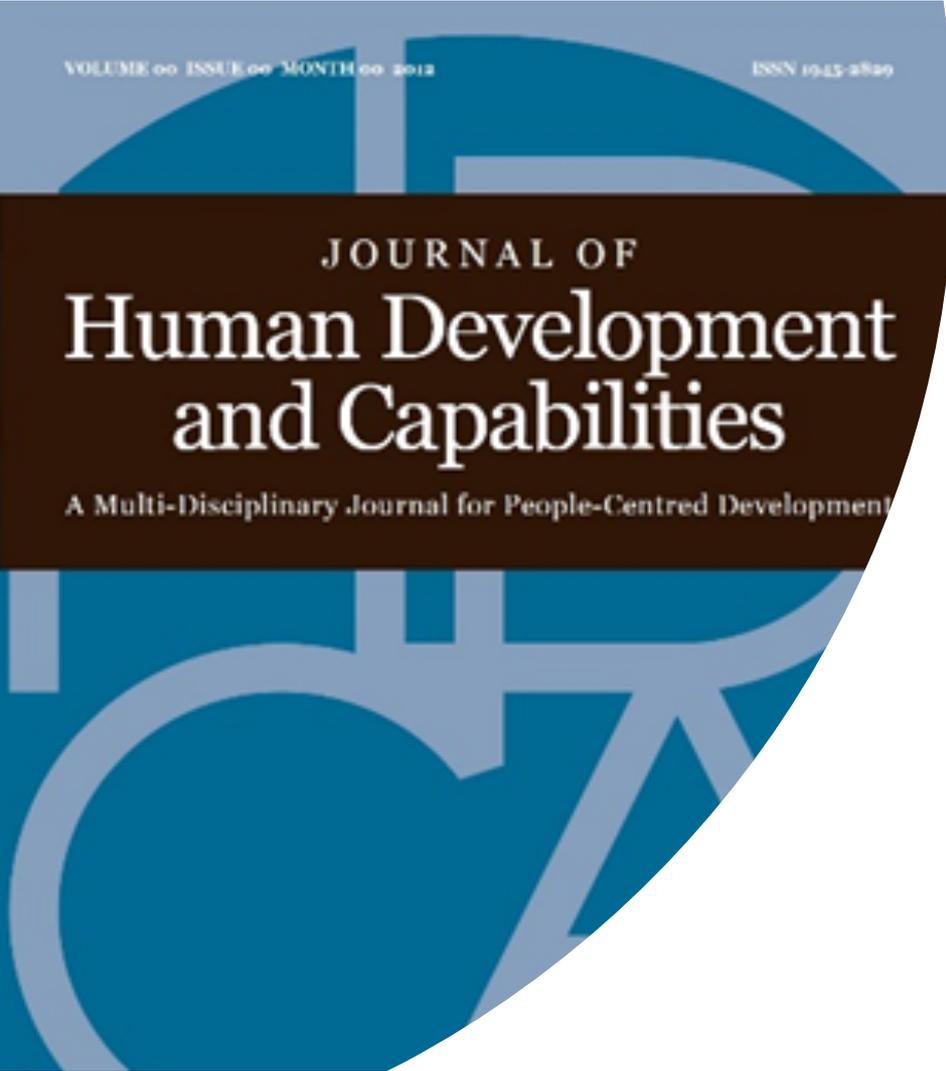


## *Aims & Scope*

A multi-disciplinary Journal aimed to stimulate innovative thinking and promote a multidisciplinary debate on concepts, measurement, analysis, policy and practice for human development cutting across economic, social, political, institutional and environmental issues.

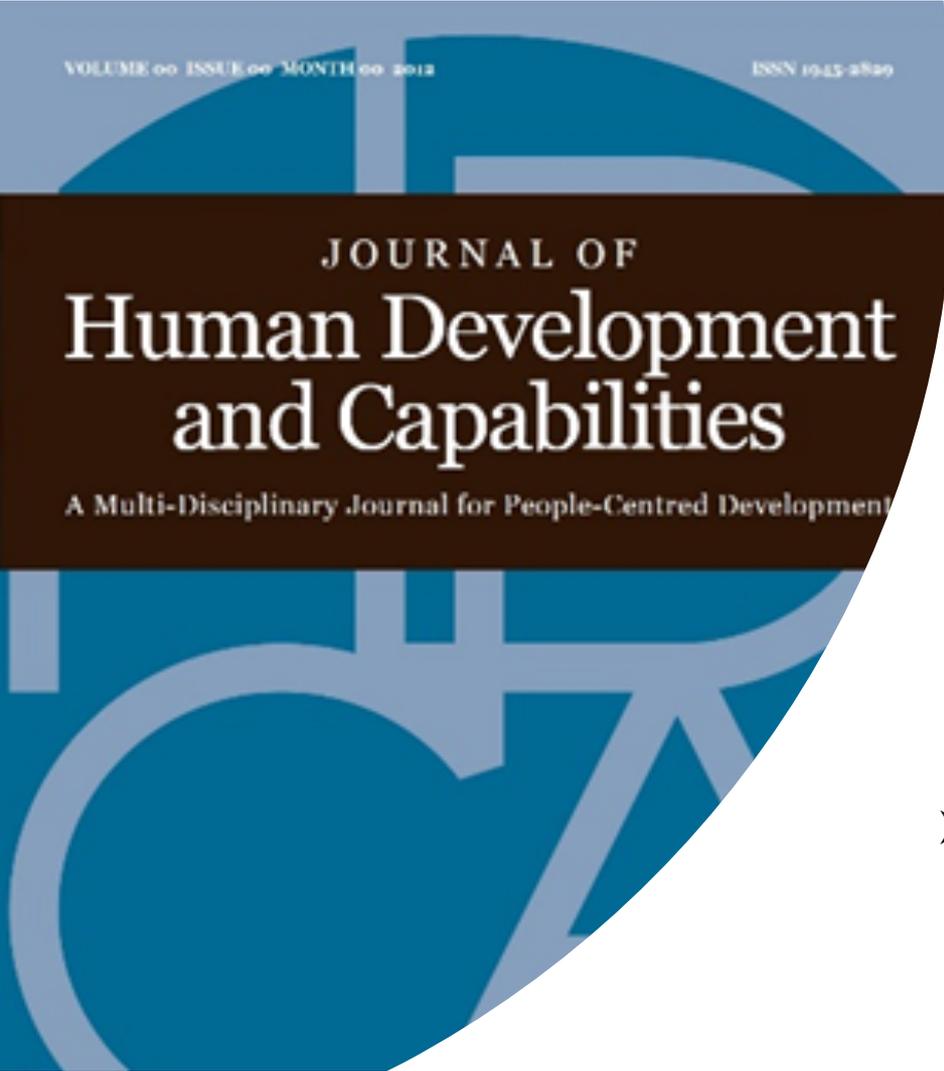


- Taylor & Francis
- Founded in 2000 as *Journal of Human Development* in 2009 becomes *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*
- Since 2005: academic Journal of the Human Development and Capability Association



## *Global Reach and Readership (from the last available report)*

- Accessible in over 11,000 institutions worldwide
- available in developing countries as part of the *Research4Life* partnership.
  
- 109,000 article downloads in 2019 (+65% over 2018)
- 58,000 article downloaded in 2020
  - 42% of 2018 online readership from Europe
  - 24% from Asia
  - 15% from North America
  - 10% from Australasia
  - 6% from Africa

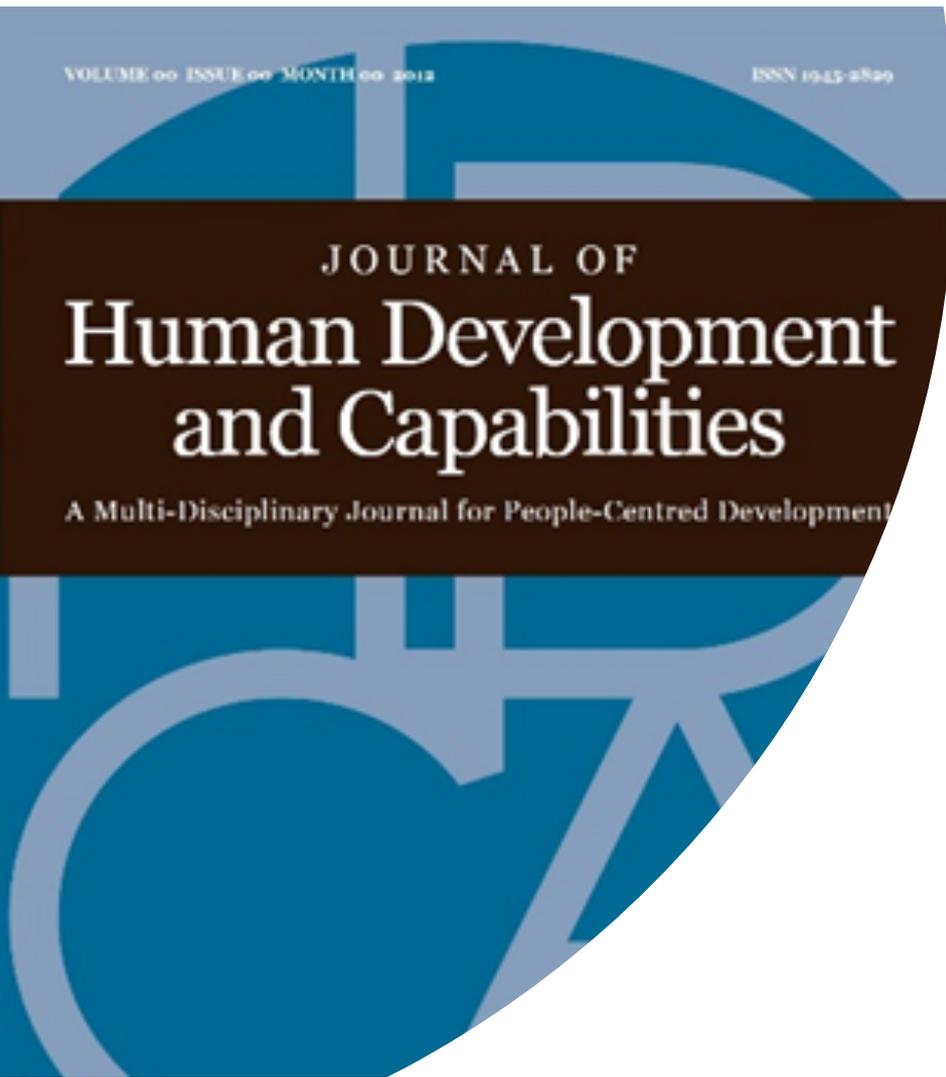


## *Impact Factor & Rank*

- 2018 Impact Factor 1.516
- 2019 Impact Factor 1,200
  - (1,579 5-year IF)
- Ranked 30 of 41 journals in the Development Studies JCR category.

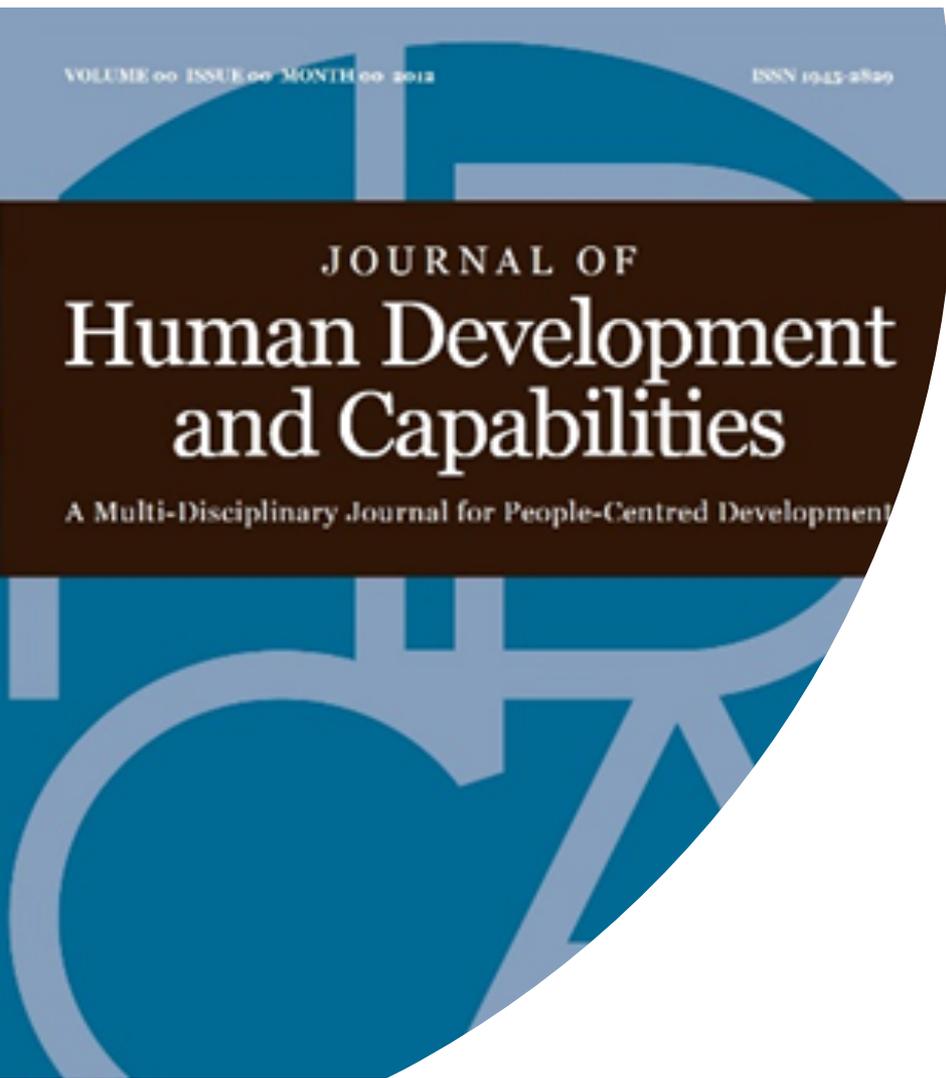
## *Submissions*

- Over 200 submissions each year; 40 articles published in 2019 (5 of which in open access) with an average acceptance rate below 20%
- Mean days to first decision about 80 days (mode: 55 days)



## Contents

- Quarterly
- Usually, one special issue per year
- Book reviews and book symposia
- Policy fora



## *Editorial team*

- 16 Associate Editors (from philosophy to econometric, from environmental to educational studies), including a book review and a policy forum editor
- A prestigious editorial board with over 30 scholars in different disciplines