

Strategies for International Publications

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Strategies for International Publications

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Lecture outline:

- Introduction & fieldwork-based research
- The changing context for publishing
- Choosing a publishing strategy
- Where to publish?
- What works: hints & tips

Introduction

- My background in International Development: Development Geographer
- Publish in tourism journals (*Annals of Tourism Research*; *Tourism Geographies*; *Current Issues in Tourism*)
- But also in development & geography journals (*World Development*; *Third World Quarterly*; *Environment & Planning*; *One Earth*)
- And written/edited four books

- Research experience: 25 years of fieldwork in South-East Asia (plus Caribbean, South Atlantic & Indian Ocean)
- Ethnographic, qualitative approach → favoured technique semi-structured, in-depth interviews
- Using insights from rapid (rural) appraisal, 'fast & dirty' limited fieldwork (budget, time) concentrated period & analyse afterwards → write up as paper(s)

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Fieldwork-based research

- My publications are based on fieldwork mostly in ASEAN (Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Myanmar)
- Funding allowed **longitudinal studies** over time (Gili islands, Lombok; Perhentian islands, Malaysia; Ha Long Bay, Vietnam)
- Fortunate to re-visit & continue research: many (most) tourism publications based on single period of fieldwork



- Example: longitudinal study of **Gili Trawangan** & island tourism development
- First 3 visits late 1990s, returned 15 years later in 2011 & again 2019
- Could track changes to island tourism & local impacts
- Methodology: semi structured interviews, participant observation, site mapping. This field site →
- 2 papers so far (*Annals of Tourism Research* 1998, *World Development* 2015), 1 more paper being written

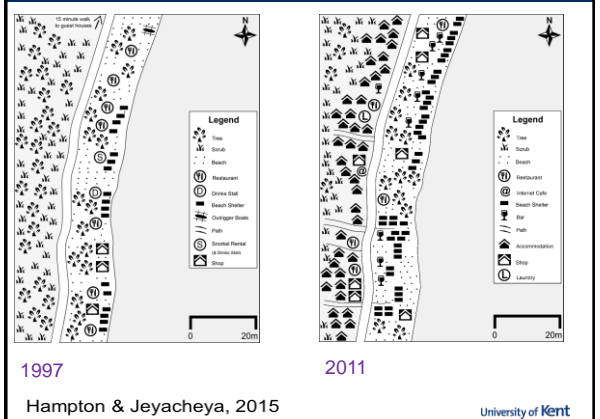


Site mapping – original research

- No useful maps available: need to create own
- Sketched beach areas in field notebook + added comments
- Created outline simple map of island
- *NB. Before Google Earth & Google Maps!*
- [Now: software to help create own maps of research site]



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The changing context for publishing

- Decline in geographical approaches to tourism (e.g. little work on coastal morphology/ tourism planning/ spatial aspects)
- In tourism journals two trends: post-modernism & positivism (heavily quantitative work) → BUT little interest/use to policy-makers!
- Also rise of open access journals & **predatory publishers: need to be very careful**
- Not always easy to tell if a journal is from a predatory publisher . . .



Avoiding predatory publishers: Checklist

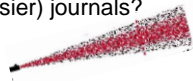
- ✓ Do they charge a **fee** to publish your paper?
top journals normally don't charge to publish
- ✓ Do they have a **super-fast reviewing period**?
most top journals take over 3 months to review
- ✓ Have **they** invited you to publish with them?
top journals don't normally approach you!
- ✓ Have you **heard of at least 50% of the Editorial Board**?
top journals have well-known & published academics
- ✓ Do they have a very **similar title to the leading journal** in the field? Or a **generic title that covers everything** & isn't specific?

BUT there are grey areas: ask colleagues' advice

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Choosing a Publishing Strategy

- **Key concept:** 'Shot gun strategy' or 'sniper strategy'?
- **Shot gun strategy:** large number of papers but lower quality (easier) journals?
- OR **Sniper strategy:** taking far longer, fewer papers to carefully target high ranking journals?
- Both strategies have costs/benefits



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Publishing strategies

- **Shot gun:** Benefits - you get the numbers, a mass of publications (useful for some promotion panels/external funders who perhaps don't know/care about journal quality!).
- You start to get your name known.



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Publishing strategies

- **Shot gun: Benefits** - easier journals to get into so often less work per paper. Some of lowest ranked journals are desperate for papers! *BUT*
- **Shot gun: Costs** – you are not hitting the best journals. Your international peers know this. Low ranked journals can be seen as 'waste of time' by government research committees or higher level funding bodies.
- Since it is relatively easy: *can feel less rewarding*

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Publishing strategies



- **Sniper: Benefits** – publication in the most prestigious journals can open doors for funding or promotion.
- You are in company of top international academics in your field: it shows your quality.
- Top journals are often more referred to by peers, researchers since better circulation internationally

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Publishing strategies



- **Sniper: Benefits** – if the top journals reject your paper you can use the referees' comments & submit to a lower ranked journal.
- *The reverse doesn't work!*
- Personally it can be very rewarding & hugely satisfying to publish your work in top international journals!

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Publishing strategies



- **Sniper: Costs** – slow & difficult process (top journals have extremely high rejection rates) so papers need to be the best you can get them to have any chance!
- Fewer papers produced in same time you could have turned out more papers for low rank journals
- Could be a problem for promotion panels if unrealistic KPIs for number of papers per year

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Publishing strategies



- Consider your own strategy. . .
- Take advice from senior UGM staff who publish (not university administration or non-researchers!)
- Need to also consider your institutional strategy – is it a numbers game (volume of publications) or a quality game?
- Next: *how to tell the quality of a journal?*
- What is a 'high impact' international journal?

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Where to publish?

- Local context (national listings, informal 'rules', subject lists, Ministry or University guidance etc)
- Knowing about the journal – disagreement, there is *no internationally-agreed list!*
- Growing number of attempts at journal rankings (Citations, SJR, Scopus, Thomson Reuters impact factors; Harzing Journal Quality List, discipline-specific lists e.g. Chartered Association of Business Schools *Academic Journal Guide* etc)



SJR

Scimago Journal & Country Rank

Where to publish?

- Rankings used by funders, governments, university administrations as a effort-saving proxy to show 'high quality' journals. Is really a rationing device
- No one single list is universal nor internationally agreed **BUT** some journals appear on multiple lists
- Also 'list of lists'. Best example: work of Prof Anne-Wil Harzing (Melbourne University) *Journal Quality List (JQL)*. 67th Edition 2020!

HARZING.COM

What works?

- Referees & journal editors look for a contribution to the subject
- Not just another nice or interesting case study! *What is your key idea?*
- Some journals (e.g. *Annals of Tourism Research*) ask you to explicitly spell it out when you submit
- Even if they don't – think – what is the contribution?
- The 'so what?' question! *Why should your paper be read outside Indonesia?*
- *Are there lessons/is your work applicable elsewhere in the world?*

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What works?

- Increasingly journals want a contribution to theory-building. This is much harder!
- *No easy short cut.*
- **BUT** does your paper do something new? Apply a theory in a new way or to a new area or aspect?
- We can't all develop new paradigms **BUT** you can hook onto existing body of work or build on it

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What works?

- In my case - my papers are a mix of case studies & some theoretical development.
- More recent papers more theoretical on tourism-led inclusive growth (*World Development, 2020*; *Journal of Development Studies, 2018*).
- Link to changes in journals – new editors – new preferences, e.g. *Annals of Tourism Research* trend towards more postmodern approaches
- Or *Tourism Management* trend to positivism & quantitative papers
- Benefit of networks & conferences

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What works?

- You get informal sense about journals, new research trends & upcoming areas to work on
- Sometimes a good conference paper (good impression) can → invited to write paper for journal Special Issue
- *Be careful it isn't a predatory publisher as emails can look like they are from reputable journals!*
- Special Issues, although refereed, often 'lighter touch' as papers already invited by editor.
- Often (relatively) easier to get published than 'cold calling' submission to a popular journal

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Reflections

- How do I do it? My work is normally fieldwork based (1 or 2 desk-based papers)
- I don't normally explicitly target certain journals **BUT** have a general idea where the paper might be aimed
- Sometimes I just write & then think about placing it after it is written (art not science!)

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Reflections

- I always plan. If solo author I plan all main sections in detail.
- If co-writing, I plan the paper with co-author & agree who writes which sections
- Authorship: solo author & co-authors. I do both! Advantages & disadvantages.
- If you write with others - be careful! Positive overall but need clear deadlines & agreement over who does what & when

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Reflections

- Need to agree on author order (1st & 2nd authors on title page).
- Different ways: depends who worked most on paper or equal share? If one did most normally they are 1st named author
- If equal share: alphabetical order of surnames. If you co-write again you can reverse the order to be fairer!

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Reflections

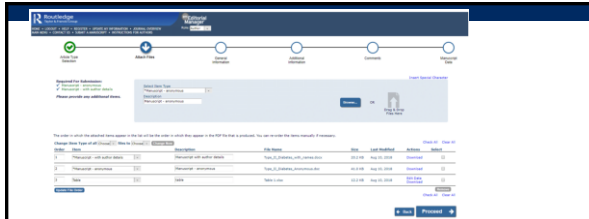
- Send the final draft to a 'critical friend' or 2. The paper can then be revised from their feedback.
- *Important step, it screens out unclear writing, poor logic or silly errors that can annoy referees & → rejection. This stage really increases your chance of publication!*
- Then you are ready to submit. I chose the target journal carefully (look at quality lists, read their web pages etc)

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Submitting to journals

- Journals have online submission: often complicated sequence. *Take care & allow enough time!*
- Fill in contact details, university affiliation etc.
- NB. 'Corresponding author' is the one who will deal with the journal (doesn't have to be 1st author)
- Upload your files. You should have closely followed journal style guide e.g. how to set out the paper, length, references style etc. *Important to follow journal word limits or upload may not be accepted!*

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The screenshot shows a submission system interface with a progress bar at the top and a table of submission details below. The table has columns for 'ID', 'Title', 'Author', 'Date', 'Status', and 'Action'. The 'Status' column shows 'Submitted' for the first entry and 'In Progress' for the second. The 'Action' column contains 'View' and 'Cancel' buttons.

- Online system then builds a PDF of your paper (abstract, main text, figures, tables, references)
- Normally opportunity to check before final click to submit – *worth doing as I've found simple errors & could edit my paper before finally submitting*
- Click 'submit' . . .and then you wait!

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And then . . .

- Normally editors screen submissions (desk review). *Some journals reject over 50% at this stage.*
- If they see potential, paper sent to 2-3 international referees. *This means you have a chance!*
- If not: you get a '**Desk reject**', sometimes with feedback you can use, sometimes none. (*was it even the right journal?!*)
- If paper is refereed, in time you have a decision, typically 3 options: **Accepted** (usually with minor changes needed); **Revise & Resubmit**; or **Reject**.

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And then . . .

- Revise & Resubmit** is quite common. Don't be discouraged: they see the paper's potential!
- Read referees' comments carefully. *Are the revisions reasonable? Or unrealistic (e.g. new fieldwork/data collection or a new conceptual framework?)*
- Generally it is worth revising if it is do-able as more likely to get published than starting again with a different journal
- You have already got over several hurdles: good chance of success. *If you withdraw & take the paper to another journal, you start at the beginning again!*

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Referees & revisions

- Don't be discouraged by criticism. Try & see what has been pointed out. *Can the paper be re-worked?*
- If so, work through every comment. Make a list/table so each is addressed (or politely explain why it was not possible) in the covering letter/document
- Attention to detail: referees like to see you have addressed their comments carefully
- Resubmit & with luck the improved paper will be published
- If you get accepted: celebrate, you have done it!
- Just go for it & good luck!***

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Useful Resources

Chartered Association of Business Schools (CABS):

<https://charteredabs.org/topic/academic-journal-guide/>

Harzing Journal Quality Guide:

<https://harzing.com/resources/journal-quality-list>

SJR (Scimago Journal Ranking):

<https://www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php>

Using Scopus & SJR to find a Journal's Impact & Rank
(information from Massey University, New Zealand):

<https://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/research/library/library-services/research-services/publish/ranking-impact-scopus.cfm>

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