# Psychology publishing in Portugal: hardships and disappointment follows expectations

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## Abstract

Recently, to *publish or to perish* has become a motto governing most of researchers work. In Portugal, what makes the whole process so prone to hardships and disappointments is the lack of resources, mainly financial. At least, that's what most of the interviewees – researchers working mostly at some of the major Portuguese public universities – mentioned. Such a lack of resources is cross-sectional to all aspects under analysis: accessibility, costs, reviewing, time delay, language, impact and reputation. However, some additional specificities must be pointed out, namely those deriving from a lack of organization (*e.g.*, absence of national databases) or from the need to, most of the time, publish in a non-native language due to impact and reputation issues, with all the reviewing and time delay question specifically deriving from it. Finally, participants' expectation and/or suggestions concerning an Open Access European Psychology Publication Platform will be outlined.

Key words: psychology; scientific communication; open access; funding; language; time delay; reputation; databases; Portugal

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## Introduction

By itself, the paper's title says it all. Not only can it be seen as a summary of what the (large) majority of the researchers consulted expressed feeling about the whole process (especially, in what concerns trying to publish internationally) but also ends up being a fairly accurate description of the way in which the current work progressed. In essence, most of the reasons for why it happened in such a manner apply to both situations. However, none of this helps to explain and/or understand why in Portugal, trying to or publishing in Psychology can be metaphorically characterized as "*hardships and disappointments follows expectations*". In order to do so, the following course of action will be adopted:

- first, will be presented a brief outline of the reasons underlying my willingness to take part in this initiative, using the online survey and its results as its starting point,
- then, the method of data gathering will be specified and the main reasons for such a choice presented,
- afterwards, the main conclusions concerning the topics under discussion will be discussed, and
- finally, some expectations concerning the present meeting will be summarized.

## What motivated me to be involved?

When I first received the online survey, I was about to finish my PhD. Everyone, starting with my supervisor, began to, more and more, persistently mention the need for me to publish and to start investing in this part of my vita. Obviously, this wasn't new to me. For a long time, I was acquainted with the (famous) sentence "*to publish or to perish*", something one of my interviewees characterized as "perversion" of the publishing system, due to the (vast) pressures it allows on all those involved, particularly authors. However, I could not avoid noticing that, as I moved along in my researching practice, such a pressure, at least among Portuguese academia, began to be more and more discernible and omnipresent. At the same time, most of the survey's questions reflected what I and my colleagues (junior/senior faculty staff and fellow PhD students, as well as other researchers) usually talked about whenever publishing was the subject under discussion:

- What is best, to publish in our own native language or in a foreign language? (Obviously, for this one, the immediate answer tends to be "*English!!!*"),
- Why should English written articles be more valued than articles published in other languages (amid which Portuguese, either from Portugal or from Brazil) regardless of the quality of the journal and of the difficulty experienced by researchers of a specific field to publish in it?
- How should we structure an article if we want it to have even a remote chance to be approved by an international prestigious journal?
- What are the major obstacles Portuguese researchers usually face when trying to publish?
- Why does it tend to be more difficult for us to know from what we read in journals what our own colleagues (*i.e.*, those that work in the same country that we do and, at times, that are members of the same faculty staff even if of different departments) are or have been doing than what some foreign researcher or team, chiefly those coming from Anglophone backgrounds?

Thus, when I looked at the survey results, it was easily understandable why a majority of the people answering to it, presumably psychologists involved in research, revealed the preference to read international journals in order to stay informed (instead of local journals), and, at the same time, wished to have more information available in their own local language (*i.e.*, concerning their own cultural and local contexts). Nevertheless, they cannot stop being aware of the (enormous) pressure to publish, especially, in journals with significant impact factors (usually renowned international journals written in the English language). Again, because in Europe only a small percentage of researchers have English as its native language, besides all the requirements journals impose on submitting authors, for all those that are non-English speaking natives, it is easy to guess that some additional problems, most likely, come up. As such, the enthusiasm and the willingness to cooperate shown by many of those answering to the online survey also came as no surprise. However, this was not what I've been asked to do, so…

## Method

Based on the preliminary research I've done, I found no references that could lead me to an outline, much less to a systematic study, of the past or current situation of the generality of the issues ascribed for discussion, concerning the psychology publishing status in Portugal. Besides my many informal talks with colleagues (as I already mentioned), I also did some research on the Internet on the subject. I was only able to find one or two opinion articles from the same number of scholars. Nothing else came up. Meanwhile, I began interviewing senior faculty members, both from the university where I do research and from other Portuguese universities. As a rule, those contacted had had some sort of publishing experience on "both sides of the barrier" – either as submitting authors or as people with editorial responsibilities. I interviewed them either in person or by email/telephone – busy schedules and physical distance not always allowed a face-to-face interview. Some, besides talking to me, gave me some material they had written, not necessarily on this subject, but on a (closely) related topic of interest. On the whole, thirteen people agreed to cooperate with this endeavor. All those interviewed (formally and informally) came from different areas of research within psychology, both fundamental and, mostly, applied areas (namely, counseling and/or clinical, social, political/community, work, education and training).

At this point, it is important to say that, although I focused primarily on the four major public Portuguese universities (Porto, Coimbra, Lisboa and Braga) I also approached scholars working in other settings (*e.g.*, University of Évora). Such an option had to do with the fact that the four major public Portuguese universities tend to be amid the eldest and most well established teaching and research Psychology faculties in Portugal. Here, it must be mentioned that recently, the number of teaching institutions with Psychology courses and departments specifically devoted to the teaching and reaching in this domain, in Portugal, has been growing immensely. The same thing happened with the number of Psychology journals being published (Machado, Lourenço, Pinheiro & Silva, 2004). Yet, it is not that simple to know exactly how many journals (actually) exist *expressly* in the field of Psychology, since not all have been publishing continuously over the years and many journals in other related areas of knowledge (*e.g.*, education) tend to publish a significant number of Psychology articles. A good example is the *Revista Portuguesa de Pedagogia* [Portuguese Journal of Pedagogy]. In an article that, among other things, aimed to characterize the research domains of the articles being published

in this journal, since its foundation in 1960, the authors concluded that 44.1 percent of the total articles published were in the domain of Psychology, even without considering Educational Psychology that accounted for 18.3 percent of the pieces analyzed (Alferes, Barreira, Bidarra, Boavida, Costa, Ferreira, Ferreira, Festas & Gaspar, 1996). The number is even higher from 1976 until 1995. Psychology, in its diverse specializations and/or domains (except, once again, Educational Psychology) accounts for over 50 percent of the total contents being published by this journal.

Concerning the interview script, basically, it followed all the suggested topics of discussion. In particular, participants were asked to express their views on issues such as the following:

– accessibility (fee based subscription vs. open access, print vs. online, re-distribution, re-usage);
– cost (subscription rates, author fees, cost of publishing);
– reviewing (submission process, quality of refereeing, rejection rates);
– time delay (submission to publication, publication to reception);
– language;
– impact (usage, citation);
– reputation (scientific career progression).

Besides the before mentioned issues, interviewees were also encouraged, not only to share their expectations regarding the possibility of an Open Access European Psychology Publication Platform but also to add any other theme they considered relevant for the subject under discussion.

Needless to say, that most informal talks with my direct colleagues (junior faculty staff, PhD students and other researchers with or without scholarships) were also extremely useful. Through our talks I was able to accede not only to their personal opinions on the subject but also to the ideas and experiences other friends and/or colleagues, working in psychological research, had gone through. The same thing applies with faculty's senior staff. Even though they based what they told me mostly on their own personal publishing experiences, they were also aware of what happened with colleagues, both from the same department or faculty and from similar areas of research, working in other institutions besides their own. Needless to say that, as soon as I began to be involved in this project, whenever we discussed this issue, I tried to direct our conversations to the topics that interested me the most, considering the task I had at hand. The results follow:

## Systematization of main conclusions

As the main conclusion of all participants' responses appeared the lack of resources. Based on what they said, it's this lack of resources that helps to understand why it is such a hard process and so prone to disappointments. First, and above all, appears a lack of financial resources, then, a relative lack of specialized human resources (in most cases, directly linked to the previous). In fact, when looking at the edition, production and distribution process, such a call for resources helps to better understand some of the basic problems named by most interviewees. A good example concerns the editing process, in particular, if bearing in mind that the availability of financial resources that supports the presence of qualified human resources at all administra-

tive levels (*e.g.*, secretarial, accounting) makes the system work. Such professionals tend to be the ones in charge of, among other things, the functioning of the reviewing process (*e.g.*, sending the manuscripts to reviewers and making sure they answer on agreed deadlines), of answering to authors, keeping track of articles flow, and, obviously, of budgets. When they are scarce or do not exist, everything becomes a whole lot more complicated. Up to a certain point, this might also help to understand why it is so hard to know what our national colleagues have been doing and/or are publishing locally (*i.e.*, within the framework of national journals). Another good example has to do with the fact that, nowadays, more and more journals, in order to be able to keep on running, require authors to pay for the electronic publication of articles (*i.e.*, rely on authors fees), often in a reduced English version of their original texts – so, the problem is, once more, if there's no money, how can one do it?

Let me be more precise. In order to do so, I'll start by addressing each and every one of the suggested topics of discussion. For each topic, I'll present the main ideas more or less unanimously focused. by participants inquired. Whenever it applies, I'll also show one or other point of view less convergent with the majority of the scholars heard. At this point, and after looking at the whole material collected, one additional thought comes to mind: most likely, this was a biased sample. It is clear, based on my experience as the interviewer, but also on the kinds of answers I got (their quality, depth, insightfulness and the seriousness of the reflections of those that agreed to cooperate) that this is an issue they've been dwelling on for some time – almost for sure, for much longer than myself. On the other hand, crossing such perspectives with many of my informal talks with my junior faculty colleagues and other junior researchers (both from my university and from other institutions, public or private), I came to the conclusion that it is possible that, nowadays, Psychological research and, naturally, publishing, in Portugal, is coming to some sort of a crossroads. New challenges have come up and scholars are trying to figure out (sustainable) ways for the future in the more and more competitive realm of scientific research. Publishing is, definitively, one of the most important issues on the agenda! So, let's take a look at what they have to say:

*(i) accessibility*

Spontaneously, several aspects were covered by interviewees within the framework of accessibility:
– accessibility to national versus foreign and/or international journals,
– accessibility to print versus online journals,
– accessibility to foreign and/or international journals on non-English language (namely due to fee based subscription issues)
– re-distribution, re-usage.

Given their interconnections, such topics won't be covered individually. Rather, they'll be integrated whenever data gathered allow for a cross-sectional approach.

On the whole, interviewees were rather unanimous that it tends to be rather too easy to accede to foreign or international journals when it comes to online means, particularly those written in English – the ones most easily accessible from databases subscribed by most faculties' libraries. Yet, for those journals written in other languages besides English (*e.g.*, French, Italian) the

picture is a bit diverse. Because most Portuguese faculties are going through a tough period financially, at times, some options must be made. So, when it comes to subscribing a mainstream journal used by a large number of scholars, researchers and students (usually accessible from fee based subscribed databases or major psychology publishers), those that do not fall into that category end up in a less favorable position – as one of the interviewees stated, as publications became mostly online, "everything became more problematic" since also costs are "more problematic". Concerning Portuguese journals, something similar happens to this kind of less mainstream publications. Why? Because many national journals still are done in print, something an interviewee (not specifically speaking about the Portuguese context) considers, no longer, to "makes no sense", given that the "online is the future; paper is destined to disappear". In essence, it is also the fact that they are in print which tends to determine the low rates of re-distribution and re-usage of national journals. As someone said, such rates tend to be "practically null" since distribution is based mostly on a permutation process with other (public) higher education institutions.

More precisely, access to Portuguese journals tends to be *good* or *very good* when it's done the "traditional way" (*i.e.*, on print or by email). For online versions, there's a clear deficit even though there are several rather good generalist peer reviewed journals (nearly half a dozen) – mostly on print versions – and a few more covering more specific areas of research (*e.g.*, work psychology), either on print or on online formats. Such a deficit is only aggravated by the fact that there are no organized systems of information concerning what has been and is being published, where, by whom, and when. In other words, there are no national data bases allowing, even, the consultation of journals' table of contents (from the most recent volumes to older editions). Largely, this is why it can be so difficult for Portuguese researchers to know what their fellow country researchers are doing. A hardship that, when taking into account what has just been said, is only intensified by the previously mentioned fact that in some specific areas (*e.g.*, learning, career guidance, employment, education and/or training, social representations) – but not only – researchers tend to also publish a lot in (renowned) national journals, specific to other research fields outside Psychology (*e.g.*, Education, Social Analysis) that tend to accommodate and/or devote specific sections to the dissemination of psychological research.

Nonetheless, articles like the one written by Machado *et al.* (2004) give us a few precious hints about some of the main features of Portuguese Psychology journals, some of them important for the present debate. Based on their review[i], they concluded that Portuguese Psychology journals operate, mostly, in "an extraordinarily closed circuit" (p. 6), the vast majority of articles published are mainly authored by Portuguese researchers from the institution responsible for publishing the journal. Foreign authors come from either Europe or the American continent. In both cases, Spanish (from Spain) or Portuguese (from Brazil) speaking authors prevail. Afterwards, appear Anglophone authors, either from the UK or the US. When it comes to their content, Machado *et al.* (2004) observed that most articles being published focus on applied areas of Psychology, namely those concerning Clinical or Educational Psychology – on the whole, these two subjects cover from 48 to 78 percent of all articles being published. When it comes to the field of fundamental research, authors state that, even they have organized it in a single category, it never goes beyond 30 percent. Something that is also mirrored by the content of journals' thematic numbers, which, should be mentioned, represent a "significant fraction" (p.8) of the totality of the volumes published by each of the three publications under revision. Moreover, only about five percent of the studies analyzed relied on an experimental method. The most abundant type of articles they found concerned literature reviews or theoretical analyses, followed by quan-

titative studies relying scales, tests and inventories. At last, and despite the large number of publications within and around the Psychological area, according to the same source, there seems to be no real differentiation between journals. Specifically, based on their knowledge of the field, authors point out the absence of specialized journals according to specific areas (*e.g.*, learning, cognition, and development) or methods of research. The same thing applies to theoretical approaches – Portuguese Psychology journals tend to be "eclectic" (p. 13). As they conclude: "In one word, little or nothing seems to set apart Portuguese Psychology journals" (p. 13).

*(ii) costs*

When it comes to costs, two dimensions of the problem tend to be underlined:
–   costs attached to accessibility to publications,
–   costs attached to the process of publishing.

For the first of the two mentioned topics interviewees were, again, quite unanimous in considering that, when it comes to already published articles, costs can be considered as being "rather reasonable"[ii]. Some even make a point to stress that some (national) journals have open online access – here it is important to point out that those doing it are usually the ones linked to such journals. Nonetheless, the scenario described is almost the exact opposite when it comes to the publishing process. As it was initially referred, the lack of funds ends up determining everything else, acting as a major restraint: ""there's no money, there are no supports, there's no organization structure". A good example of such structural constraints concerns the inexistence of what one might call a *commercial circuit* for the distribution of journals, given the reduced number of volumes potentially available for distribution at each edition – as the same participant noted: "there's no interest on behalf of those responsible for the distribution process".

Because of this, some Portuguese Psychology journals are starting to think about their future, namely, are equating the possibility of becoming online journals – however, by itself, this won't solve the problem, since, at least initially, a major investment (not only of money but also of time and, in most cases, of not necessarily existent human resources) must be made. To think about such a step means that, up till now, a number of journals have been able to survive and publish their volumes on a regular basis (typically, one or two per year). How do they manage it? Well, basically the one's doing it all are department members or, at least, most of the work involved in the whole process of editing, producing and distributing. Whenever it is possible, they try to reduce as much as possible such costs, so they can, for instance, have some more money available for translation or editorial reviewing –things that make costs escalate. Most of the money being used comes from self-assessment funds, projects and other funds researchers try to raise by their own initiative. Even so, often, "money is not enough" for the flow of articles waiting to be submitted. No wonder, then, most of them considered authors fees as "unacceptable! It's an exploitation! There must be alternative mechanisms of funding!"

*(iii) reviewing and time delay*

Unanimously, interviewees considered that, regardless of their more or less mainstream field of study, Portuguese researchers don't run in the same exact circumstances as many of their foreigner counterparts. Being a bit more specific, it is possible to say that, even though not all talk about it with the same openness or vehemence, it's clearly understandable that the prevailing opinion is that research coming from the South of Europe, Portugal in particular, tends to be de-valued, since studies being conducted there aren't always considered to have an universal value – contrary to what happens with other kinds of national or regional samples. If nothing else, by itself, such a fact clearly contributes to the likelihood of having an article rejected or accepted, but in the international or ethnic section of some (international) journals – most chose not to compromise themselves on numbers concerning acceptance or rejection rates, and no further inquiries were made beyond what was mentioned in the script they had had access to. Nonetheless, often some mentioned rejection rates "are bollocks". Usually, there's always a paragraph that opens a window allowing the author to re-submit the article – making it a continuation of the initial process of submission and not a resubmission, because, the first time, "the article wasn't 100 percent rejected".

When exploring such an issue, most interviewees made it most clear that they wanted to use this opportunity as a means to express their views on two other related subjects regarding the submission process that, from their perspective, also add, while working in Portugal, to complexities of having an article accepted:

– first of all, the language: since they are required to write in a language that is not their native one (commonly English), this is usually an issued raised by most reviewers. Often articles are rejected adding on the argument of the "lack of elegance" of the written English or the necessity of appealing to a "native speaker". Something (a poorly written text) that some editors overtly admit being a pre-exclusion criteria of an article, regardless of the quality of its scientific content;
– secondly, the need to adhere in a somewhat strict way to certain style norms or guidelines that end up conditioning the whole creative process of scientific writing. Nevertheless, it is important to say that not all share this point of view or consider it even to be a relevant issue to be discussed. Such differences occur not only amongst those that tend to publish preferably in other languages besides English (mainly French) but also within those aligned with what might be called the mainstream journals, largely represented in online databases and controlled by major publishing companies[iii].

Those who subscribe such a standpoint argue that, within Europe, it is possible to find different cultural and ideological traditions mirrored in also diverse scientific traditions – thus, distinct ways of reasoning and of doing research. Frequently, Portuguese researchers, above all those aiming to publish in Anglophone journals, resent such a difference. Again, positions vary. There are those that acknowledge the need to learn in order to best adjust themselves to the "rules of the game", because it's all "very political", "there's a circuit with very specific rules we must learn" – for instance, some institutions already provide scientific writing courses to their students –, while others simply refuse to even consider such a possibility. Such a viewpoint is particularly evident amongst scholars more aligned with the Francophone scientific tradition. On the other hand, especially those relying on qualitative

methods of research on their work, talk about the prevalence of quantitative methodologies on editors choices. As one of the interviewees puts it: "editors were trained, above all, in quantitative methods. That's what they know to do and that's what they sustain". Needless to say that when a researcher publishes by invitation no such obstacles come up. Something similar happens when the co-author is a (national) scholar already well-known within the (international) publishing circuits.

Looking at other dimensions of the reviewing process, namely those relating to the quality of refereeing, and, afterwards, the time delay from submission to publication and from publication to reception, their main ideas can be summarized as follows: they all tend to agree that there is a lot of variability, when it comes both to the quality of refereeing and to the time delays of the whole process – here, they tend to focus specially on time delays from submission to publication, seeming to be less concerned with the time delays occurring from publication to reception. To be exact, interviewees talk about some reviews qualified as "constructive" and "well supported", revealing that peer review process was thoughtful and carefully done – they made an issue to stress that this happens regardless of the positive or negative character of the decision. When it happens, the general opinion, is that the final version of the article, forcibly, "is always better than the original". Still, this is not always the case… One of the explanations advanced had to do with the fact that usually independent reviewers tend to be other (national or foreign) scholars already with their "hands full", and to whom might not always be easy to balance the multiplicity of roles and responsibilities they end up being simultaneously committed to. This applies even to those institutions that already rely on the services of internal reviewers – as it was mentioned by one of the interviewees, technicians already "have their hands full" – an excuse commonly used by journal editors.

At the same time, it might be another side effect of the "*to publish or to perish*" motto. Such a pressure, most likely, gives rise to an increase of the flow of articles being submitted, which, taking into account what has just been described, makes it easily understandable how, on their whole, these issues might have impact on time delays. Even so, once more, experiences tend to be quite varied, not only when it comes to national journals but also regarding international ones. Based on their reports, the following timelines are possible to define: while the average waiting time for the publication of an already accepted article in an international journal varies from 3 to 12 months, in Portugal, such a period tends to extend up till two years. Yet, there are reports of the exact opposite. Given the previously mentioned hardships underlying the submission process, which, naturally, make it rather long due to all the back-and-forth movements of the paper, some authors mentioned a time delay of almost two years from submission to publication in some foreign journals. At the same time, a few Portuguese journals make an issue to comply with the following timelines: one year from submission to publication, six months from publication to reception. Ideally, interviewees tend to consider that the whole process should not take longer than these stipulated deadlines, yet, that does not stop them from considering it "too long, nonetheless".

Another issue raised by some of the interviewees with reviewing responsibilities had to do, precisely, with the reviewer status, described as "an ungrateful task". As all those involved in the reviewing process know, to be a reviewer, when done seriously, is a demanding task, not easily visible or acknowledgeable. Why? As the same participant states, currently, there's no mechanism in place allowing "to verify the quantity or the quality of the reviewing" being done by each person. Possibly, if such a procedure could be devised, not

only higher quality demands could be made but also faster reviewing processes could be implemented. Simultaneously, it could also be a means of, up to some extent, counterbalance a few of the pernicious effects of the impact factor over both the quality of the scientific production and the quality of researchers' lives. As the participant points out, as it has been used, the impact factor serves mainly as a control measure conditioning all those involved in making science. If, on the one hand, it might be a "very comfortable solution for managers", on the other, it does not necessarily reflect expertise or innovation. As the interviewee argues, the impact of fundamental authors in Psychology like Freud, Piaget, Maslow, Skinner or Bruner cannot be assessed merely by their usage or citation. It goes deeper and is wider. Quoting the scholar: the impact factor "expresses what it expresses; it is not necessarily a synonym of good ideas", of ideas capable of "enrich and bring about some profound added value to scientific production".

### (iv) language, impact and reputation

Since participants' answers on these topics were so closely intertwined the option was to, once more, jointly present their main conclusions. Necessarily, many of the issues already discussed must be taken into consideration when thinking about language and impact factor specific issues, namely, those concerning the higher likelihood of having an article rejected based on the (in)ability to (proficiently) use the idiom. Yet again – and I'd dare say, not surprisingly –, interviewees were pretty unanimous on their ideas on the subject. Based on what was previously discussed, it is easily understandable that, on the whole, participants tend to subscribe the notion that there is an over-appreciation of English written publications (particularly, American), and, maybe, at times, Spanish, and a clear devaluation of all that is written in Portuguese or any other foreign language for that matter. Such a viewpoint is grounded in very practical circumstances relating to the two other aspects focused – impact and reputation. More precisely, criteria used for the assessment of research units or departments rely largely on members' publication performance, being scholars' scientific career progression, to a large extent, also determined by one's productivity and, above all, impact (*i.e.*, usage and citation) – a feature, given all that has been said, that places Portuguese researchers in a not so favorable position (at least, internationally).

Nevertheless, this is not the only reason why many of the interviewees (once more, some more openly than others) question such criteria – the preference given to articles published in Anglophone journals, preferably, those with high impact factors. They present some compelling arguments in order to support their point of view. Here are some of the most salient examples they give. A striking illustration of one such case has to do with the work being done by the members of a research team, with its headquarters in Portugal, that have devoted a lot of their time and energy to the creation of a journal that is one of a kind in its field – work psychology. Prior to the existence of this open access, online, peer reviewed journal, no other publication in Portuguese or Spanish languages was available on the subject. Nevertheless, external evaluators tend to disregard such an accomplishment simply because articles they publish are not written in English. At the same time, they seem to be totally oblivious of the fact that, when written in these two languages, a journal under such format has as it potential target market not only the Iberian Peninsula but also the whole of the Latin America (not to mention everyone else in the world that can and knows how to

read any of these two languages, which are – *both* – amongst the five most spoken languages in the world). Moreover, while going through the indexation process, the members of the editorial board were confronted with the fact that, because they didn't publish in English, articles such as those referring to case studies or surveys would not be selected (and, especially, case studies are some of the pieces they publish the most).

Another good example of the paradoxes of the system has to do with the fact that, because non-English written articles rank lower (if at all, regardless of their quality or the quality and/or difficulty in being accepted for publication in a certain journal) in terms of their impact, often, researchers prefer to publish adaptations to national samples of foreign assessment instruments in international journals than doing it locally. That's probably why they all tend to agree with the need to "dignify other languages" clearly, all European native languages, being, without a doubt, Portuguese one of them, and, to some extent, make a stand "against an excess of Americanism". As another interviewee said, "if, for instance, for Americans is highly valued to publish in American journals, why shouldn't the same happen with national journals?" One thing, though, must be said: it is not because of all the hardships that Portuguese do not have what might be seen as rather reasonable performances. For example, in 2007, a department of one of the inquired universities, within the field of Psychology of Education (with 8 PhD's), had a 1.5 ISIS ratio and 3.5 international articles published – a ratio that applies to the whole department.

## Expectations, suggestions…

Open Access Psychology Platform – some ideas:
–  it should be easy to accede and open to all areas of psychology, and must have quality as its first and most vital feature: "To be demanding is crucial to its real success. If quality is assured, impact will be high, even because it will be open access"; in fact, some even go a bit further and consider that such a platform could operate a some sort of "filter over production quality", namely making it as rich and diversified as possible in terms of thematic areas, methods of research and epistemologies;
–  it should be organized by themes and not by regions and/or countries; however, maybe within each theme could be space for national/regional sections (*e.g.*, open to the publication of case studies, instruments adaptations and other similar subjects in authors native languages),
–  it should not neglect the general public, and, above all, practitioners, making sure there is room for articles focusing on intervention or practice issues (both in native languages and, perhaps, in another one of the most spoken European languages – possibly abstracts in all of three most spoken European languages and the countries/region native language),
–  it should consider the possibility of issuing a number devoted to an "Annual Review", covering all areas published, possibly following the same thematic logic used for the regular editions, and, even, presenting a selection of articles that might be considered as the "best of"; by doing this, it would allow scholars (and, eventually, practitioners) from all fields of Psychology to keep up to date with what is being done by colleagues in other areas of research/practice – since, on a daily basis, there's usually no time –, and not lose track of what is going on in Psychology, as a subject, on the whole;

- it should consider other kind of indexes besides simply the impact factor, maybe:
  (i) a consultation index, that could serve as an index of the article's social impact (there are articles/journals that interest mostly practitioners and policy makers) – by doing this, other audiences besides the scientific community would be targeted and researchers would find a renewed motivation to devote (much) more time and energy to communicating with others besides their peers, as well to disseminate their work beyond academia "walls" (dissemination is usually one of the most salient criteria for the assessment of a project within the framework of European Union funds),
  (ii) an innovation index, designed to recognized what one of the interviewees described as "good ideas" or ideas capable of really contributing or moving forward the scientific process; at the same time, such an index, due to its specificity, could also be used as a means of making more visible reviewers work, because the quality and the rigor of the revision would, inevitably, be a vital requirement of the process leading to the identification and acknowledgement by the scientific community of such "good ideas";
- it should rely on computer system (already available and being used) that allows for authors to receive almost immediate answers to their questions and, thus to keep track or monitor their articles progression; in other words, such a system makes it possible for authors to, always, know how and where their article stands in the submission to publication and publication to reception process;
- if a single publication language must be chosen, interviewees (more or less reluctantly) agree that it should be English; however, due to all difficulties experienced by non-native speakers while trying to publish in that language, there are those that argue the need for making more flexible, in order to accommodate a larger diversity of ways of expressing or using the language – obviously, as long as its grammar is not compromised; alternatively, a more intense effort directed to the financing of scientific translation should also be considered – something that, up till now, at least in Portugal, has not yet happened.

One final topic should be mentioned: the freedom offered by internet to all those willing to search the web and/or use its resources, namely, as a means of divulging one's work. Needless to say that there are several open access resources available to all those interested in going beyond what fee-based subscription databases have to offer. As one of the interviewees mentioned, often, on such open access resources one can find articles that are "more interesting" and/or "up-dated" than those being offered by specialized databases. As the same scholar adds, there has been a trend pointing to the gradual "emptying of production's quality". On the other hand, by itself, the web offers potential authors a powerful means for divulging their work, almost (if not, entirely) free of cost. As another interviewee mentioned, "the existence of means of communication and divulgation at almost zero cost, might make a revolution, as long as we want to". It's no longer necessary for the publishing process to be centered on "half a dozen people" who control it from top to bottom. However, as the same person recognizes, there "long traditions" that gave rise to "inertias that tend to reproduce themselves" and, in the meanwhile, due to all the pressures researchers feel in order to publish, act as a "predatory system over authors". Why? Well, as this researcher states "authorship seems to be something very badly treated. It's opportunistically reaped from authors, because they have to publish, and a number of rights and benefits and so on are lost…" Ob-

viously, things aren't that simple to change and complex problems, such as the one under discussion, require thoughtful solutions – something that is beyond the aspirations of the present paper. However, one thing is for sure, as long an initiative (like the present one, it seems) contributes to the advancement of science, most of my interviewees and, naturally, myself, would say, as another one of the scholars that talked with me did: "To me, everything that means expanding science (Psychology or not), I think it's excellent!" Hopefully, this will be the case...

## References

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[i] The authors reviewed the articles published between 1996 and 2003 in three major Portuguese Psychology journals (*Psicologia: Teoria, investigação e prática*, *Psychologica* and *Análise Psicológica*), each attached to a different higher education institution (respectively, the Universidade do Minho, the Universidade de Coimbra and the Instituto de Psicologia Aplicada in Lisboa), located in also diverse regions of the country. Both the Universidade do Minho and the Universidade de Coimbra are public institutions while the Instituto de Psicologia Aplicada is private. The latest is also the oldest higher education institution in Portugal teaching and doing research in Psychology, its journal, also being the oldest of the three. The one published by the Universidade do Minho is the most recent one of the three.

[ii] Here it is important to mention that all interviewees are linked to higher education institutions, which, as a rule, subscribe a number of databases and print journals for and through their libraries. Possibly if participants were people without free access to such benefits, their assessment of the situation might be different. As one of the interviewees commented, "there are two very distinct situations: one is the person being the subscriber, the other is when the subscriber is the institution".

[iii] However, as many also acknowledge, amongst Anglophone journals there are also substantial differences, mostly deriving from their British or American origin. As some have commented, American journals are more strict in the compliance of their guidelines, particularly, those concerning article's structure and language. On the other hand, European journals tend to focus more on the quality of arguments, thus, being more flexible when it comes to language rules.