

EQUAP²

Evaluating the Quality Assurance Process in Scholarly Publishing



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<https://www.slub-dresden.de/ueber-uns/projekte/evaluating-the-quality-assurance-process-in-scholarly-publishing-equap2>

Background: Quality?

“Quality assurance must be clearly separated from the publication service business model to discourage practices that reduce selectivity to increase profits”

Background: Acquisition?

- Effect of acquisition and publication-based business models on publication behavior
- Quantitatively based acquisition decisions vs. qualitative assessment
- Responsibility of libraries or self-responsibility of research community?

Background: Isolated cases?

- Anecdotal reports on quality assurance violations

In principle, these journals create their own demand.

In general, however, I can't shake the impression that these journals [...] are primarily about making money.

Ponzi scheme.

And [the publisher] cashes
in...

Abuse of the "Resubmission" option: as a reviewer, you receive an article that you had recently clearly recommended for rejection, again with the justification that it was a "new submission".

Accepting clearly negatively evaluated manuscripts (clear statement "reject") and this repeatedly in different journals [of the publisher]

Coincidence, cooperation and participation

- TU9-OA coordinators discuss quality assurance study
- Working Group Open Access Switzerland (AKOA) discusses national Gold OA contracts
- Initial ad hoc cooperation and funding by TU 9 & Swiss libraries
- Working Group: Swiss Libraries, TU9 and Robert Neumann, TU Dresden
- Participation of other colleges and universities in Germany and Switzerland

Aims

- Analysis of quality assurance in the review process of journals
 - > Query and comparison: expectations vs. actual experiences
- Target population: Scientists in their roles as authors, reviewers and editors in the publication process

EQUAP²



Konsortium der Schweizer
Hochschulbibliotheken

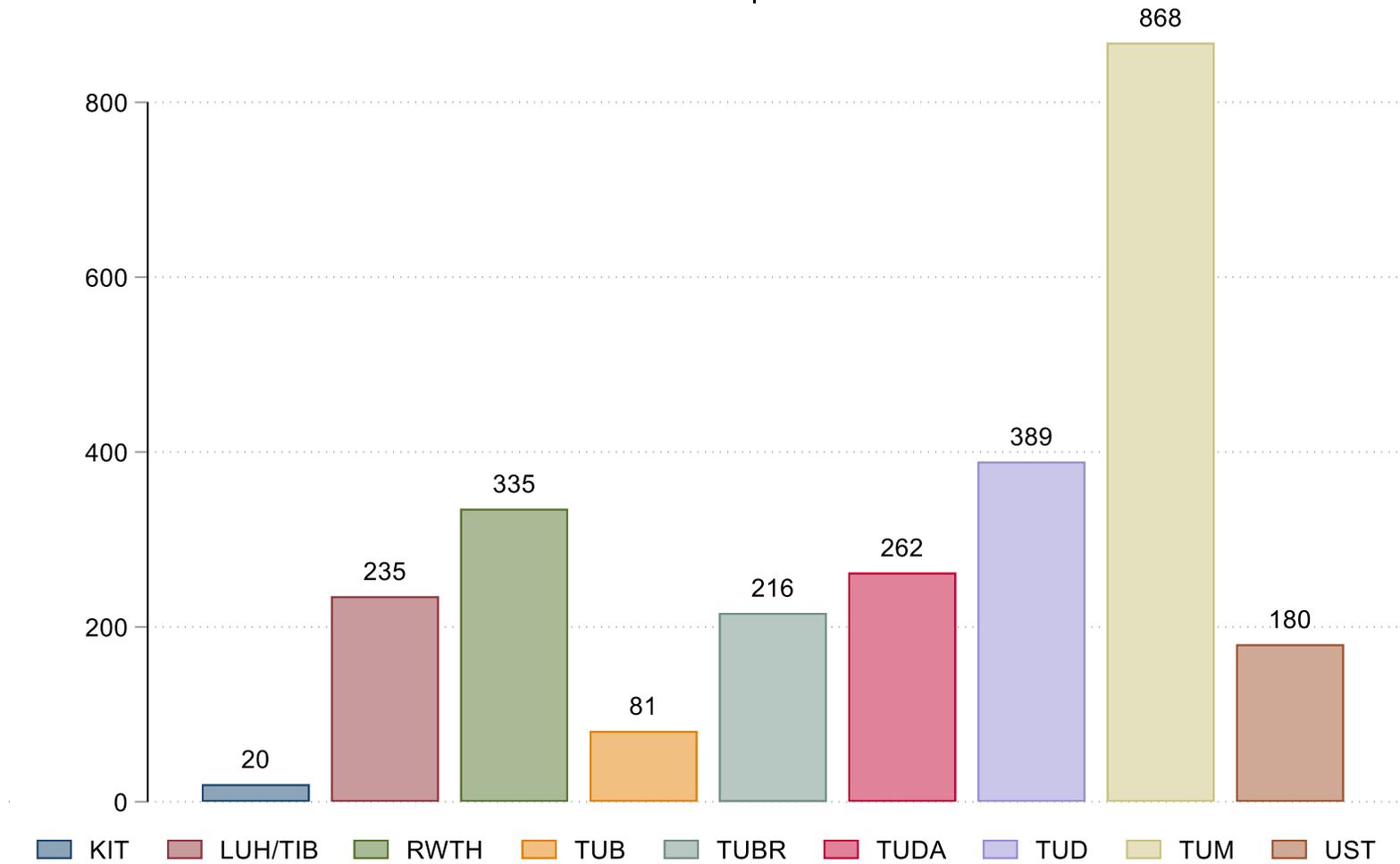
**Swiss Library Network for
Education and Research**

Implementation of the EQUAP2 Survey

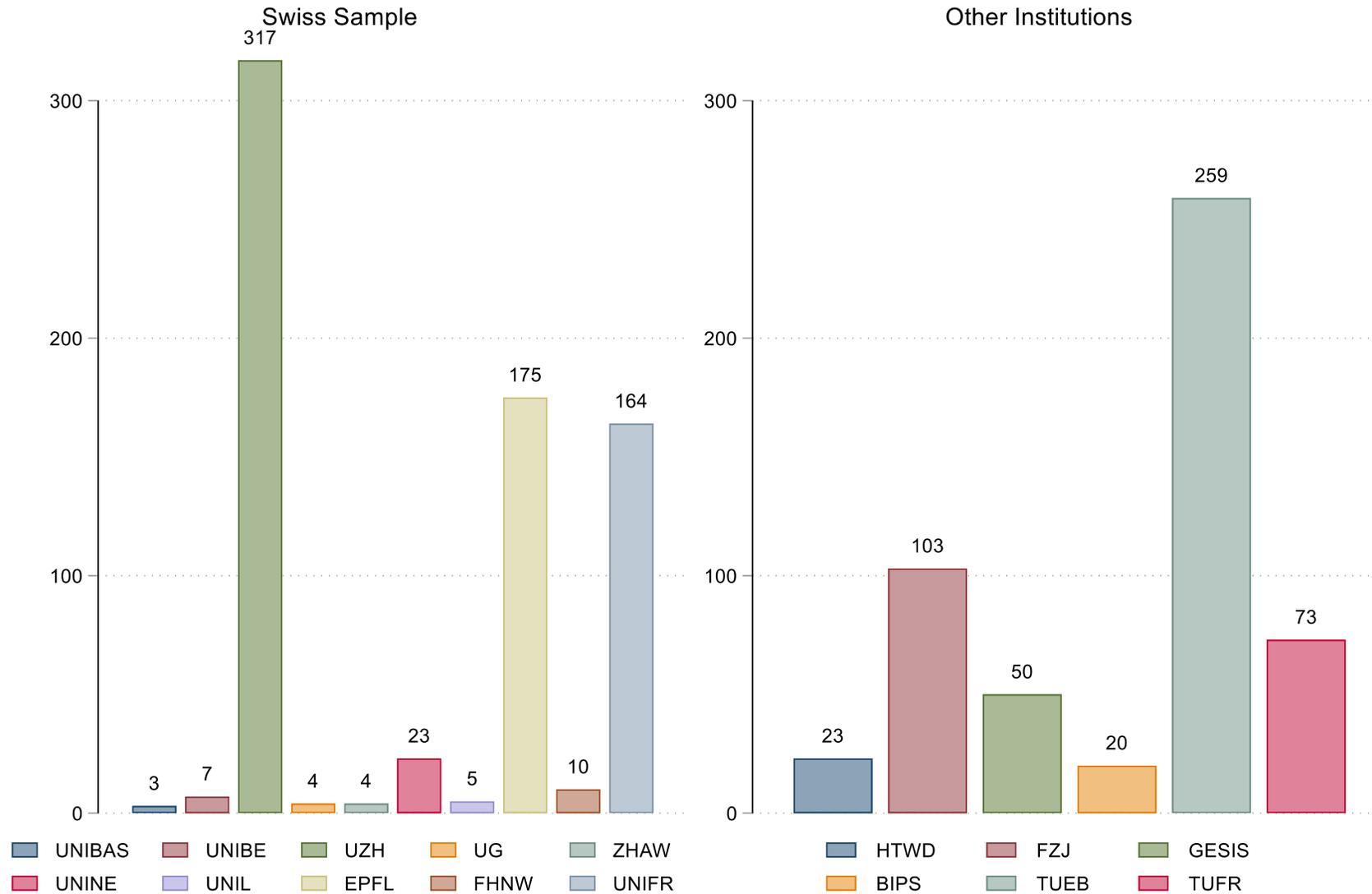
- Standardized web survey (bilingual German/English)
- Currently carried out in 25 institutions
 - TU9 in Germany and five cooperation partners in Switzerland
 - 11 additional institutions considered
- Field time from April 25th to September 15th, 2022
- Almost 3,500 complete interviews (still in the preparation process)

EQUAP² - Sample I

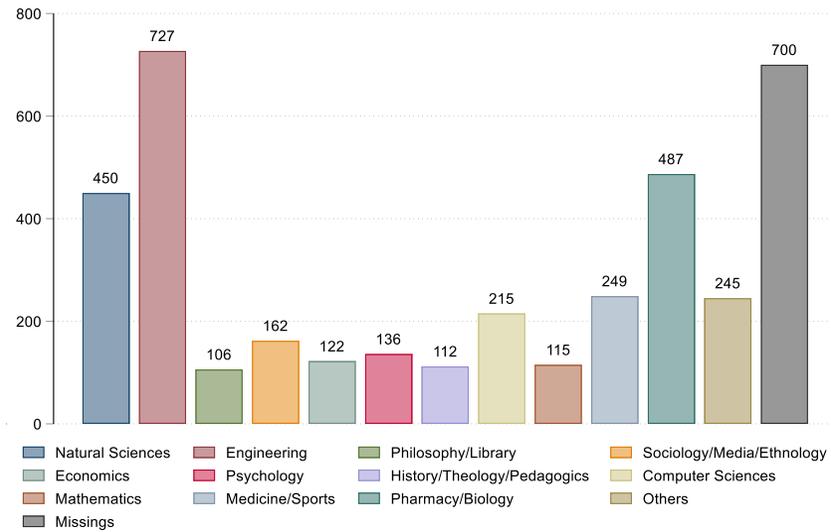
TU9 Sample



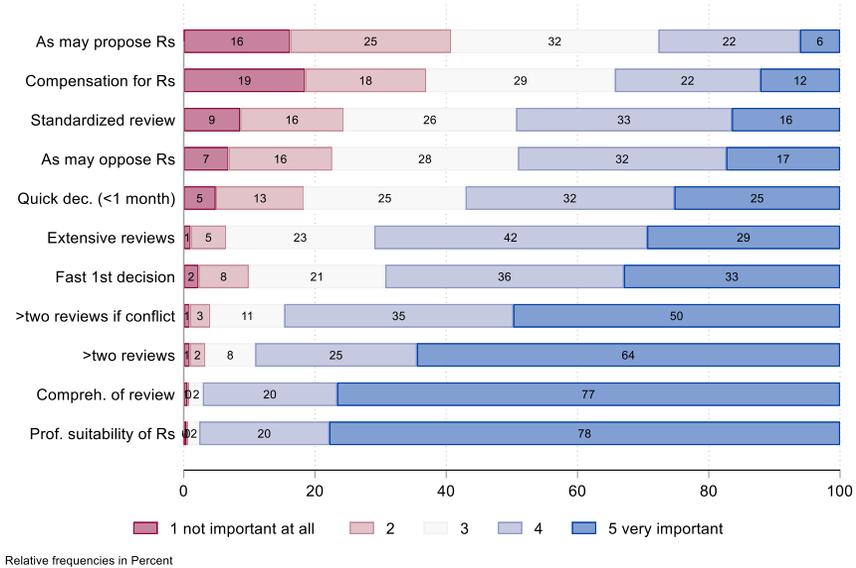
EQUAP² - Sample II



EQUAP² - Sample III

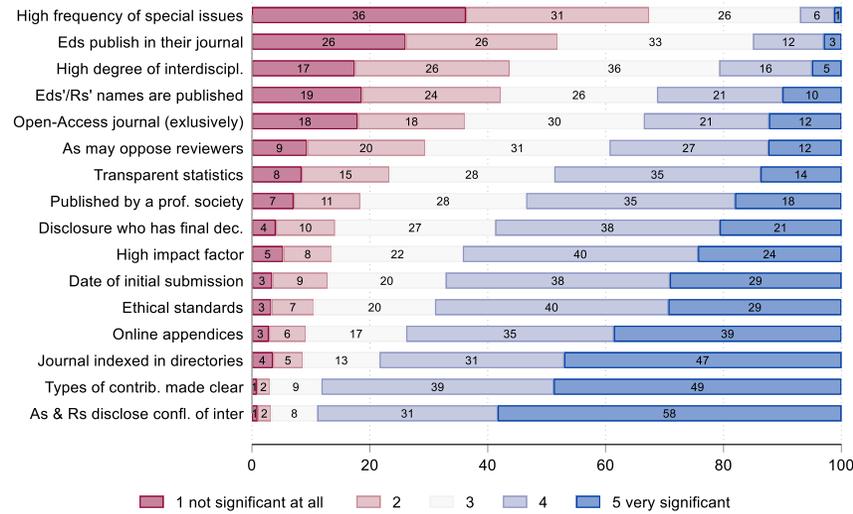


Best practice for quality assurance



As...Authors
 Rs...Reviewer
 Es...Editors

What contributes to the quality of a journal?



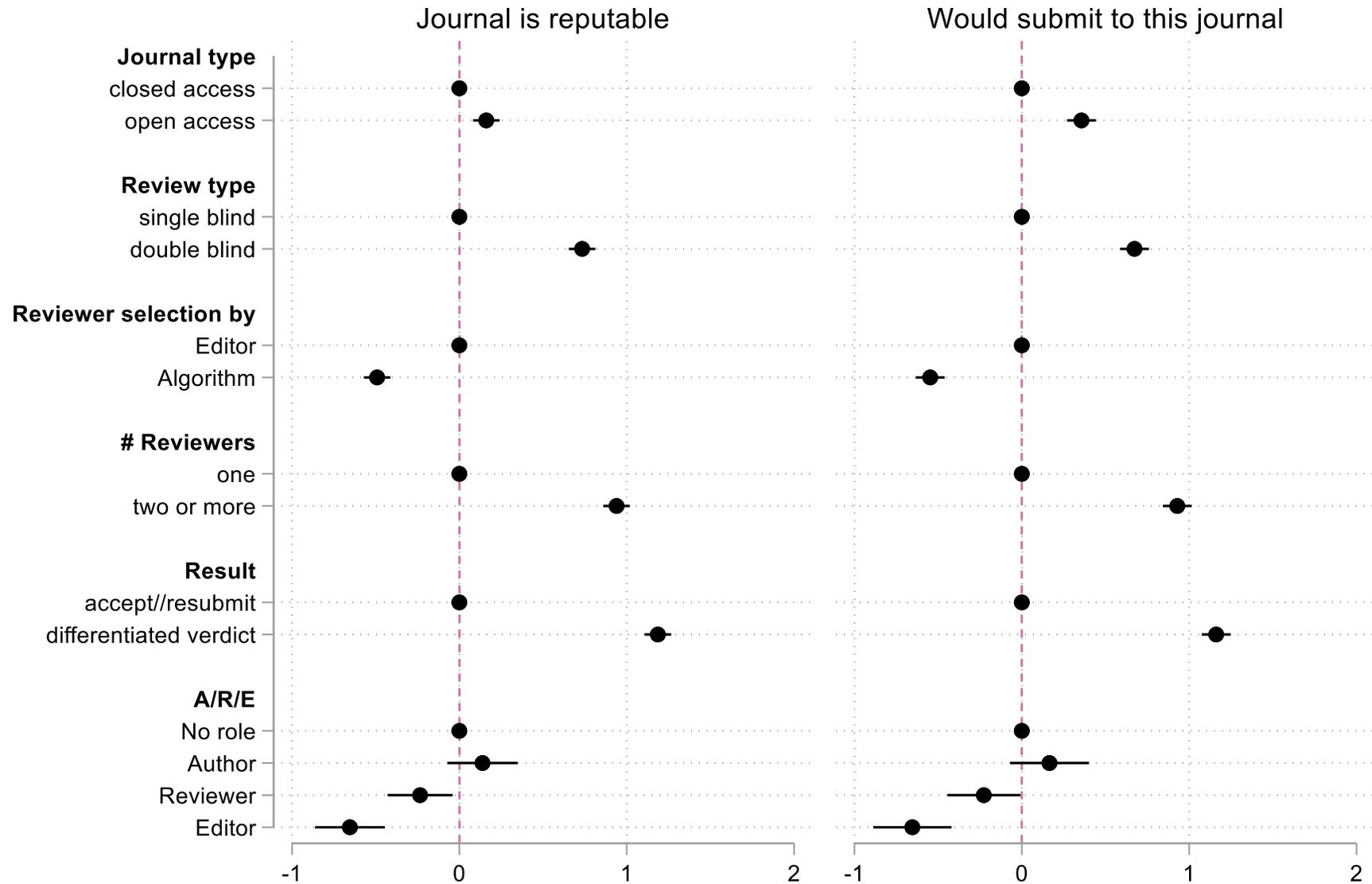
Relative frequencies in Percent

Target dimensions: vignette studies

- Take into account the complexity of the review and decision process
- Review-Vignette (two per respondent)

A team of authors submits a paper to a **closed [open]** access journal. The article is reviewed in a **single [double]** blind process by **two or more reviewers [one reviewer]** who were automatically selected by the publisher **[by the editor] with the help of an algorithm**. The reviewers have the option of **accepting the article or suggesting it for resubmission [assess differentiated]**.”
- Two-tier assessment
 - How serious do you think the journal is? (1-7)
 - How likely are you to submit an article to the journal? (1-7)

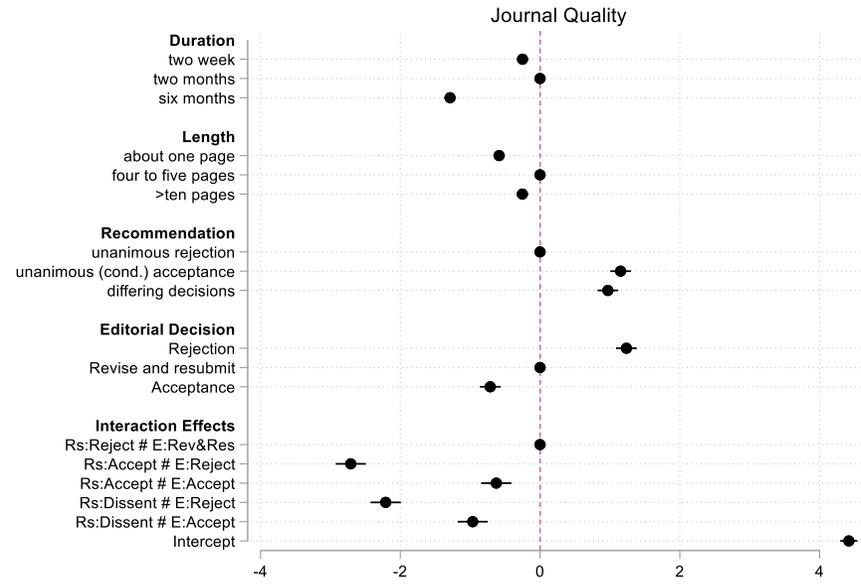
Review-Vignette



Target dimensions: vignette studies

- Decision-Vignette (three per respondent)
 - “A team of authors submitted an article to a journal. **Two months [two weeks//six months]** after the first submission, the authors receive two reviews, each of which is more than **10 pages [only about one page//around 4 to 5 pages]** long and make **different recommendations [one unanimous rejection recommend // unanimously recommend a conditional acceptance]**
 - The editor then communicates their decision to **reject the paper [reprint as is regardless of reviews // to return to authors for revision and resubmission].”**
- Two-tier assessment
 - How do you rate the quality of this review process? (1-7)
 - How do you rate the editor's decision? (1-7)

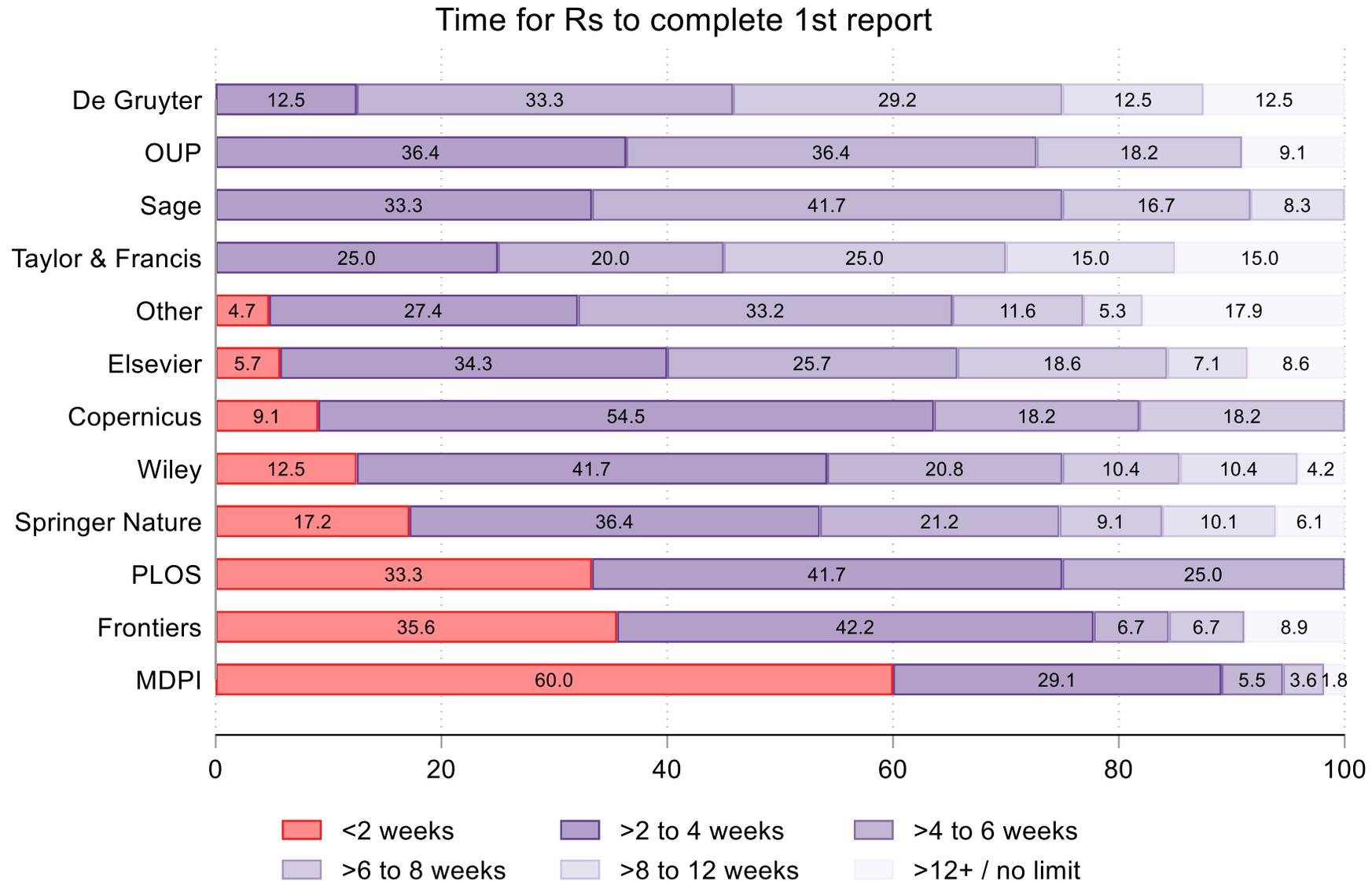
Decision-Vignette



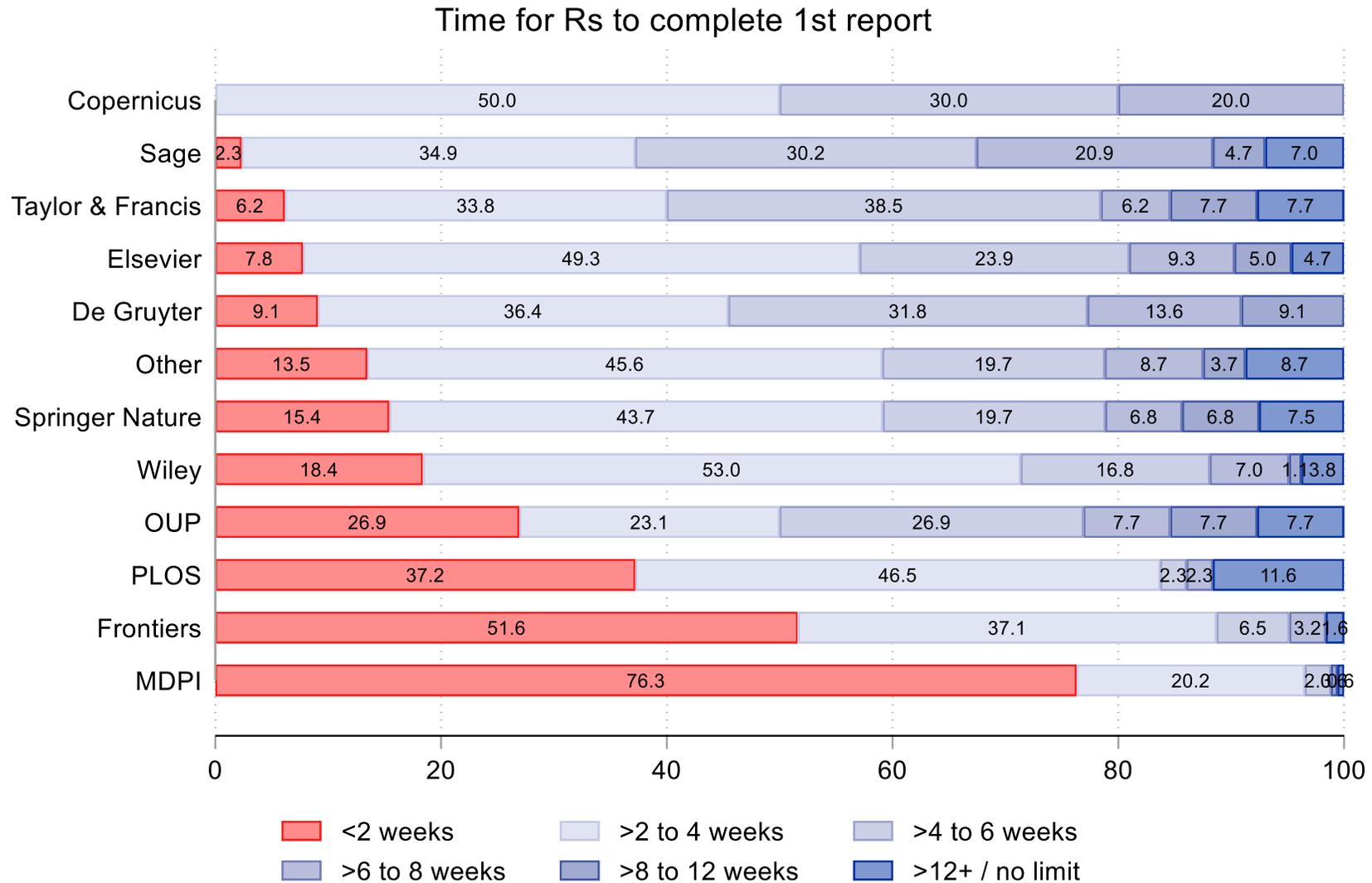
Current state

- Analysis of the current state takes place across the publishers
- separated according to the roles of editors, reviewers or authors
- Special focus on a) time aspect and b) technical expertise

Editors: How much time do reviewers get?

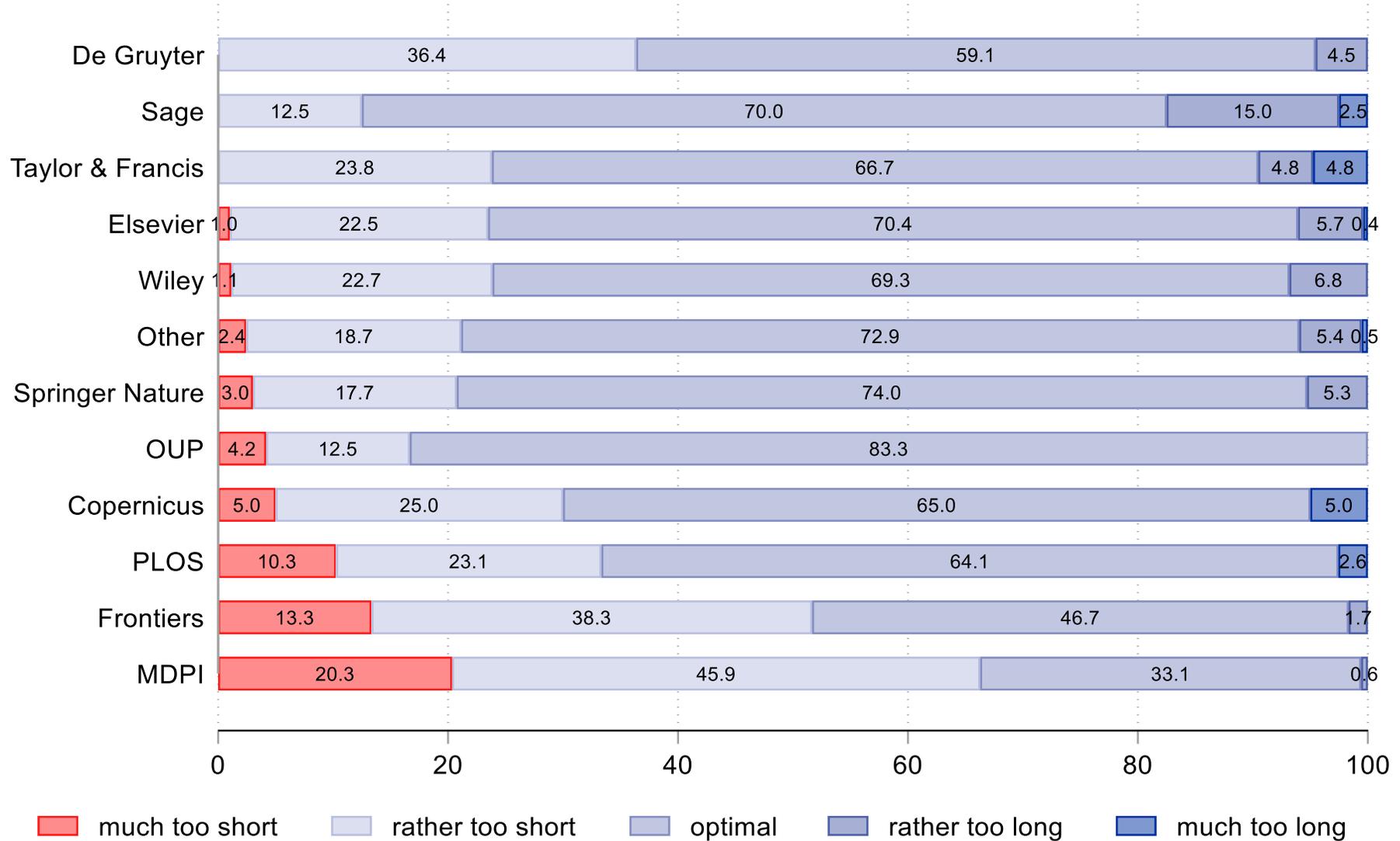


Reviewer: How much time do you get for initial reviews?

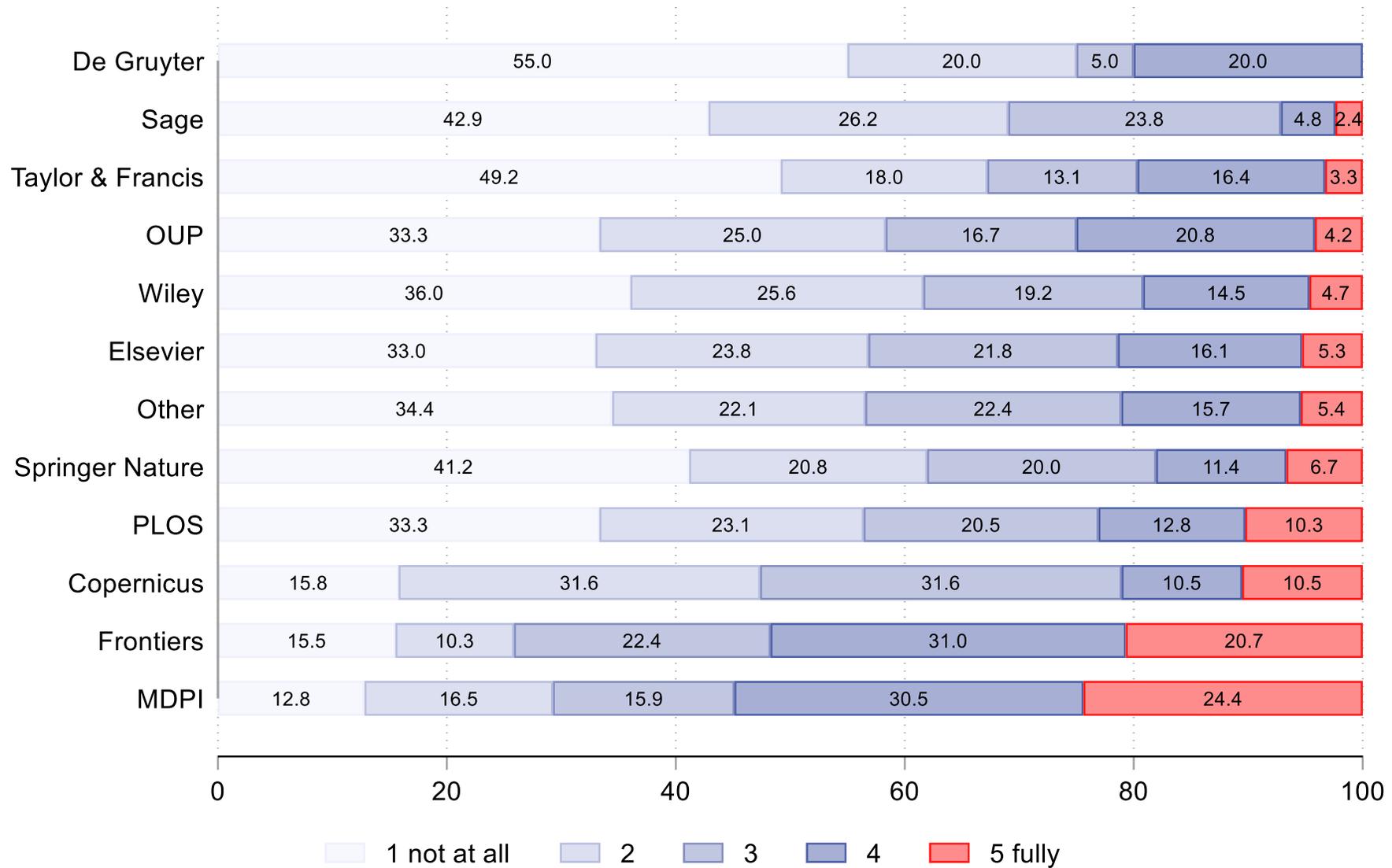


Reviewer: Evaluating the timeline

Reviewers' opinion on duration

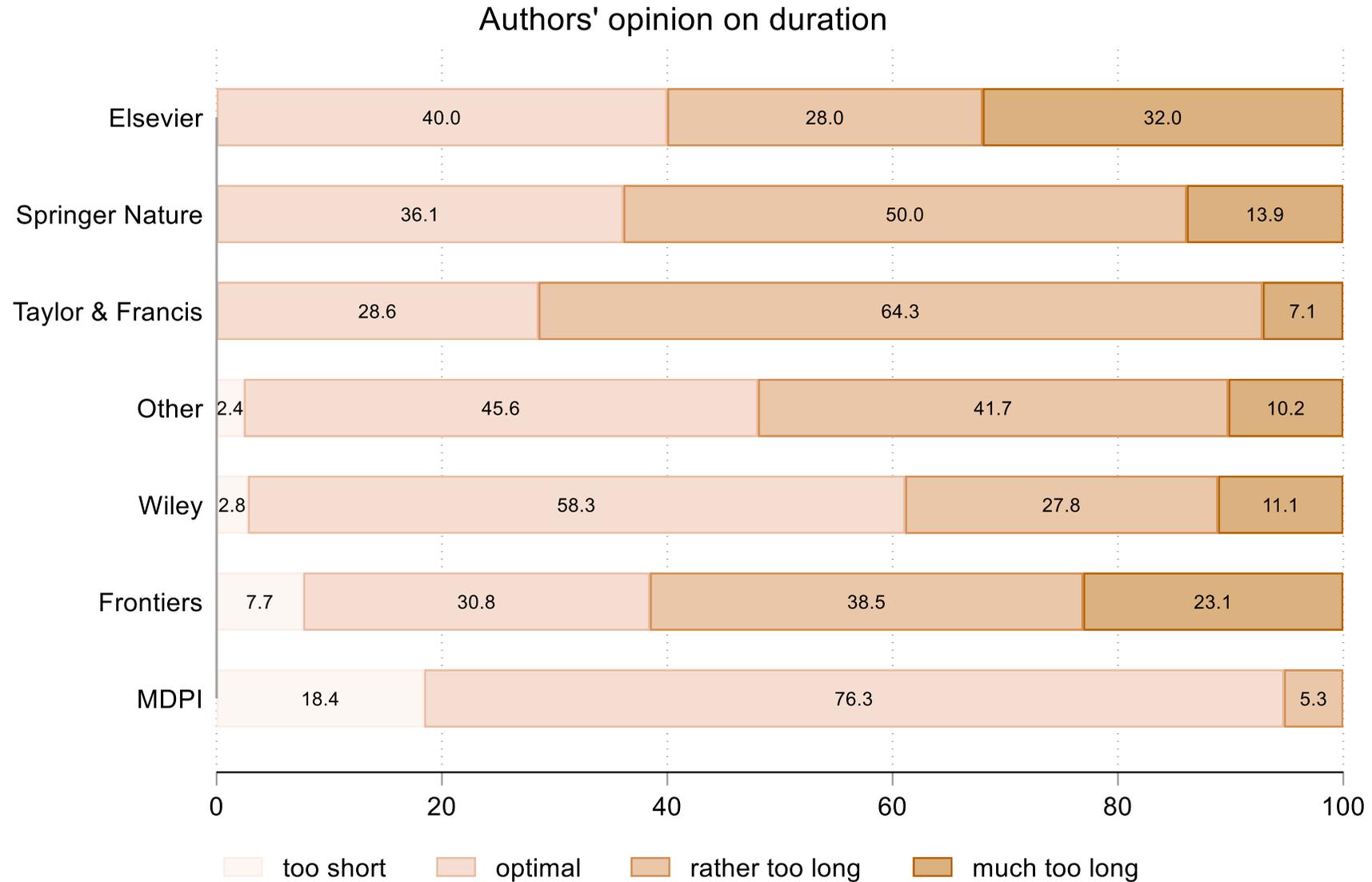


Reviewer: Time pressure from the publisher?

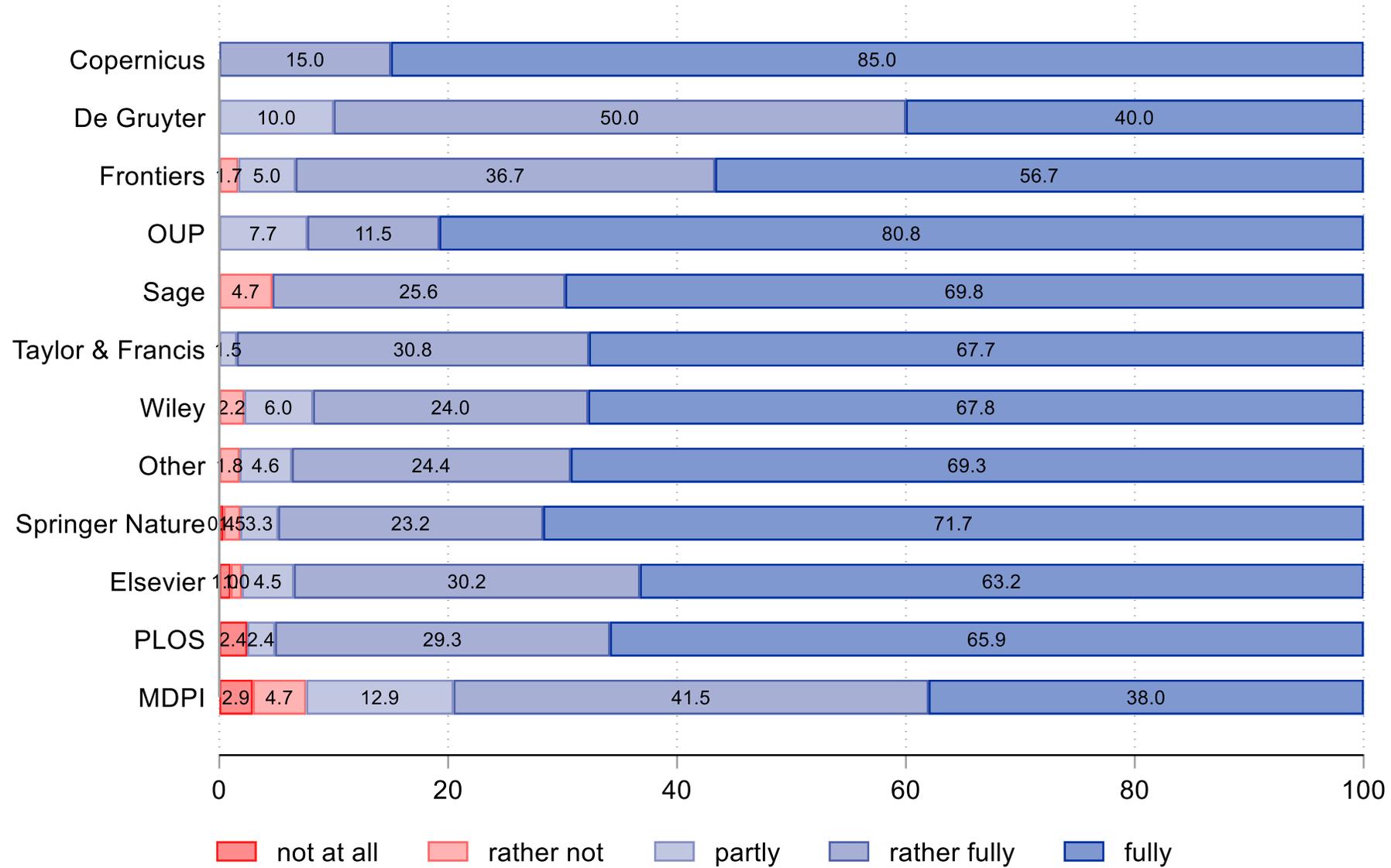


Relative frequencies in Percent. Publishers with less than 10 cases not shown.

Authors: Judgment of the duration

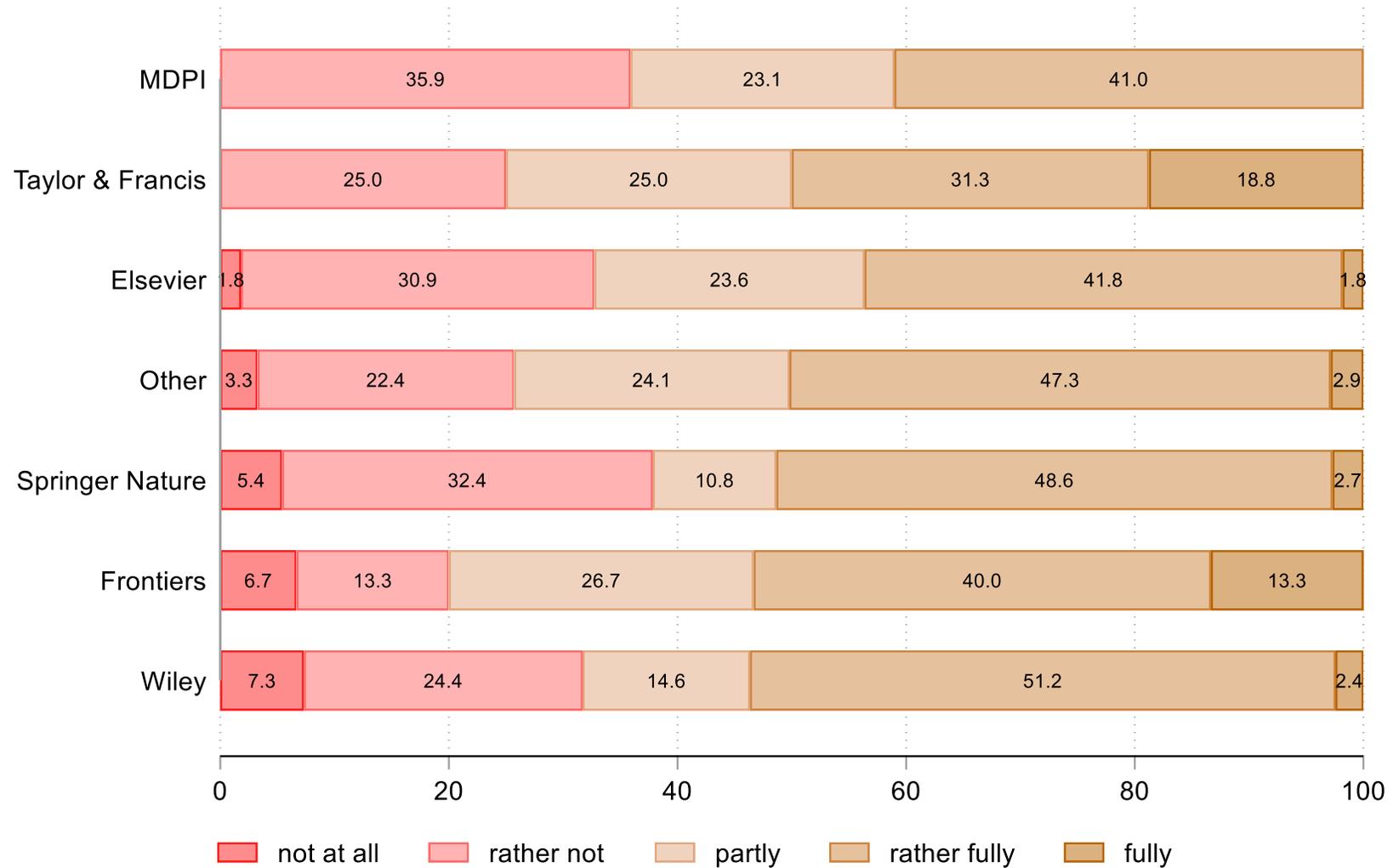


Reviewers – Expertise in the article’s subject?



Relative frequencies in Percent. Publishers with less than 10 cases not shown.

Authors – Reviewers are experts in the article's content



Relative frequencies in Percent. Publishers with less than 10 cases not shown.

Conclusion

- Expectations of the peer review process very homogeneous
 - + Transparency (funding, conflicts of interest) and expertise
 - very fast review process (except for authors)
- Evaluation according to publishers shows more variance in the perception of quality
 - Criticism of the time regime clearly recognizable
- Quality perception and assurance is subject to conflicts of interest and goals
 - Editors/reviewers - committed to scientific ethos (Merton 1968)
 - Authors – publish or perish (therefore a quick decision is welcome)

Organizational conclusions

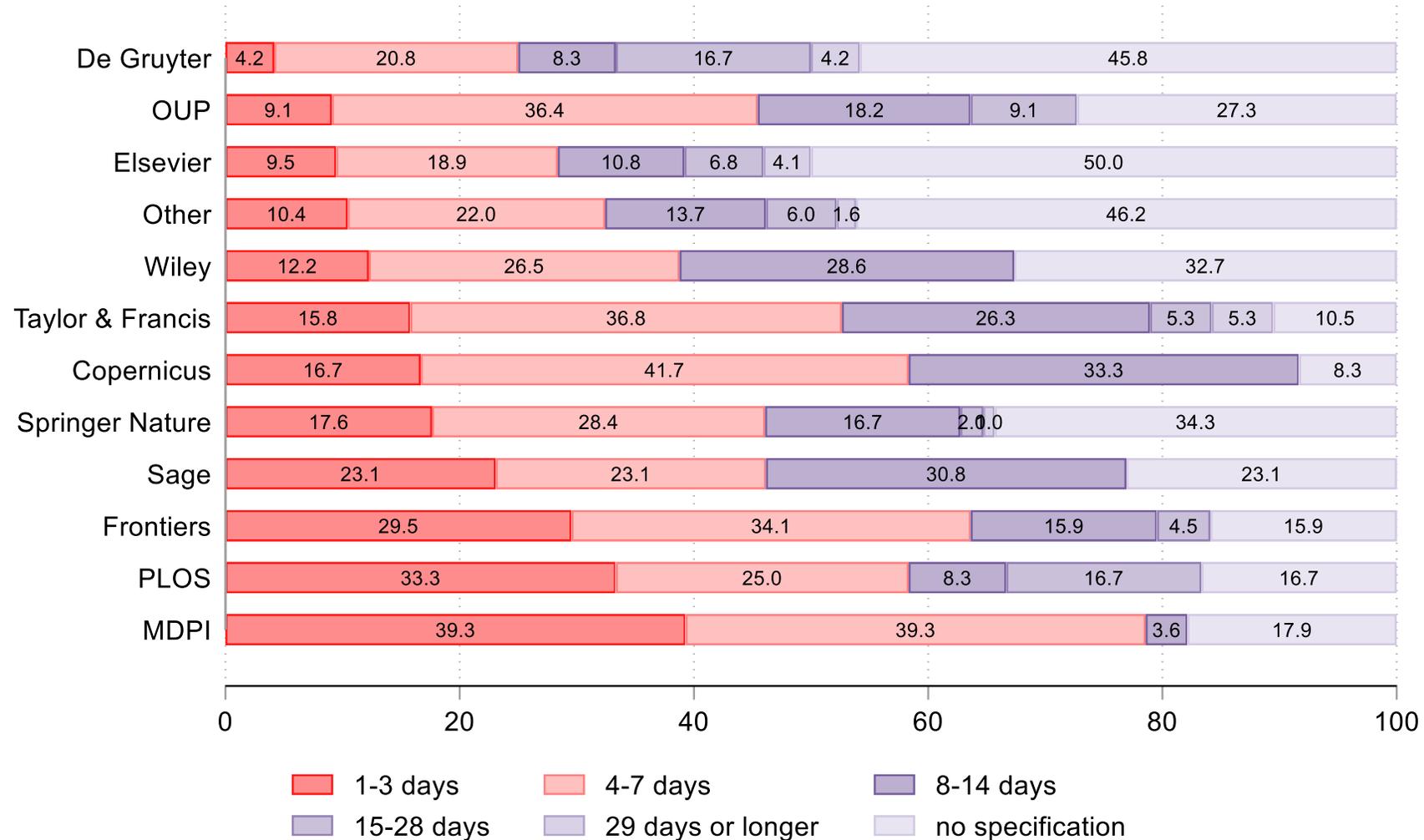
- Surveys need support and backing in the institutions
- Invitations via newsletter? -> Better to use resources differently

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Many thanks on behalf of the **EQUAP²** Teams

Appendix - Extras

Editors: How much time do you get for desk-reject?

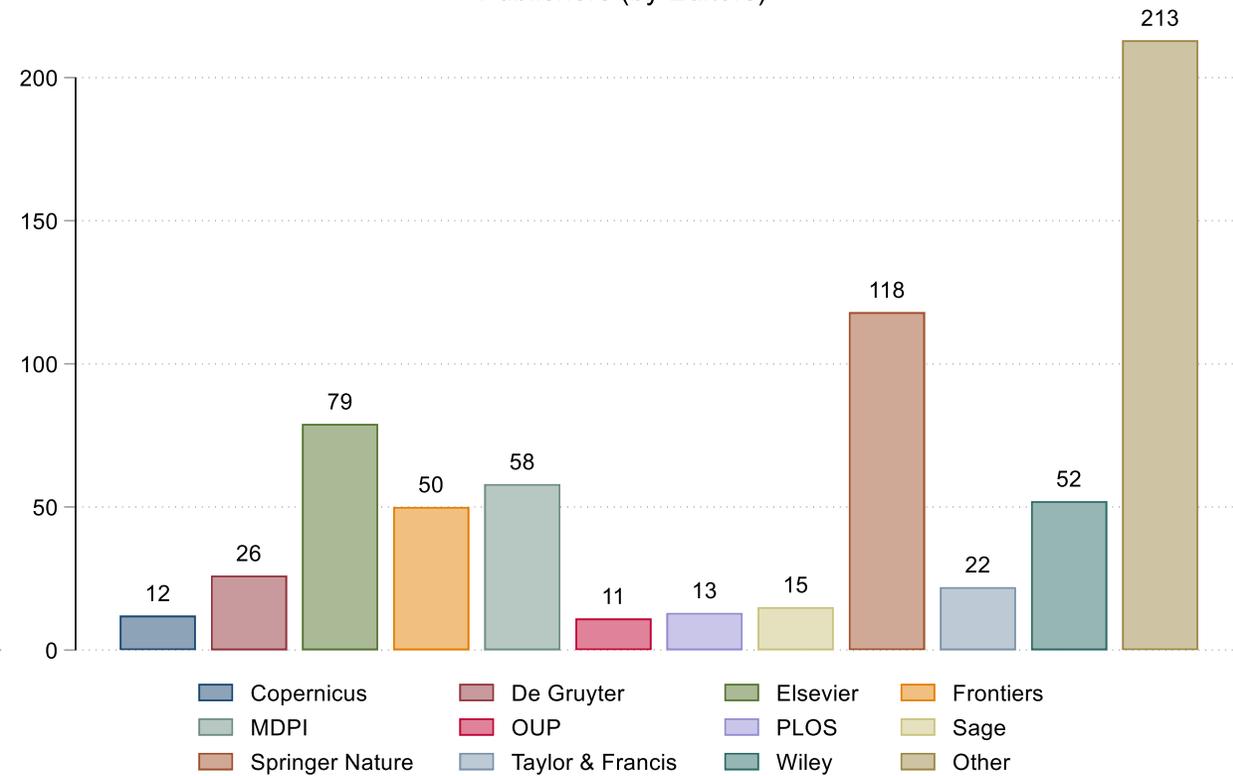


Relative frequencies in Percent. Publishers with less than 10 cases not shown. 11 cases answered 'can not refuse.'

Current-perspective

- Frequency of publisher naming

Publishers (by Editors)



Publishers (by Reviewers)

