

Writing a Journal Article

Dr. Sovinda Po
Director, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, IISPP, RUPP
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About me

- **Name:** Po Sovinda
- **Education:** PhD in Political Science/International Relations
- **University:** Griffith University, Australia
- **Award:** Excellence in a Thesis Research
- **Current Position:** Director, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, and Visiting Fellow at ISEAS-Yosuf Ishak Institute (Singapore)
- **Publications:** Australian Journal of International Affairs, Asian Studies Review, European Journal of East Asian Studies, Southeast Asian Affairs, among others.
- **Interviews:** CNC, VOA, The Wire, The Phnom Penh Post, The South China Morning Post, among others.
- **Speaking at prominent institutions:** the National Uni of Singapore, Nanyang Technological Uni, ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, ANU, Uni of Melbourne, Griffith Uni, ASEAN Future Forum, Shangri-La Dialogue, among others
- **Teaching experience:** Griffith University and IISPP

Content

- What
- Why
- How
- Choosing a Journal
- Addressing Feedbacks

What is a journal article?

A journal article is a scholarly work published in an academic journal. It typically presents original research, reviews existing literature, or discusses theoretical frameworks.

Characteristics

- **Peer Review**
 - Most journal articles undergo a peer review process, where other experts in the field evaluate the work for quality and validity before publication.
- **Structure**
 - They often follow a specific structure, including an abstract, introduction, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusion.
- **Citations**
 - Journal articles include citations and references to other scholarly works, allowing readers to verify sources and explore related research.
- **Audience**
 - They are written for a specialized audience, including researchers, academics, and professionals in a specific field.
- **Purpose**
 - The main goals are to advance knowledge, share findings, and contribute to ongoing scholarly discussions.

Reasons to write journal articles

- **Dissemination of Knowledge**

- It allows researchers to share their findings with the academic community and the public, contributing to the body of knowledge in their field.

- **Peer Recognition**

- Publishing in reputable journals helps establish credibility and recognition among peers, enhancing the author's professional reputation.

- **Career Advancement**

- Publishing articles is often a requirement for academic positions, promotions, and funding opportunities, making it an essential part of a researcher's career.



BUILDING A UNITED, INCLUSIVE AND RESILIENT ASEAN
AMIDST GLOBAL TRANSFORMATIONS
Ho Chi Minh City, 25-26 February, 2025

Panelist

H.E. Ms. TIFFANY MCDONALD

Ambassador of Australia to ASEAN



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THÀNH VIÊN HỘI VIÊN

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How?

Structure

- Introduction (500 – 2000 words)
- Framework (1000 – 3000 words)
- Methodology (500 – 2000 words)
- Findings and discussion (2000 – 4000 words)
- Conclusion (500 – 1000 words)

Total length: 6000 words to 10000 words. It can sometimes be 12000-15000 words but it is rare.

Writing an introduction

- **Provide Background Information**

- Offer context by summarizing existing research or key concepts related to your topic. This helps readers understand the broader landscape of your study.

- **Define the Research Puzzle/Problem**

- Clearly articulate the specific problem or question your research addresses. Explain why it is important and worth investigating.

- **Outline the Article Structure**

- Briefly explain the structure of the article. This can include what each section will cover, providing the reader with a roadmap.



- **Define the Research Puzzle/Problem**

Question vs puzzle

Research question

- A research question is a concise and specific inquiry that defines the scope of a research project.
- It identifies the problem or issue that the researcher aims to investigate and provides a clear focus for the study.
- The research question guides the entire research process, including the design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of findings.
- It should be answerable through empirical evidence and contribute to the existing body of knowledge in a particular field.

Research puzzle

- A research puzzle refers to a broader conceptual challenge or a problem that researchers are trying to address.
- It represents a gap or inconsistency in existing knowledge, theories, or understanding that motivates the research.
- A research puzzle often emerges from the observation of contradictory findings, unresolved debates, or unexplained phenomena in the literature.
- It represents a more complex and multifaceted issue that requires deeper investigation and analysis.

Types of puzzle

- Empirical puzzle
- Theoretical puzzle
- Methodological puzzle

Empirical puzzle

- An empirical puzzle is grounded in real-world events. As such, these puzzles lend themselves to inductive research, creating the dual challenge of requiring researchers to be familiar with actual cases, and working backwards from the puzzle to find or build an appropriate theoretical framework.
- While empirical puzzles require some familiarity with theory or conventional wisdom, they rely primarily on a researcher's knowledge of a case or region.
- For undergraduates/graduates, empirical puzzles are likely the most accessible mode of discovery as they are grounded in real-world political phenomena.

Type of empirical puzzle

- **Contra expectations:** when a phenomenon occurs against the conventional wisdom or theoretical expectations regarding everything we think we know about something.
- **Divergence/convergence:** a set of cases that do not relate to each other in an expected way.
 - Divergence is when multiple cases that look similar experience different outcomes. E.g, Laos and Cambodia on China's hydropower dams.
 - Convergence is when multiple cases that look very different experience the same outcome. E.g, African countries: different political systems but still poor.
- **Variation over time:** This occurs when conditions of a political phenomenon seem stable but suddenly change.

Theoretical puzzle

- Theoretical puzzles are found in gaps or contradictions in existing literatures.
- Largely deductive, such puzzles require familiarity with a particular body of theory, and pose challenges of case selection in order to test a new theory.
- Learning how to identify a theoretical puzzle requires an extra dimension of sophistication for many undergraduates, and may be more suitable for graduate students.

❖ Types of theoretical puzzle

- **Conceptual omission**: a body of literature only addresses one type of phenomenon, when theoretically other types of phenomena could exist.
- **Theoretical convergence**: one body of literature is used to weigh in on another, unrelated body of literature.
- **Square the circle**: pit contradictory theoretical arguments against one another and look to identify an alternative approach to understanding particular phenomena.

Methodological puzzles

- Methodological puzzles identify an ongoing debate or an intractable issue to which a particular method has not yet been applied.
- As such, these puzzles require a high level of methodological literacy at the outset.

- Read from page 44-47 of “Explaining Cambodia’s Bandwagoning Policy towards China”
- Reflect on it.

Developing a Framework



What is a framework?

- A framework is a **conceptual or theoretical** structure that provides a basis for organizing, understanding, and analyzing complex information or phenomena.
- It serves as a guide or a system of principles that helps to structure and make sense of various elements within a particular domain or context.

- In the context of social science research, a framework refers to a structured approach or set of concepts, theories, or models that researchers use to guide their study.
- It provides a theoretical lens or a conceptual framework through which researchers can view, interpret, and analyze the research problem.

What are the purposes of the framework?

- The framework outlines the key dimensions, variables, or factors that need to be considered during the analysis, ensuring a comprehensive examination of the research problem.
- It provides a lens through which researchers can make sense of the data and draw meaningful conclusions based on the theoretical or conceptual framework they are working with.
- It helps researchers identify empirical evidence that supports or challenges existing theories and can lead to the development of new theoretical propositions.

Theoretical Framework

- ***What is a theory?***
 - A theory is a well-substantiated explanation of some aspect of the natural or social world. It is based on a body of evidence and provides a framework for understanding how and why certain phenomena occur.
- ***What is a theoretical framework?***
 - A theoretical framework is grounded in existing theories that explain phenomena within international economics. It provides a lens through which to interpret data and findings.

Characteristics of Theories

- **First**, theories aim to explain complex phenomena by integrating various concepts and ideas. They provide a framework that helps to make sense of observations and data.
- **Second**, a good theory not only explains past events but also predicts future occurrences. For instance, theories about trade can help anticipate how changes in tariffs might impact global trade flows.
- **Third**, theories should be testable through empirical research. This means they can be supported or refuted based on evidence gathered from observations or experiments.

- Read the theoretical section of “Explaining Cambodia’s Bandwagoning Policy towards China”
- Reflect on it.

Choosing a methods and designing a methodology



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Everything You need to Know

Methods vs methodology

Research methods

Table 1.2 Alternative Strategies of Inquiry

Quantitative	Qualitative	Mixed Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experimental designs• Non-experimental designs, such as surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Narrative research• Phenomenology• Ethnographies• Grounded theory studies• Case study	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sequential• Concurrent• Transformative

Research methodology

Qualitative data collection tools

- Interview
- Focus groups
- Observation
- Survey questionnaires
- Ethnography
- Document analysis

Qualitative data analysis methods

- Thematic analysis
- Content analysis
- Discourse analysis
- Grounded theory
- Narrative analysis

Writing a findings and discussion section



Writing a findings and discussion section

- **Present Data Clearly**

- Use clear and concise language to present your findings. Organize the data logically, often by themes or research questions.
- Use tables, figures, or charts where appropriate to summarize data visually. Ensure they are labeled and referenced in the text.

- **Be Objective**

- Focus on the results without interpretation. State what you found based on your data collection methods.

- **Use Quotes and Examples**

- Include direct quotes from participants or illustrative examples to highlight key findings, especially in qualitative research.

- **Interpret Results**

- Discuss what the findings mean in the context of existing literature. How do they support or contradict previous studies?

- **Address Research Questions**

- Relate your findings back to the research questions or hypotheses. Explain how your results answer these questions.

- **Implications**

- Explore the practical or theoretical implications of your findings. What do they mean for the field? How can they be applied?

Bonus: How to present your data



EXHIBIT 10.1. Three Modes for Displaying Qualitative Data

Type of display	Illustrative example
<i>Word tables and lists</i>	Summary of findings, placed into a matrix of rows and columns Chronology Aggregate characteristics of people studied or interviewed List of individual participants in a study (usually using pseudonyms) and their <i>study characteristics</i> (not necessarily routine demographic characteristics)
<i>Graphics</i>	Geographic map; census tract map Spatial layout of a study area Hierarchical chart (e.g., organization chart) Flowchart (e.g., sequence of events over a time line) Family trees and other schemes
<i>Pictures</i>	Photographs Reproductions (e.g., of artwork or of others' drawings or pictures)

Tables and Lists

Tables and Lists

EXHIBIT 10.2. Variations among Household Types (Accompanies Vignette 10.4)

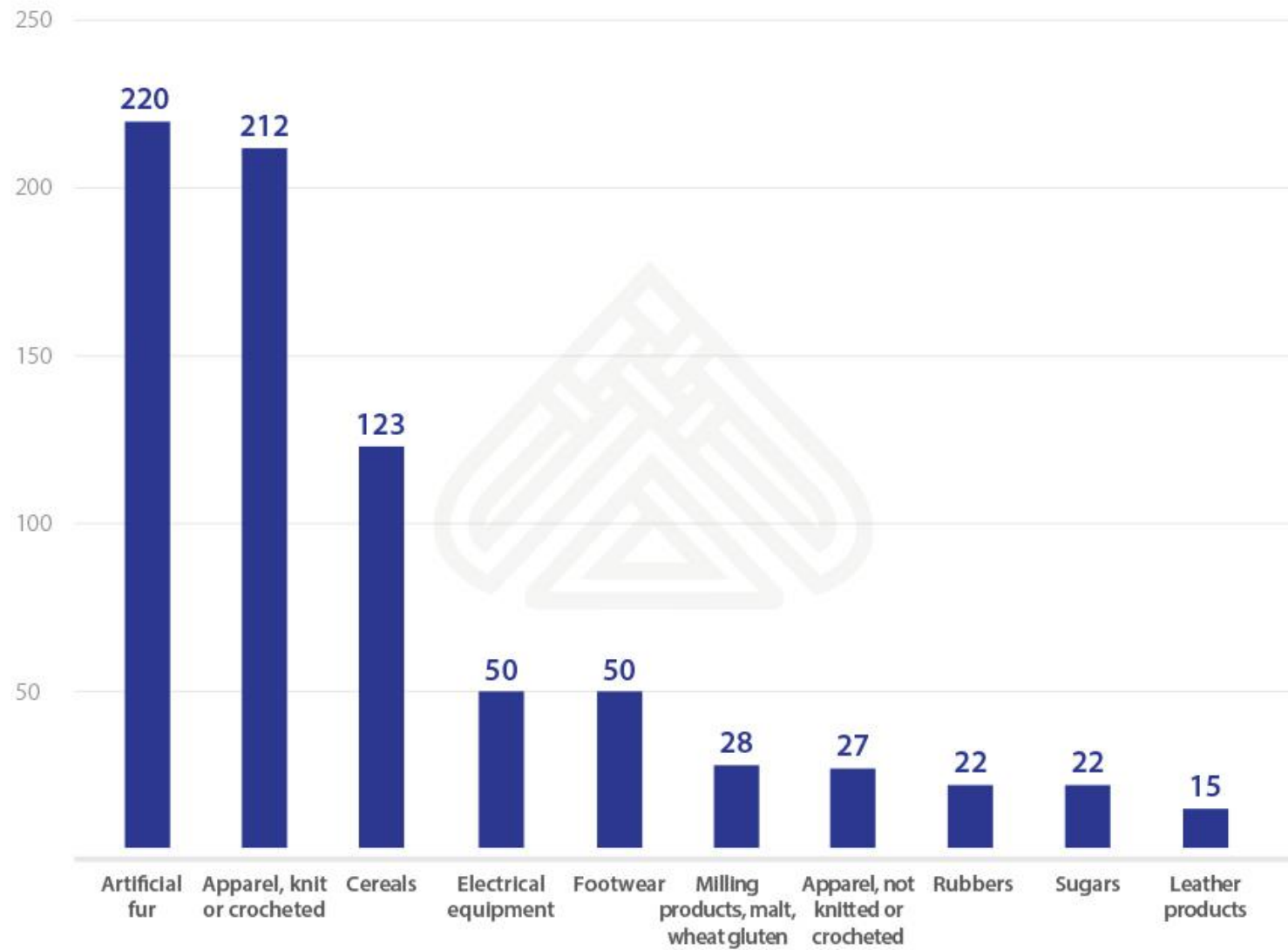
Household types	Shaping Factors		
	Immigration pattern	Relationship to labor market	Arrangement for child care
<i>Traditional</i>	Men are the primary immigrants.	Men have high status. Women have lower or equal status.	Women stay home. Kids are left in Kerala with relatives or at boarding schools.
<i>Forced-participation</i>	Women are the primary immigrants.	Women have high status. Men have lower status relative to their jobs in India and to their wives' jobs in the United States.	Men are forced to participate. Couples work alternate shifts. Some child-care help is available in the United States or Kerala.
<i>Partnership</i>	Women are the primary immigrants.	Women have high status. Men have lower status relative to their jobs in India and to their wives' jobs in the United States.	Men participate. Couples work alternate shifts. There is little outside support.
<i>Female-led</i>	Women are the primary immigrants.	Women have high status. Men are absent, not active, or have low status.	Women are mostly alone. Relatives and the community provide some support.

Source: George (2005, p. 81). Copyright 2005 by The Regents of the University of California.

- Graphics and drawings

Cambodia Exports to China

■ Products (US\$ million)

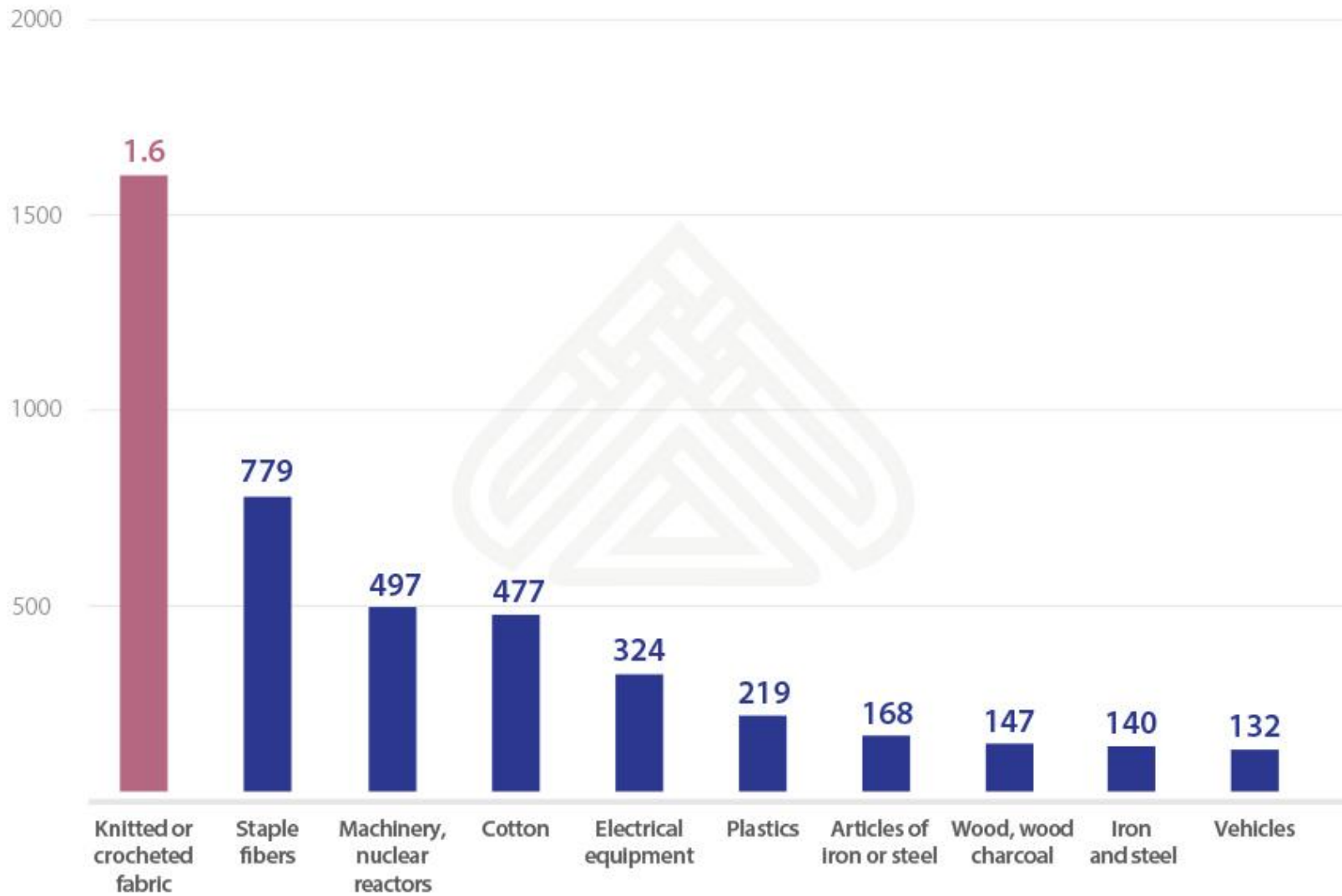


Source: Trading Economics

Cambodia Imports From China

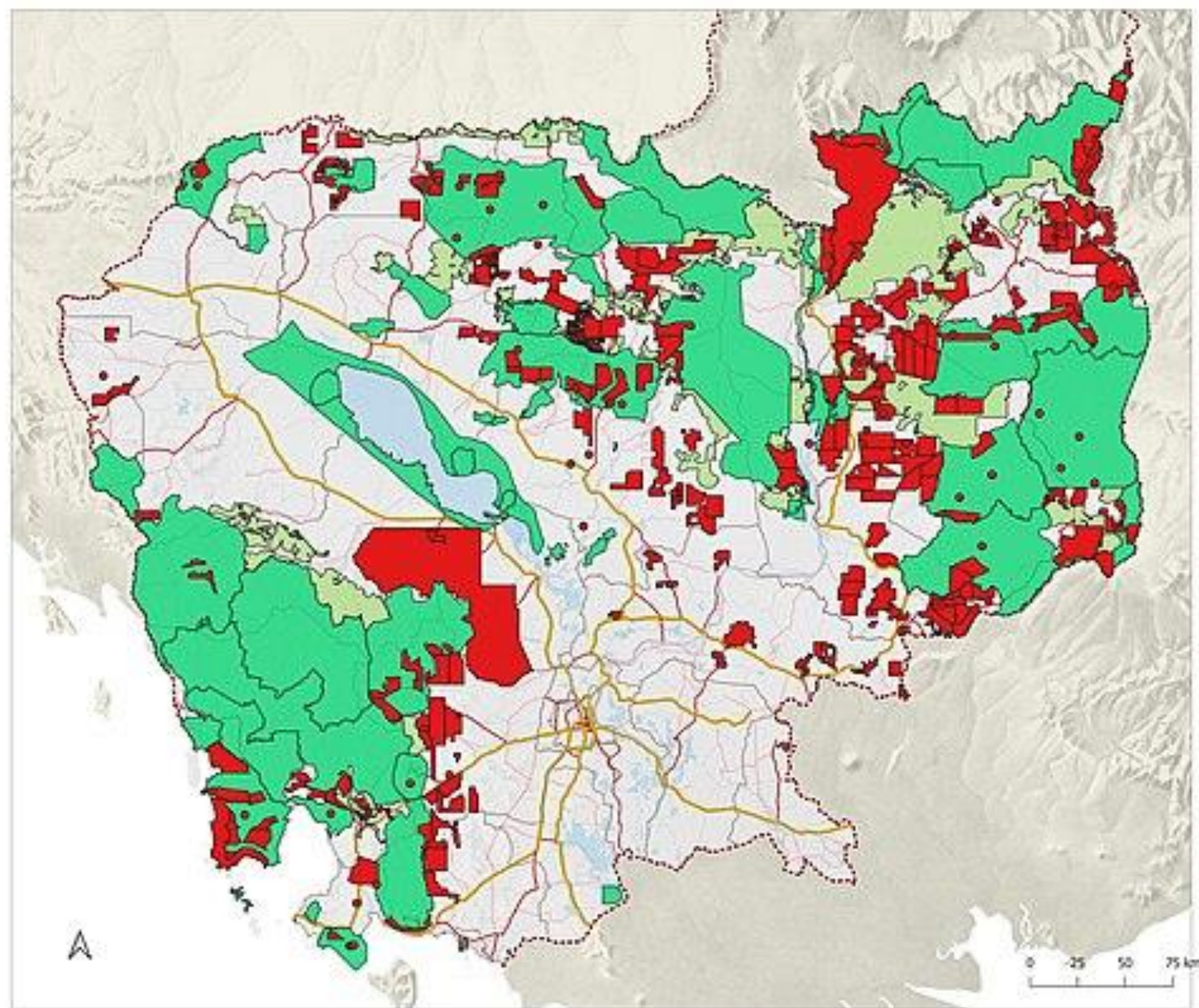
■ Product (US\$ billion)

■ Products (US\$ million)



Source: Trading Economics

Graphic © Asia Briefing Ltd.



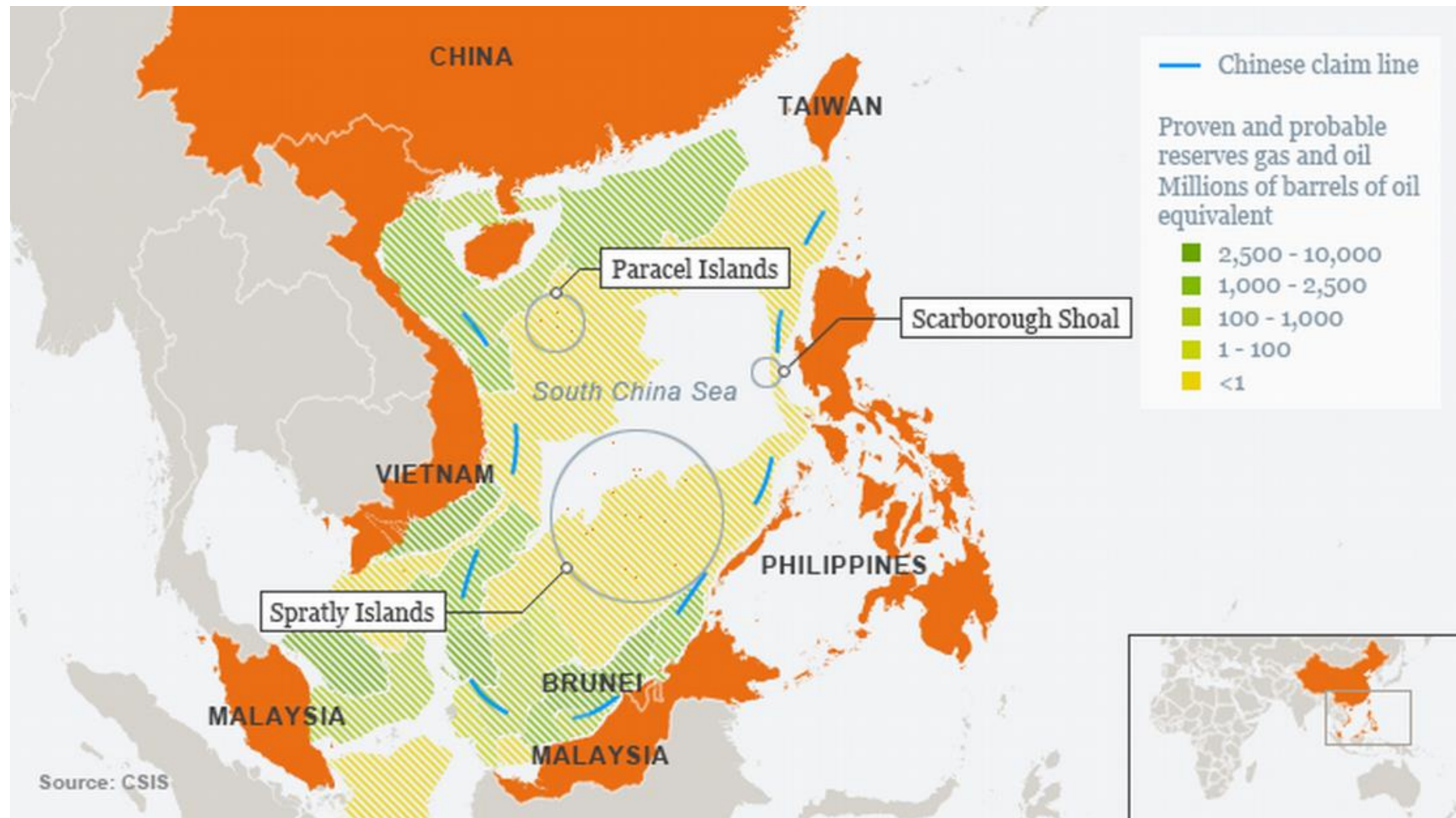
Protected Areas and Economic Land Concession

Legend

- Corridors
- Protected area
- Economic land concession

Data sources:

Province center/ Province and International boundary: Department of Geography (DoG), 2005, <http://www.naturalearthdata.com>
Water body/ Road network: Aruna Technology Ltd.
Economic land concession and Protected Area: Open Development Cambodia





- Photographs



- Read from pages 450-457, “Explaining Cambodia’s Bandwagoning Policy towards China”

Writing a conclusion



conclusion

Structure of the Conclusion

- **Restate the Purpose and summarize key findings**
 - Begin by briefly restating the purpose of your study and the main research questions or objectives.
 - Highlight the most significant findings of your research. Focus on what you discovered and how it addresses your research questions.
- **Acknowledge Limitations**
 - Briefly mention any limitations of your study to provide context for your findings and to demonstrate transparency.
- **Conclude with a Strong Closing Statement**
 - End with a thought-provoking statement or a call to action that reinforces the importance of your research.

- Read the conclusion of “Explaining Cambodia’s Bandwagoning Policy towards China”

A Journal: Choose and then be chosen

- Choosing the right journal for your research is a crucial step in the publication process. Here are some key factors to consider when selecting a journal:
- **Scope and Focus**
- Ensure the journal's focus aligns with your research topic and discipline. Review the journal's aims and scope to determine if it's a good fit.
- Consider who the journal's readership is. Is it primarily for academics, practitioners, or a broader audience?
- **Reputation and Impact Factor**
- Look for journals that are well-regarded in your field. You can assess reputation through recommendations from peers or advisors.
- While not the only measure, the impact factor can indicate the journal's influence. Be cautious, as some fields have different norms regarding impact factors.
- **Publication Frequency and Timeline**
- Consider the journal's publication frequency (monthly, quarterly, etc.) and the typical time from submission to publication. Some journals have long review processes, which may affect your timeline.
- **Peer Review Process**
- Look into the peer review process. Is it single-blind, double-blind, or open? Understanding the review process can help you gauge the journal's rigor.
- **Ethical Standards**
- Ensure the journal adheres to ethical publishing practices. Check for policies on plagiarism, authorship, and conflicts of interest.

Watch out!

Predatory journals



Addressing reviewers' feedbacks



Decision

- Accepted without revision
- Accepted with minor revision
- ***Revise and resubmit***
- Rejected

How to address reviewers' feedback

- **Read Feedback Carefully**

- Carefully read through all comments and suggestions from the reviewers. Take notes to clarify your understanding of their points.

- **Organize Comments**

- Group the feedback into categories (e.g., major revisions, minor revisions, suggestions). This helps you prioritize your responses.

- **Prepare a Response Document**

- Prepare a separate document that outlines your responses to each reviewer's comments. This letter should include:
 - A thank you message for their feedback.
 - A summary of changes made in response to their suggestions.
 - Detailed responses to each comment, referencing specific sections of your manuscript.

- **Respond to Each Comment**

- For each comment, clearly indicate how you addressed it.
- If you choose not to make a suggested change, provide a respectful and clear rationale for your decision.

- **Be Professional and Courteous**

- Maintain a professional and respectful tone throughout your responses. Avoid defensiveness; instead, show appreciation for the reviewers' insights.
- Recognize valid criticisms and express gratitude for constructive feedback.

- **Revise Your Manuscript**

- Make the necessary revisions to your manuscript based on the feedback. Ensure that your changes address the reviewers' concerns.
- Consider highlighting changes in your revised manuscript (e.g., using tracked changes or a different color) to make it easier for reviewers to see what has been modified.

- **Summarize Major Revisions**

- At the beginning of your response document, provide a brief overview of the major revisions made in response to feedback. This gives reviewers a quick insight into the significant updates.

- **Submit Your Response**

- Before submitting, review your response document and revised manuscript for clarity and coherence.
- Ensure you adhere to any specific submission guidelines provided by the journal regarding responding to reviewer feedback.

Thank You!