

# HOW QUALITATIVE RESEARCHERS COMPETE (OR SURVIVE) GLOBALLY

—OVERGENERALIZING FROM MY EXPERIENCES—

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# TOP IR (AND A BIT OF CP) JOURNALS THAT FREQUENTLY PUBLISH QUALITATIVE STUDIES

## Top Tier:

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*International Security, International Organization, Security Studies, World Politics, International Studies Quarterly, European Journal of International Relations, Journal of Strategic Studies*

## Semi-Top:

*ISA journals, APSA journals, International Theory, International Affairs*

## Good Journals with Asian Regional Focus:

*The Pacific Review, Journal of Northeast Asian Studies, Asian Security, International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*



# PRESENTER'S TOP TIER JOURNAL ARTICLES

- “*Explaining Japanese Antimilitarism: Normative and Realist Constraints on Japan’s Security Policy*,” *International Security* 2010 (3.5 years since 1<sup>st</sup> submission to IS)

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- “*To Coerce or Reward? Theorizing Wedge Strategies in Alliance Politics*,” *Security Studies* 2013 (One year since 1<sup>st</sup> submission to SS)
- “*Binding Strategies in Alliance Politics*,” *International Studies Quarterly* 2018 (R&R then rejected by *World Politics*, 2.5 years since 1<sup>st</sup> submission to ISQ)
- “*Network Connections and the Emergence of the Hub-and-Spokes Alliance System in East Asia*,” *International Security* 2020. (??? years since 1<sup>st</sup> submission to IS)

# PRESENTER'S **NON-TOP TIER** PUBLICATIONS

- *Unpublished Manuscript based on my dissertation*

*Submitted to IO, rejected by reviewers → never submitted elsewhere*

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- *“The Efficacy of Asymmetric Positive Sanctions: South Korea’s Nordpolitik,” Korea Observer 2006*

*Submitted to SS, rejected by reviewers → Invited for a good regional journal, submitted → **Rejected!** →*

*Submitted to KO, accepted without revisions*

- *“Security Dependence and Asymmetric Coercive Bargaining,” Asian Security 2007*

*Submitted to IS, rejected by reviewers → Submitted to XXXX → R&R, resubmitted*

*→ **Rejected (probably by a different reviewer)** → Submitted to AS → R&R, resubmitted → Accepted*

- *Unpublished Manuscript (Title Anonymous), around 2007*

*Submitted to SS → R&R offered → **Not resubmitted (yet)***

# CHRONOLOGY OF THE 2020 IS ARTICLE

- *Once upon a time...: The inception of the paper idea (around 2000)*
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- *Sometime in 2010: Visit to Taiwanese Diplomatic Archive → Some key findings*
  - *Sometime in 2012: Start writing a first draft*
  - *April 2013: Submitted to IS, received R&R in July 2013, with a special request by the editor*
  - *XXXXXX*
  - *XXXXXX*
  - *September 2018: Meeting the IS editor at APSA in Boston, my manuscript turned out to be alive.*
  - *March 2019: The editor finally returned his 15-page, single-spaced comments on my 2<sup>nd</sup> draft*
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# CHRONOLOGY OF THE 2020 IS ARTICLE—CONTINUED

- *September 2019: 3<sup>rd</sup> draft submitted*
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- *December 2019: The editor's comment returned, asking for further revision*
  - *March 2020: 4<sup>th</sup> draft submitted*
  - *June 2020: Conditional acceptance, with some more revisions required*
  - *July 2020: 5<sup>th</sup> draft submitted → Accepted soon afterwards*
  - *Late July to September 2020: Tortuous, several rounds of final editing*
  - *October 2020: Published*
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# TECHNICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Think of *a group of top-tier journals*, not just one (i.e., not just IS or IO)
  - Consider yourself lucky if your work gets published from **ANY** of them.

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  - Go for a 2<sup>nd</sup>-tier journal if it is rejected by top-tier journals. **Cross the finish line!**
- Keep your 1<sup>st</sup> draft somewhat shorter than the word limit.
- *Real challenges begin only when you get a R&R.*
- At the R&R stage, make sure *to address ALL the points raised by the reviewers.*
  - Even if you decide **NOT** to comply with their suggestions, explain why!
  - Write a note elaborating how you address their concerns and why you didn't do so.
- Show your respects for the previous literature.

# HOW TO DEVELOP A-CLASS ARTICLES

- *Ask an important question!*
  - *DON'T focus too much on “what nobody has ever done before.”*

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- *Take literature review seriously.*
- *Develop the good command of qualitative research design.*
  - *Not just hypothesis testing, but also **concept formation**, **hypothesis generating**, etc.*
  - *The quality of case studies matters! Choose good sources & use process tracing effectively.*
- *Think about which level of generalizability your research may be the most fruitful.*
  - *Whether or not going up or down the ladder of generalization? Typologize?*
- *NEVER treat historical materials merely as “data.”*
- *Think of your strength and take advantage of it. Ex. Language skills, interview opportunities*

# ONE LAST COMMENT.

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The most important may not be to come up with a great idea. Rather, it may be more important **to develop the great idea into a research design** with sufficiently clear visions of how to execute theoretical and empirical parts.

(事後のコメント) ここ**10**年の私の査読論文は、**2010**の**IS**論文の査読プロセスで鍛えられた経験がなければ、存在してなかったと思う。そして、**2010**年の**IS**の査読プロセスを乗り切れたのは、**non-top tier**ジャーナルで査読を生き残った経験があったためである。その意味では、トップジャーナル以外にでも論文を発表していくことが重要。

**THANK YOU!**

**COMMENTS & QUESTIONS?**

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