



Is my publication peer reviewed?

**A comparison of top-down and bottom-up identification of peer review
in the framework of the Finnish and Flemish performance-based
research funding systems**

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PRESENTATION

1. **BACKGROUND & AIMS**
2. DATA & RESULTS
3. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION



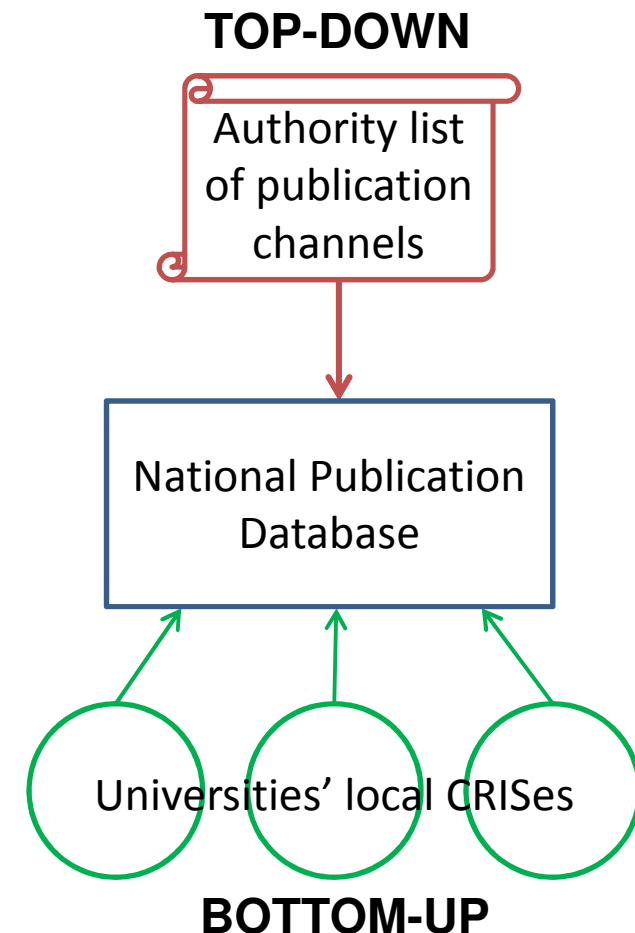
INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF PEER-REVIEW

- In performance-based research funding systems (PRFSs) evidence of peer review is typically considered a minimum requirement of included publications.
- Originating from the sciences, pre-publication peer review has become a widely accepted standard in publishing of new results, also in the social sciences and humanities (SSH).
- The notion of peer review remains challenging because of the variety of practices – from the editorial to the double-blind – across SSH fields, and because of the differences in journal and book publishing.
- Consequently, it is not always crystal clear whether a publication channel applies peer review, or whether a specific article, chapter or book has gone through pre-publication peer review.



PEER-REVIEW IN PRFS FRAMEWORK

- In Flanders and Finland, field-specific panels of experts are responsible for producing an authority list of peer-reviewed publication channels, to which we refer in this paper as top-down identification of peer review.
- PRFS takes into account only peer-reviewed publications in the approved outlets
- In the Finnish system, researchers indicate at the time of registration of a publication in the local current research information system (CRIS) whether they consider their publications to have been peer-reviewed prior to publication or not, which we refer to as bottom-up identification of peer review.





GREY ZONES OF PEER-REVIEW

- In this contribution we analyse the occurrence of lack of clarity concerning peer review status in SSH:
 1. Comparison of classifications of journals/series as applying peer review or not applying peer review by expert-panels responsible for the authority lists in Finland and Flanders.
 2. Comparison of top-down identification of peer review on basis of the authority list of peer-reviewed publication channels versus bottom-up reporting of peer review by authors versus (Finland only)
 3. Occurrence of co-publications one university has reported as peer-reviewed and another university as not peer-reviewed article or book (Finland only)
- In each case, we use the term “the grey zone of peer review” to refer to publication activity, the peer-reviewed status of which is unclear.



BACKGROUND

- We expect ambiguous peer review status to occur more in humanities disciplines than in social sciences, and more in books than journals.
- It is more common for humanities researchers to communicate by means of the same publication channels within and beyond academia.
 - Verleysen, F. T. & Engels, T. C. E. (2014). Internationalization of peer reviewed and non-peer reviewed book publications in the Social Sciences and Humanities. *Scientometrics* 101: 1431–1444.
- Journals in the SSH can also be positioned on a continuum of being more social sciences-like versus more humanities-like. Humanities journals are characterized by less frequent use of double-blind review and larger share of non-original research publications.
 - Mañana-Rodríguez, J. & Giménez-Toledo, E. (2013). Scholarly publishing in social sciences and humanities, associated probabilities of belonging and its spectrum: a quantitative approach for the Spanish case. *Scientometrics* 94: 893-910.



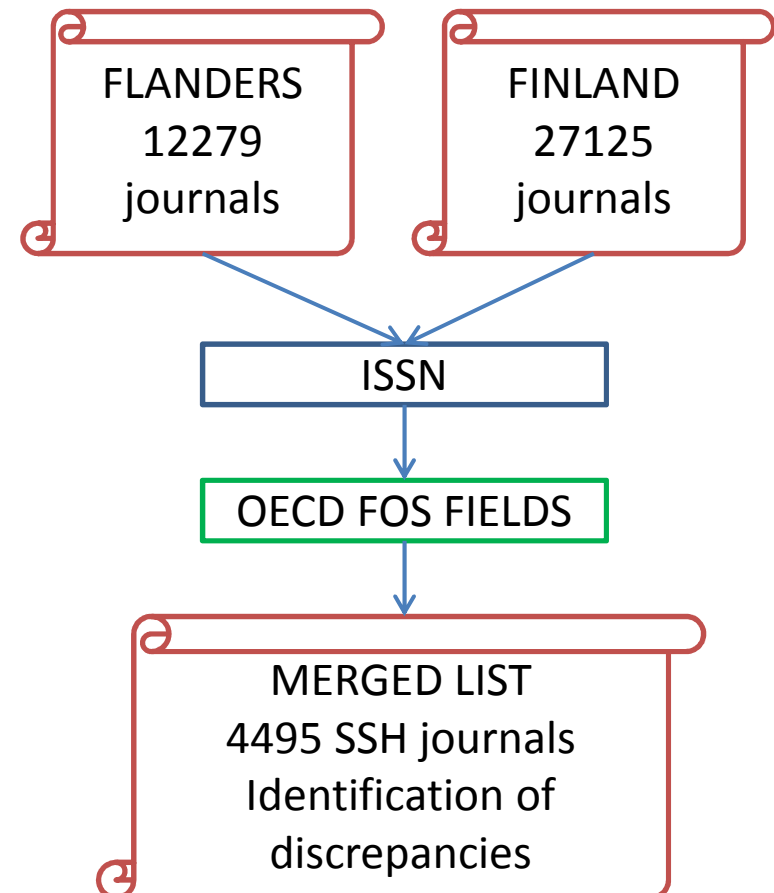
PRESENTATION

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1. COMPARISON OF AUTHORITY LISTS

- Data consists of 2016 versions of journal/series lists from Flanders and Finland merged on basis of ISSN
- OECD FOS fields were assigned on the basis of available field classifications from CRISTIN (Norway), ERIHPlus, Web of Science, and Scopus.
- Analysis includes 4495 journals assigned to any one of the SSH fields.
- Journals evaluated differently were identified





GREY ZONE IN JOURNAL LISTS

- 9 % of the journals (427) have been evaluated differently by the Flemish and Finnish panels as peer-reviewed or not.
- Grey Zone is larger in humanities (13 %) than Social Sciences (8 %).
- **Note!** Approval to authority list may depend also on criteria other than peer-review, such as quality, localness and relevance, or inclusion in WoS.

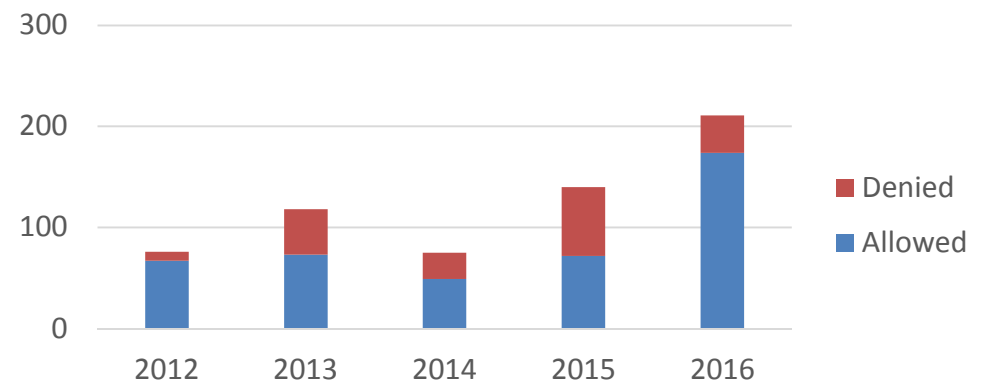
Field	# of Journals	Total Grey Zone
All Fields	4498	9 %
Social sciences	2784	8 %
5.1 Psychology	465	4 %
5.2 Economics and business	687	6 %
5.3 Educational sciences	275	7 %
5.4 Sociology	342	6 %
5.5 Law	278	13 %
5.6 Political science	220	13 %
5.7 Social and economic geography	197	4 %
5.8 Media and communications	221	9 %
5.9 Other social sciences	99	16 %
Humanities	1714	13 %
6.1 History and archaeology	323	14 %
6.2 Languages and literature	748	13 %
6.3 Philosophy, ethics and religion	403	6 %
6.4 Arts	180	19 %
6.5 Other humanities	60	17 %



APPEALS OF PEER REVIEW STATUS

- In Flanders, university can appeal if publication channel is treated as not peer-reviewed.
 - Panel reconsiders decision based on additional information brought forward by university.
 - Appeal is itself indication of unclear peer review status.

- Increase in number of appeals:

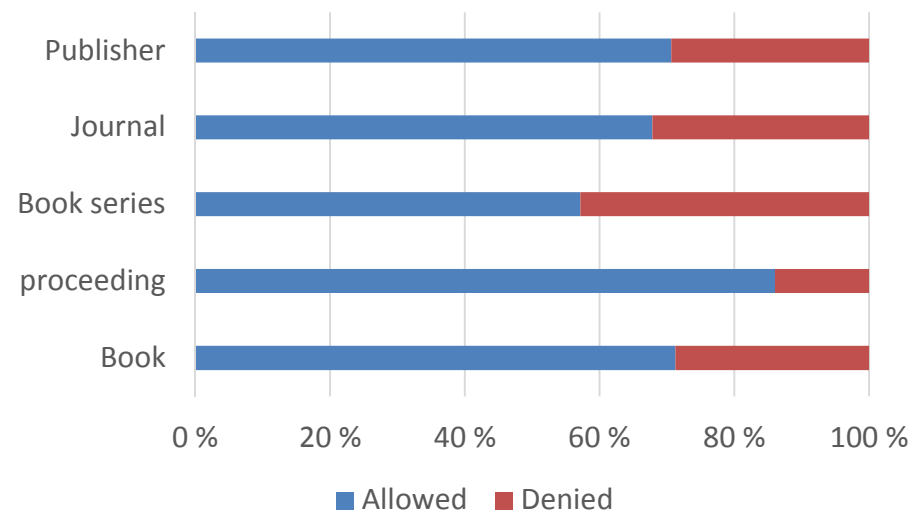
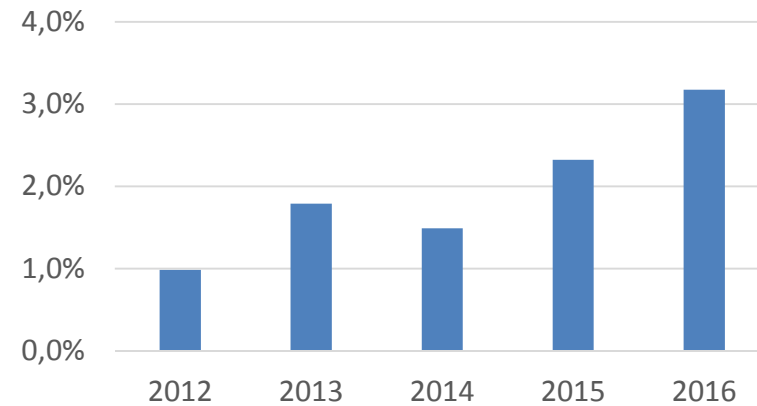


- 68% of appeals come from Humanities, 32% come from Social Sciences.



APPEALS OF PEER REVIEW STATUS

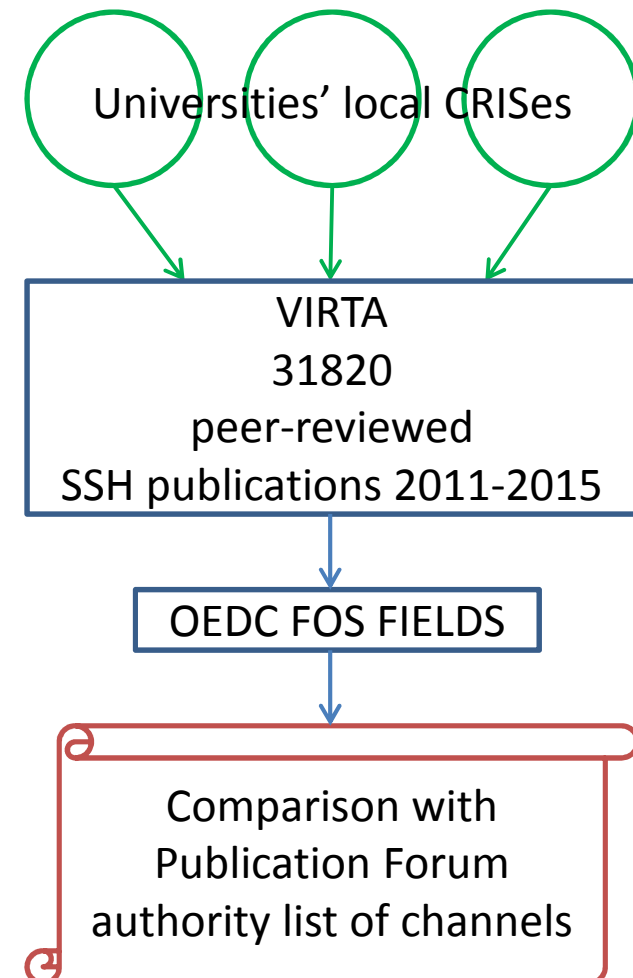
- Universities appeal for 1 to 3% of journals considered as not peer-reviewed:
- Success ratio is similar across types (about 70%):





2. TOP-DOWN VS. BOTTOM-UP

- Data consists of 31820 SSH journal articles and book publications (excluding conference articles) published in 2011-2015 and reported by 14 universities as peer-reviewed publications to the Finnish VIRTA Publication Information Service
- OECD FOS fields were assigned on the basis of 1st field assigned to each publication at the time of reporting to local CRISes.
- Publications in journals and book publishers not approved to be peer-reviewed academic/scholarly channels by the Finnish panels of experts (Publication Forum) were identified.





TOP-DOWN VS BOTTOM-UP GREY ZONE

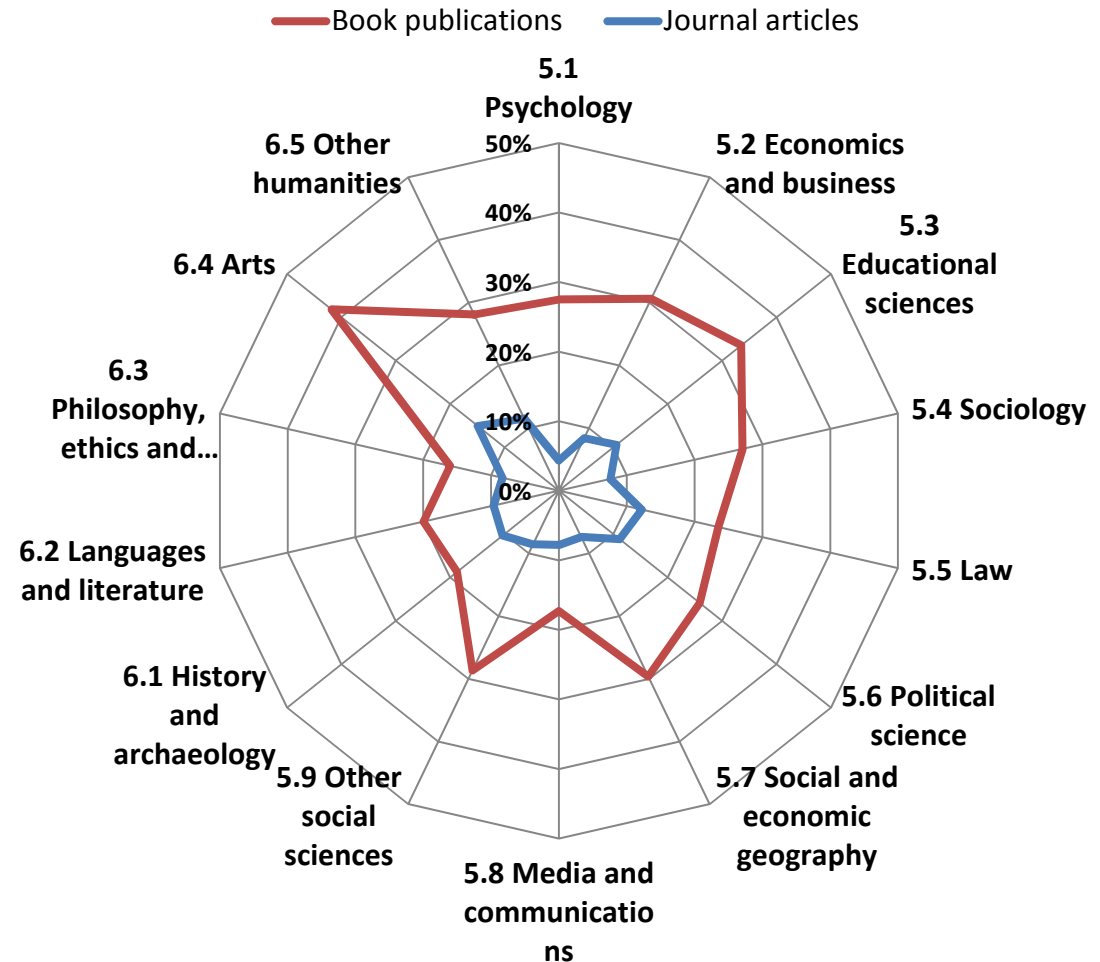
- 16 % of the peer-reviewed publications (5021) according to local definition are not published in channels approved by the expert panels
- Grey Zone is slightly larger in humanities (17 %) than in social sciences (15 %).
- **Note!** Top-down definition may depend also on criteria other than peer-review: quality, localness and relevance of the channel

Field	# of Publications	Total Grey Zone
All journals/series	31820	16 %
Social sciences	20328	15 %
5.1 Psychology	1925	6 %
5.2 Economics and business	4824	13 %
5.3 Educational sciences	3762	20 %
5.4 Sociology	2942	16 %
5.5 Law	2188	18 %
5.6 Political science	1621	18 %
5.7 Social and economic geography	628	14 %
5.8 Media and communications	1092	12 %
5.9 Other social sciences	1659	17 %
Humanities	11647	17 %
6.1 History and archaeology	3012	16 %
6.2 Languages and literature	3794	15 %
6.3 Philosophy, ethics and religion	2590	13 %
6.4 Arts	1266	27 %
6.5 Other humanities	1035	20 %



GREY ZONE IN JOURNALS AND BOOKS

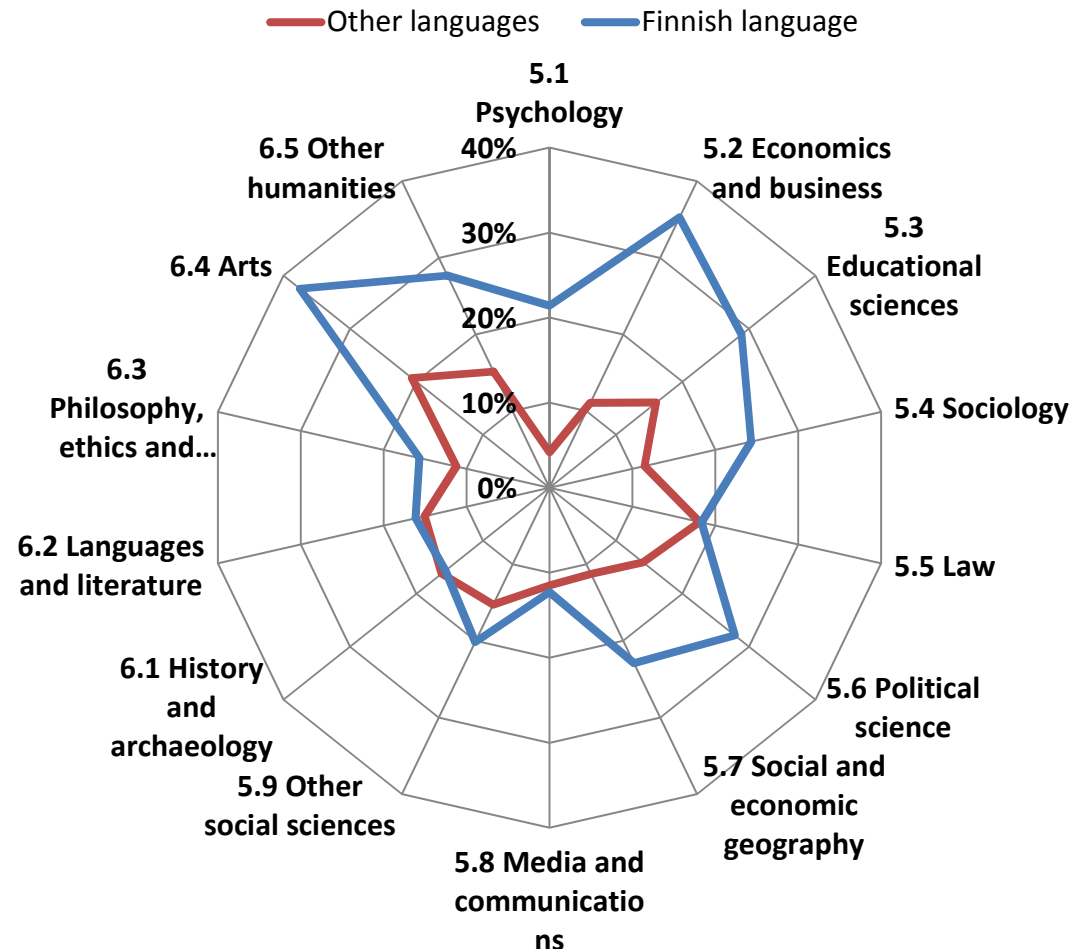
- Top-down vs. Bottom-up
Grey zone is wider among book publications (25 %) than journal articles (9 %).
- In case of journal articles, the Grey zone is larger in humanities (10 %) than social sciences (8 %).
- In case of monographs and articles in books, the Grey zone is smaller in humanities (21 %) than social sciences (28 %).





GREY ZONE AND PUBLICATION LANGUAGE

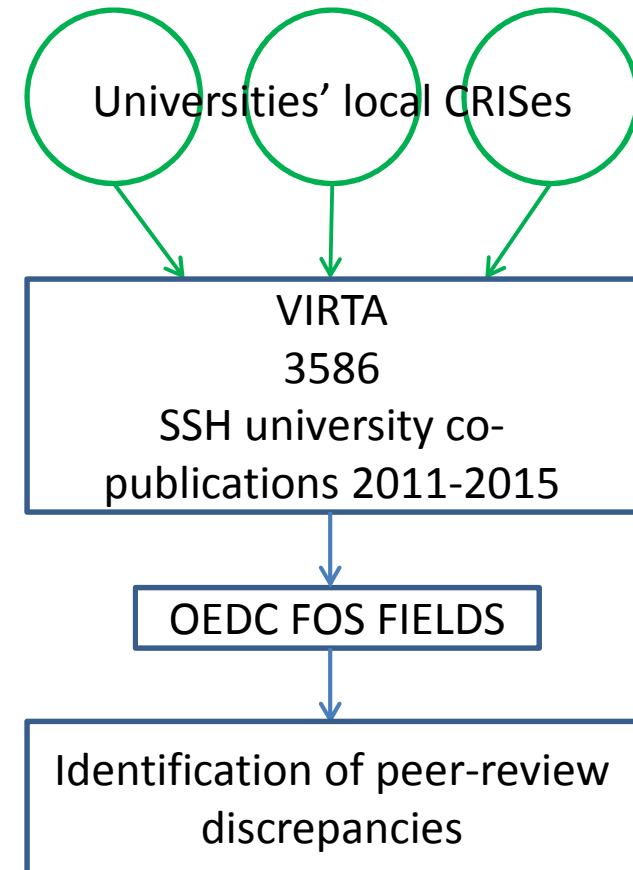
- Top-down vs. Bottom-up
Grey zone is wider among Finnish language (22 %) than other language publications (13 %).
- For other language publications, the Grey zone is larger in humanities (15 %) than social sciences (12%).
- For Finnish publications, the Grey zone is smaller in humanities (19 %) than social sciences (24 %).





3. COMPARISON OF LOCAL DEFINITIONS

- Data consists of 3586 SSH co-publications of two or more Finnish universities, both peer-reviewed and not peer-reviewed, published in 2011-2015 and reported to VIRTAs in 2016.
- Additional data consists of publication types originally assigned to university co-publications in local CRISes (discrepancies have been adjusted in VIRTAs data).
- OECD FOS fields were assigned on the basis of locally assigned fields.
- Publications originally determined differently as peer-reviewed or not peer-reviewed were identified.





GREY ZONE OF LOCAL DEFINITION

- 8 % of the co-publications (303) have been reported differently as peer-reviewed or not peer-reviewed by different universities.
- Grey Zone is larger in the Humanities (10 %) than in the Social Sciences (8 %).
- Ambiguity is more frequent among book publications (15 %) than journal articles (3 %).
- It is larger among Finnish language (16 %) than other language (1 %) publications

Field	# of Publications	Total Grey Zone
All Fields	3586	8 %
Social sciences	2966	8 %
5.1 Psychology	542	2 %
5.2 Economics and business	858	8 %
5.3 Educational sciences	674	8 %
5.4 Sociology	427	10 %
5.5 Law	157	14 %
5.6 Political science	211	13 %
5.7 Social and economic geography	89	12 %
5.8 Media and communications	174	10 %
5.9 Other social sciences	299	10 %
Humanities	854	10 %
6.1 History and archaeology	146	8 %
6.2 Languages and literature	333	10 %
6.3 Philosophy, ethics and religion	131	17 %
6.4 Arts	162	12 %
6.5 Other humanities	170	9 %



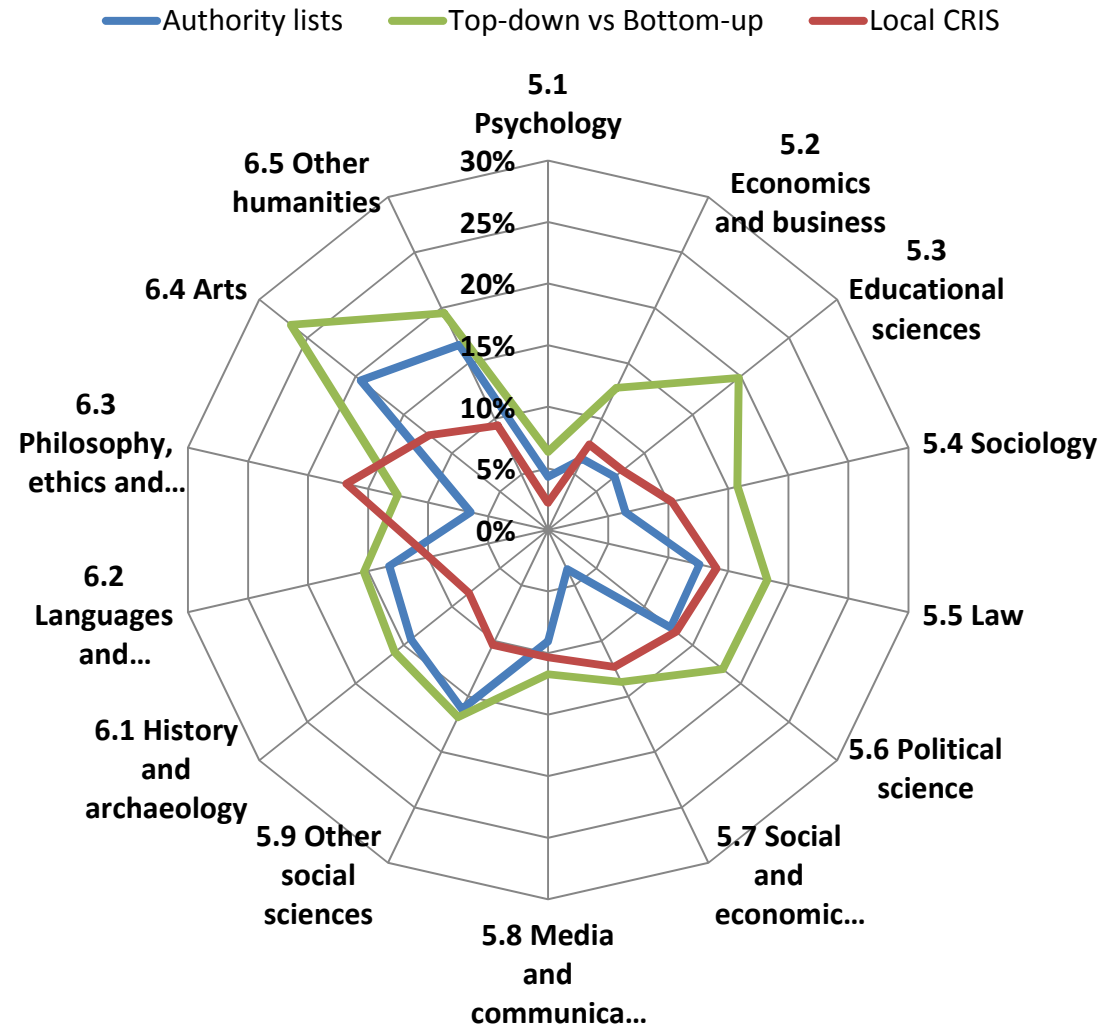
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FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

- Our finding concerning the three different aspects of ambiguity in peer-review status of publications do not show uniform pattern across SSH disciplines
- However, in all analyses Psychology and Economics show small grey zone, while Arts and Other humanities, as well as Law are most frequently located at the other end of the spectrum.





FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

- Overall, our analysis suggests that uncertainty as to the peer-review status of journals (analysis 1) and publications (analysis 3) is larger in humanities than the social sciences.
- Analysis of the Top-down vs Bottom-up Grey zone does show, however, less pronounced differences between social sciences and the humanities (analysis 2).
 - This may be related to the ability of the expert panels to take into account field-specific differences in definition of peer review, and the strictness with which each panel has approached its task.
- In all SSH fields, the ambiguity is more common among book publications than journal articles, and in Finnish than other language publications (analyses 2 and 3).
 - Both Flanders and Finland have introduced labels for peer-reviewed publications to promote and control of peer-review standards among national publishers



THANK YOU!