

Case study

Open post-publication peer review

SOURCE: Fox, J., Pearce, K. E., Massanari, A. L., Riles, J. M., Szulc, Ł., Ranjit, Y. S., ... & L. Gonzales, A. (2021). Open science, closed doors? Countering marginalization through an agenda for ethical, inclusive research in communication. *Journal of Communication*, 71(5), 764-784. <https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqab029>

Open peer review has been seen as an important aspect of a more transparent, more open science. In traditional peer review, the identities of authors and reviewers are usually kept confidential. The open peer review introduces openness in different ways: the authors and reviewers may know each other's identity, the reviews may be published along with articles and their different versions, the comments to the articles may be open etc.:

- **open identity** "makes authors and reviewers known to each other",
- "in **open reports**, peer reviews are published alongside articles",
- **open pre-review** is, for example, "a crowdsourced platform where any scholar could review a manuscript before publication and a cumulative score would be displayed",
- in **open final-version commenting** "the public can comment on published articles, and authors are expected to engage with commenters to promote public communication about science".

While this can certainly affect the quality and the tone of the reviews, as well as offer opportunities to acknowledge the effort of reviewers, some scholars have drawn attention to the possibility that there are certain risks involved in the open-peer review, especially for marginalized researchers and research. Open reviewing might result in self-censorship for fear of retaliation or discrimination (felt especially by young, marginalized researchers). Open commenting could, in worst-case scenarios, turn into a witch-hunt.

Questions for discussion:

- 1) Imagine that you are a young scientist asked to review a well-established researcher's paper in an open peer review process. What are the challenges as well as opportunities involved?
- 2) How the potential dangers of open peer review could be handled in a way that best protects the researchers (both authors and reviewers)?