

A Very Pragmatic Approach to Publishing:

Lessons from My Soccer Paper

Kyosuke Kikuta Institute of Developing Economies, JETRO

1. Theory

2. Application to the Soccer Paper

3. Making of the Soccer Paper

4. Career

Theory

How Can We **Publish** an Article?

Deductive Logic

Premise

A paper is published if editors and reviewers accept it.

➔ **Everything** depends on editors and reviewers.

- Theory or Empirics?
- Quantitative or Qualitative?
- Causal or Descriptive?
- Internal or External validity?

For publication, we just need to impress editors and reviewers.
But with research ethics.

Implications

1. We must understand potential reviewers ($\hat{=}$ **readers**) and their interests.
Evaluations are inherently subjective.
2. We can safely ignore comments from other people.
e.g., Professors well-known in Japan but with no international publication.
3. Consider how people outside of our community will see our community.
Our academic community \neq Readers.
4. Literature review ($\hat{=}$ **framing**) is so important.
It's our sales points.
Just saying "there is no study" or "substantively important" is insufficient.
5. Randomness
Need to hedge the risk by having **multiple** projects.

So, it's all about...



A Simple Model

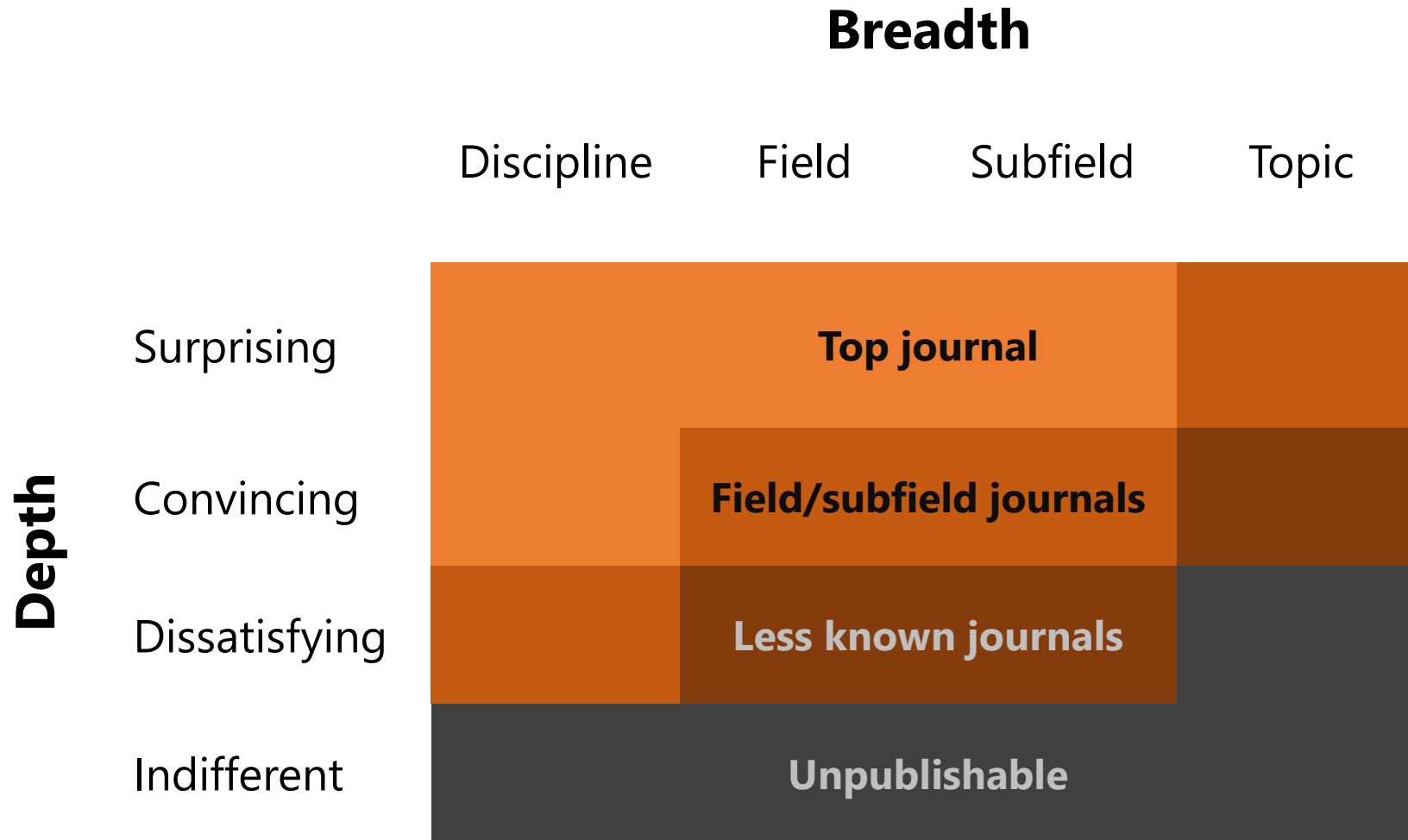
Breadth of Impact

1. Discipline or broader
political science, social sciences
2. Field
IR, CP, Methods
3. Subfield
conflict studies, IPE
4. Topic
resource curse, electoral violence

Depth of Impact

1. Surprising (beyond expectation)
"Aha, I did not think in that way!"
2. Convincing (about expectation)
"I think that's important and I'm convinced."
3. Dissatisfying (below expectation)
"I think that's important but I'm not convinced."
4. Indifferent (no expectation)
"I do not think that's important."

Hypothesis



Application to the Soccer Paper

Do Politically Irrelevant Events Cause Conflicts?

The Cross continental Effects of European Professional Football on Protests in Africa.

Do Politically Irrelevant Events Cause Conflict? The Cross-continental Effects of European Professional Football on Protests in Africa

Kyosuke Kikuta^{a*} and Mamoru Uesugi^b

Q1

^aInstitute of Developing Economies, Japan External Trade Organization, Tokyo

^bOsaka School of International Public Policy, Osaka University, Japan

*Corresponding author. Email: kyosuke.kkt@gmail.com

Abstract We examine whether politically irrelevant events can cause conflicts, by analyzing the effects of professional football games in Europe on protests in Africa—an unintended spillover across the continents. By expanding psychological theories, we argue that the outcomes of the football games in Europe can affect African people’s subjective evaluation of domestic politicians, which in turn can trigger protests. By exploiting as-if random variation in the results of 15,102 close football games conditional on betting odds, we find that compared to draw games, close losses of African players’ teams increase peaceful protests in their original countries while not changing the likelihood of riots or armed conflicts. The effect is particularly large for non-ethnic protests targeted at a central government. Close losses also temporarily decrease people’s trust in their country’s leader. By contrast, close victories do not have equivalent or compensating effects on protests or public opinion. These results suggest asymmetric misattribution: people in Africa unreasonably blame domestic politicians for bad luck in European football games, prompting protests; but they do not credit politicians with football victories.

Karl Marx said “Religion is the opiate of the masses.” He was wrong. It’s sports.
Bill Scharrer¹

In recent decades, professional football in Europe has emerged as the “second religion” in Africa. In the words of Musa in Nigeria, “European football has become part of my life, it is more than just a source of entertainment but it’s like my second religion.” Another Arsenal supporter, Jude, does not even deny the risk of escalating violence: “What often makes me angry in football centers [places to watch European football broadcasts] is the insult and unnecessary mockery. There are times people will tell you something that will annoy you just because their team beat yours. . . . This kind of negative words sincerely stir anger in one, and

1. Scharrer 2017.

International Organization, 2022, page 1 of 38

© The Author(s), 2022. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of The IO Foundation

doi:10.1017/S0020818322000261

Potential Readers

1. Editors

Impact: Surprising or Indifferent.

2. Conflict studies

Impact: Surprising.

3. American Politics

Impact: Surprising or Dissatisfying.

"Sink or Swim"

A risk of desk rejection

Reviewers from conflict studies → Top or field journals
Authors of soccer papers will especially like the paper.

Reviewers from American Politics

Camp A (Healy, Malhotra, Achen etc.) → Top journals

Camp B (Fowler, Montagnes) → Less known journals

Results

APSR (2021/5/11 – 2021/5/24)

Desk rejection (no comment at all).

Too many submissions? (2021/2/24, 2020/11/17, 2020/2/3)

AJPS (2021/5/25 – 2021/9/27)

R1: "strong candidate for publication."

R2: Mostly favorable (questions about the measurement of moods).

R3: "the results are ... false positive."

JoP (2021/12/8 – 2022/1/7)

Desk rejection: "the paper lacks ... innovation," "so what?"

IO (2022/1/8 – 2022/5/10)

R1: "consider this manuscript very strongly for publication."

R2: Mostly favorable (comments about empirics).

Behind the Scene

1. Conception (2020/04 – 2020/08)

Coauthored project with Kentaro Fukumoto.

The literature about **irrational attribution** (Healy et al. 2010 PNAS).

Bertoli (2017) "Nationalism and Conflict" ISQ.

The World Cup can cause war!

➔ European Professional Football & Intrastate conflicts.

Politically irrelevant events can cause domestic conflicts.

2. Analysis (2020/08 – 2020/12)

Initial Plan: Both **individual & team** performances.

Design: Deviant player performance, Close victories, Survey-date RD, DiD.

No idea about matching on **betting odds**.

Hypotheses without theory.

Data: WyScout → TransferMarkt

The coauthor (上杉衛). Web-scraping.

Results

Null results about individual performances.

Very consistent and clear results about team performances.

But the results were **asymmetric**. Why?

3. Reading (2020/12 – 2021/02)

Card & Dahl (2011) QJE.

Natural experiments with control for **betting odds**.

Sports economics and psychology.

Basking-in-reflected-glory and cutting-off-reflected-failure theses.

Success-failure bias.

➔ Asymmetric effects.

Sports anthropology

Viewing center.

Extensive reading (Index cards).

4. Writing (2021/02 – 2021/05)

Clear idea about the story.

Writing is like a **chess**.

I usually use a template structure and phrases.

Strategic interactions.

I realized that this paper embodied what I really wanted to do.

Crazy idea.

New “Aha!” insights in the theory.

Good design & simple method for observational studies.

5. Submission (2021/05 – 2022/05)

From the top to bottom.

International Organization.

The word "**cross-continental**" was added to the title.

I included Montagnes to the list of opposed reviewers.

6. R&R (2022/05/10 – 2022/05/26)

Editor

Writing. Only close games? DiD.

R1

National sports. Gender.

R2

Mobilization. Fixed effect. Placebo tests.

Response memo (10 page limit)

Kyosuke Kikuta

(kyosuke.kkt@gmail.com)

Fell free to send me a paper.
Happy to comment.