

Peer Reviewed Publications

What it is and how to get there

Peer Review Concept

- General Concept
 - Proposed Articles are read and critically commented by other experts (**peers**) in the research field of the article
 - To ensure honesty / validity of reviews, reviews should be **double blind**
 - The author does not know the reviewers
 - The reviewers do not know the author

Peer Review Concept

- In theory, concept is superior to previous models of publishing which were largely driven by networks / connections between senior researchers and their mentees

Peer Review Concept

- In practice, however, the world of political science is smaller than one thinks
- Reviewers might know who the author is due to
 - Personal / private relationships
 - Conference papers as the previous form of the articles

Peer Review Concept

- IF reviewer know the author, this may have three outcomes
 - Reviewer knows you but is still professional => no effect
 - Reviewer knows and likes you and this influences his / her review => positive effect
 - Reviewer knows and does not like and this influences his / her review => negative effect

Peer Review Concept

- **First Take Home Message**
 - Know your friends and enemies!
 - If you want to avoid some researchers as reviewers you may send them the article in advance and then tell the editors that these people have already commented upon it

Peer Review Concept

- Who is this editor?

Peer Review Concept

- The editor is the ,boss‘ of the journal
 - (S)He is the one deciding about the reviewers
 - (S)He is also the one deciding about a desk reject
- **Desk reject:** Submitted articles gets rejected because of
 - Low quality of article
 - Mismatch between journal topics / article topic

Peer Review Concept

- **Second Take Home Message**
 - You should really have a look into the mission statement of the journal and the articles published in it: Does your article fit to the topics discussed the journal?
 - DON'T: just send around an article!
 - DO: contact the editor in case of doubt before submitting the article!

Peer Review Concept

- Ehmm – where do I find these journals and how to decide which to choose?
- Different options
 - Snowballing (which journal did you cite the most in your article?)
 - Based on ranking (via SSCI)

Peer Review Concept

- SSCI = Social Science Citation Index
- Measures the impact factor (= Number of citations per year / number of articles per year in a given journal)
- BUT: Whether impact factor is a valid and legitimate measure of quality / impact is highly debated!

Peer Review Criteria

- Still: As the ,boss' of the journal, the editor is also oriented toward increasing the impact factor of the journal

Peer Review Criteria

- Hence, s/he is interested in articles that
 - are of **high quality** (1)
 - tackle an **important / timely subject** (2)
 - frame the article in a way that **more fine-grained results are connected to broader / more abstract lines of research / public debate** (3)

Peer Review Criteria

- (1) High quality can be further subdivided into
 - A **concise but interesting abstract / introduction**
 - A **concise but comprehensive literature review** („walk the reviewer through it“)
 - A **theory part that builds upon previous lit but is also innovative**
 - An **empirical part** that at best uses **new data** (with **fancy methods of analysis**)
 - A **conclusion** that **connects the findings to broader debates => (3)**

Peer Review Criteria

- Of course, achieving all of these criteria is hard to do but you should fulfill as many as possible

Peer Review Criteria

- **Third Take Home Message**

- Emphasize these points in the article so that reviewers don't miss it

- „This article for the first time...“

- „So far, no research has ...“

- „Based on self-administered data / an innovative approach of analyzing ...“

- BUT: Do not oversell it – reviewers do not like that!

Peer Review Process

- Okay, I have a manuscript that
 - Knows its friends and enemies
 - Fits to the aims of Journal XY
 - Fits the Quality Criteria

- What now?

Peer Review Process

- Submit it!
- But before: be sure to have checked the submission guidelines provided by Journal XY!

Peer Review Process

- Most regularly, each journal has its own website and its own submission page
- Check both pages for **guidelines for (potential) authors**

Peer Review Process

- These guidelines contain information on
 - Which types of articles are allowed (research articles, research notes, lit reviews, etc.)
 - How to cite literature (style of bibliography)
 - How to format the main text
 - How you should format / submit graphs, figures, tables etc.
 - How many words you are allowed to use

Peer Review Process

- **Fourth Take Home Message**
 - Some editors do not like submissions that do not follow the guidelines closely
 - DON'T: lower the chances of getting your article published by not following these guidelines!

Peer Review Process

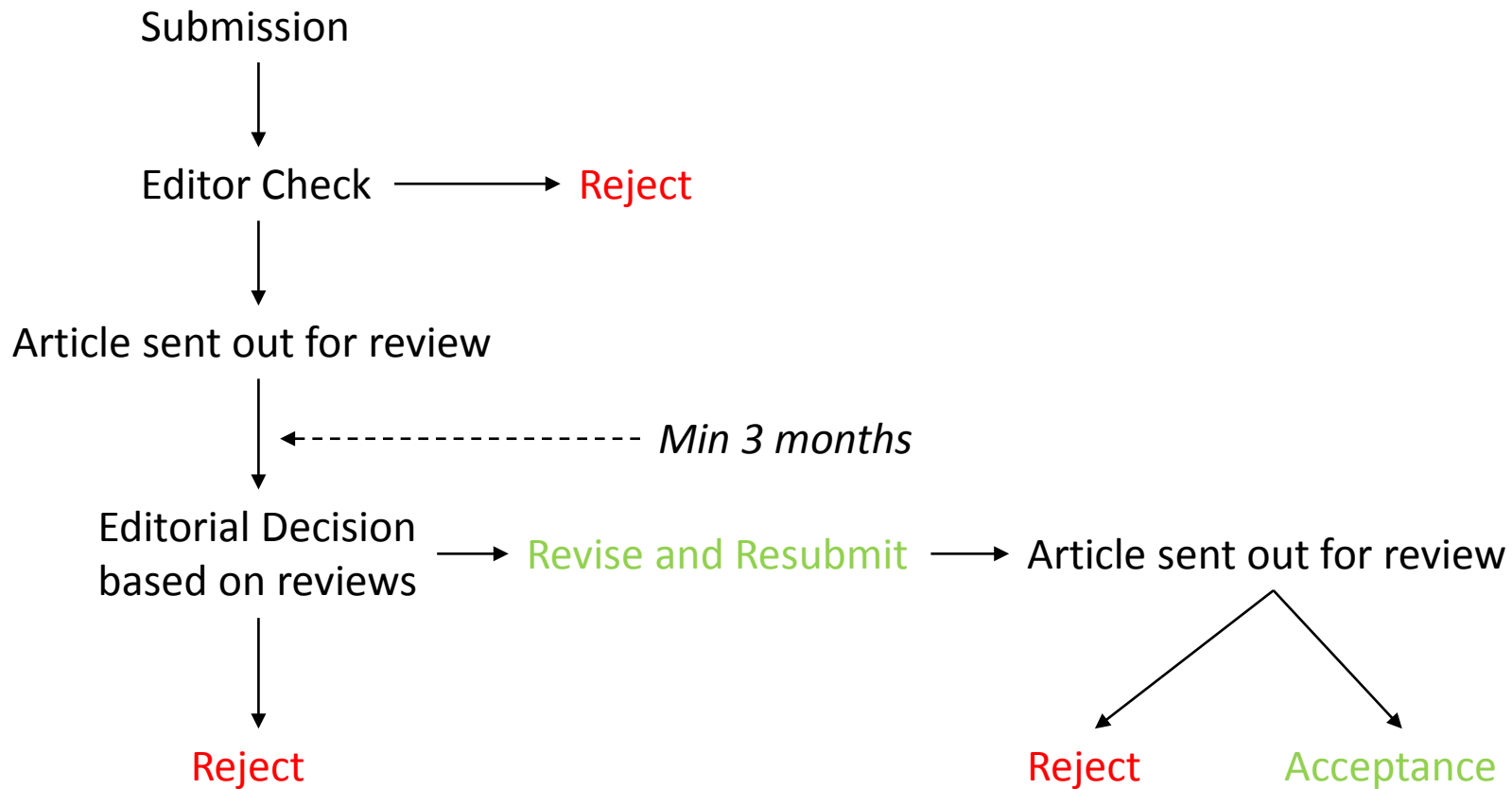
- Okay, I have a manuscript that
 - Knows its friends and enemies
 - Fits to the aims of Journal XY
 - Fits the Quality Criteria
 - Follows the Guidelines

- What now?

Peer Review Process

- **Submit it!**
- Okay, but then?
- **Wait, wait, and then – wait a little longer!**

Peer Review Process



Peer Review Process

- What does **Revise and Resubmit (R&R)** mean?
- Most regularly, something good
 - In most journals, your chance of being published has now increased to about 80-90 % (based on very anecdotal evidence)

Peer Review Process

- What does **Revise and Resubmit (R&R)** mean?
- Contentwise, it means that you should rewrite your article taking the comments of all reviewers into account

Peer Review Process

- **Fifth Take Home Message**

- Actually follow the lead of the reviewers – they can get pissed if you do not consider their comments valuable
- BUT: If you have good arguments against following their advice, do this and explain it to them in the **memo**

Peer Review Process

- **Memo** = Reply to the reviewers outlining your reaction to their comments
- Be as specific as possible in the memo!
 - Some reviewers may – out of time reasons – only check the memo and not read the whole (revised) article again!

Peer Review – an Example

- Reinke / Treib: Knowing How to Make European Policies Work

Peer Review – Questions?

bernd.schlipphak@uni-muenster.de