Academic Publication: Strategies and Processes

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Presented at IAPRI capacity building seminar, May 10th, 2013
Components of an iterative process

1. Identify research questions and methods
2. Identify journal
3. Crafting manuscript to the journal
4. Feedback, revisions, and resting
5. Submission, review, and next steps
Research Questions and Methods

- The research question, methods, and theoretical tools all shape range of potential journals for you to target.

- Be strategic…Note that a single research topic may yield multiple journal articles simply by changing the emphasis.
Ex: What are the effects of input subsidies on private sector?

Three ways to spin this:

1). Methodological question.

2). Policy/substantive question.

3). Theoretical question.
Identifying a Journal

- What is the main contribution of your work?
- What is novel about your work?
- How broadly relevant are the insights?
- How rigorous is the work?
  - Shoot high (but be reasonable)
  - What is the methodological fit of your work?

Note: The relative prominence given to theories, methods, interpretation, and recommendations will be adapted in the manuscript depending on the journal.
Impact factor

\[ IF = \frac{\text{# of current citations a journal receives}}{\text{Total # of articles published in the journal in those same two years}} \]

\[ IF_{AE,2011} = \frac{\text{# of times that articles published in AE in 2009 and 2010 were cited by articles in indexed journals during 2011}}{\text{Total # of articles published in AE in 2009 and 2010}} \]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal name</th>
<th>2011 IF (rank)</th>
<th>HBDPS Rank</th>
<th>HBDPS grade</th>
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<td>Food Policy *</td>
<td>2.054 (1)</td>
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Other journals in which AFRE ID faculty frequently publish

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<th>HB DPS grade</th>
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<td>Environment &amp; Development Economics</td>
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<td>Development in Practice</td>
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Crafting Manuscript to Journal

- **Scope and Aim of the Journal**

- Know the journal outputs on your topic:
  - Remember reviewers are normally drawn from journal authors and editorial boards

- Style and formatting
Scope and Aim: I

*World Development* is a multi-disciplinary monthly journal of development studies. It seeks to explore ways of improving standards of living, and the human condition generally, by examining potential solutions to problems such as: poverty, unemployment, malnutrition, disease, lack of shelter, environmental degradation, inadequate scientific and technological resources, trade and payments imbalances, international debt, gender and ethnic discrimination, militarism and civil conflict, and lack of popular participation in economic and political life.

Contributions offer constructive ideas and analysis, and highlight the lessons to be learned from the experiences of different nations, societies, and economies. *World Development* recognizes 'development' as a process of change involving nations, economies, political alliances, institutions, groups, and individuals. Development processes occur in different ways and at all levels: inside the family, the firm and the farm; locally, provincially, nationally, and globally. Our goal is to learn from one another, regardless of nation, culture, income, academic discipline, profession or ideology. We hope to set a modest example of enduring global cooperation through maintaining an international dialogue and dismantling barriers to communication.
Scope and Aim: II

_Agricultural Economics_ aims to disseminate the most important research results and policy analyses in our discipline, from all regions of the world. Topical coverage ranges from consumption and nutrition to land use and the environment, at every scale of analysis from households to markets and the macro-economy. Applicable methodologies include econometric estimation and statistical hypothesis testing, optimization and simulation models, descriptive reviews and policy analyses. We particularly encourage submission of empirical work that can be replicated and tested by others.
The *Journal of Modern African Studies* offers a quarterly survey of developments in modern African politics and society. Its main emphasis is on current issues in African politics, economies, societies and international relations. It is intended not only for students and academic specialists, but also for general readers and practitioners with a concern for modern Africa, living and working both inside and outside the continent. Editorial policy avoids commitment to any political viewpoint or ideology, but aims at a fair examination of controversial issues in order to promote a deeper understanding of what is happening in Africa today. The journal also includes an invaluable book review section.
Crafting Manuscript to Journal

- **Scope and Aim of the Journal**

- **Know the journal outputs on your topic:**
  - Remember reviewers are normally drawn from journal authors and editorial boards

- **Style and formatting**
Crafting Manuscript to Journal

- Scope and Aim of the Journal
- Know the journal outputs on your topic:
  - Remember reviewers are normally drawn from journal authors and editorial boards
- Style and formatting
  - Following guidelines is a signal to the editor!

http://www.elsevier.com/journals/food-policy/0306-9192/guide-for-authors
Crafting Manuscript to Journal

- How to maximize citations
- Manuscript title:
  “A cross country comparison of inter-industry linkages and the role of imported intermediate inputs” (published WD 1985: total citations 18)
Crafting Manuscript to Journal

- Key words: ensure internet searches bring up your article

- Abstracts: situate your work in key debates (substantive, methodological, or theoretical)

- Introduction and conclusion: catchy and concise
Before submission: Feedback, revisions, and resting

- Get as many eyes on the manuscript as possible
  - Develop a community of support

- Present it: Brown bag, conference…

- Put it down for awhile and come back
Submission

- Craft a cover letter:
  - Minimum requirements as per the Journal
  - Optional:
    - What are your contributions and how the paper relates to debates in the journal
    - But be concise and brief!

- Make sure you meet all Journal requirements before hitting “submit”!
Review Process and Decision

1. Editor Review
   - Is the manuscript appropriate for the Journal?
   - Importance of abstract, intro, and (maybe) cover letter

2. Blind Review
   - 2-4 peers, normally drawn from journal/cited authors
   - Importance of engaging with debates in journal/topic

3. Initial Decision
   - Outright Reject (This is common)
   - Revise and Resubmit (What you’re hoping for)
   - Accept (almost never happens)
Three reviewers have commented on the above-mentioned paper. Their comments are reproduced below.

As you will see, Reviewers #1 and #3 in particular see merit in the paper. They suggest relatively minor changes (both focusing on your conclusions section) before the paper is published. I particularly like the second point raised by Reviewer #1 concerning ZAMACE volumes, which seems an important one.

Reviewer #2 requests more substantive changes to the paper. In light of the comments of Reviewers #1 and #3, who clearly both see benefit in the case study approach, I am not going to insist on a full response to these suggestions. However, the paper will undoubtedly be strengthened by taking on board some of the comments of Reviewer #2 (e.g. the UNCTAD reference, setting out the conditions under which commodity exchanges may be expected to be particularly useful).

I am, therefore, writing to invite you to revise the paper in response to the reviewers' comments below. When you submit the revised manuscript, please also submit a covering letter setting out the main changes made in response to the reviewers' comments. I hope then to be able to approve the paper for publication in Food Policy.
Crafting a Response to Reviewers

- Address all reviewer and editor comments.
- If you don’t agree with a reviewer’s comment, you still must address it. Acknowledge it politely, make your case as to why you don’t think it is appropriate, and offer to note the issue in a foot note.
- Keep track of all your changes!
- Resubmit revised paper along with a VERY detailed letter indicating how and where (page, paragraph) you addressed each comment. Thank reviewers and editor for their comments and time and indicate you think the subsequent changes have improved the paper!
- There may be multiple rounds of review
Decision

- More quick than round 1

- In some cases the manuscript will be just reviewed by the editor, in others it will be returned to the reviewers, or, in some cases, given to a separate reviewer with instructions to give the article and thumbs up or down.

- If get additional reviewer comments, repeat process on previous slide
Final Thoughts

- Don’t take it personally
- The first time is always the most difficult
- Look at it as a learning process
- Take note of what you found helpful and try to apply the same when you’re a reviewer!
Thank you

Good Luck!