

# Getting Started with Publishing Your Master's Thesis [useful for research master's in the social sciences]

Sukriti Issar

Sciences Po, Paris  
June 2022

Congratulations, you have just finished and defended your master's thesis! Here are some ideas and encouragement to disseminate and valorize your research.

Most important – do not lose momentum. Start thinking of publishing and valorizing or dissemination immediately. While it is still fresh in the mind of your advisor and thesis defense committee (or jury), ask them if they have any advice or suggestions about the best parts to convert into a publication, if they have ideas about what journals you could target, or what argument from the thesis might be the most promising for a publication.

While it is still fresh in your own mind, Immediately after your thesis defense, spend a day drawing out say 8,000 words, the best 8000 words from the thesis. Don't spend too much time on this step. Put a time limit, a day is plenty of time to create a working file that you can then revise. And 8,000 words is a reasonable length in the social sciences for an academic article. A master's thesis often includes elements that are there to demonstrate that you understand methodological and theoretical issues. There might be parts of the thesis that are there to demonstrate your mastery over the material and are not needed for a journal article. So delete those parts that are 'good to know', or that are overly detailed say on definitions, methods etc., or keep them and whittle them down, revise and streamline. Taking out the 8,000 words will give you immediately a workable manuscript to revise.

**Short blog for your own website:** You could write a short blogpost about your thesis to link to the twitter run by your department, or to add to your LinkedIn and social media. Add

photographs or the key graphs and charts from your thesis. All thesis writers can aim to write a blogpost to disseminate findings, even if the data in the thesis is not ready yet for publication in an academic journal or if you have no interest in writing for an academic journal. For a blog post think of the main message and what would be interesting for people to know. Avoid jargon. Avoid too much theory or literature. Write it for a general audience.

### **Longer feature article**

For a longer feature article you can describe the context and background in more detail. Here you have more freedom to write something that could reach a large heterogeneous public including policy makers, practitioners and concerned citizens. The effort of translating into readable language will vary by field. In a technical science field there is a separate literature on public understanding of science and how to make technical ideas more accessible. The social sciences are usually a little easier for non-academics to understand, but here too you need to write in a simple and accessible manner communicating your main findings to a larger audience.

You could publish your longform content on your social media, blog, or in pre-existing working paper series, specialist magazines and so on.

### **Journal article in an academic or peer-reviewed journal**

- Spend some time thinking about whether a journal publication is necessary for your career path and whether it is a good fit for your thesis. Not every master's thesis has the format and scope to be converted into an academic journal article. And that is fine, that is to be expected as the aim of a master's thesis is to first and foremost demonstrate that you have gained the expertise needed to obtain your master's degree.
- Based on, 1) the scope of your thesis (amount of fieldwork, number and depth of interviews, datasets explored), 2) the audience that is likely to be most interested in your work, and 3) the type of journals that you think fit most your style and the scope of your research --- create a list of prospective journals and skim a few articles from these

journals so you can see whether your article could find a home there. Be realistic in the journals you aim for.

- The aim is to choose a journal in your field (or sub-field) that publishes articles that match the type and scope of data and nature of writing / argumentation that you have in your thesis. Empirical articles can be easier to place in a journal for younger scholars. Since your work is recent, its newness is an important aspect of why readers would be interested (and much of that newness resides in the evidence that you bring to bear).
- Once you have a workable manuscript you can send it to your advisors for advice, share it with your colleagues or writing buddies. Get feedback before submitting it to a journal. Having done the preliminary work of creating a manuscript out of your master's thesis, you will get much better feedback (in my opinion, feedback on a text is more useful than advice on something that you are yet to write!).
- There are various sources online that offer guidance and advice on academic publishing.
- Academic publishing can be slow so this process could take time as the article is peer reviewed. When you receive reviews, discuss with a colleague or advisor who has experience with academic publishing and can help you navigate the review process.

Good luck!

