Attachment (Commissario Montalbano)

A list of questions/answers to consider for social scientists wishing to get their papers published

Source: based on personal experience and materials I use when supervising students

Q	A
Is the meaning of important concepts clear? Are all terms clearly defined?	Revise obscure passages. Make reference to literature when explaining concepts.
Is the paper well written in terms of language?	Check tenses, grammar, spelling, overlapping passages, punctuation, jargon. Give the manuscript to somebody for proof reading.
Are the objectives of the study stated clearly?	Including a research question (in the introduction section of the article) would help. And don't forget to answer the research question at the end of the paper.
Is your paper well-structured?	Most papers are structured as follows: introduction, literature, methods, results, and discussion (the IMRAD structure). But there are other ways, of course.
If hypotheses were postulated, are they proved or not proved?	Check for possible (types of) errors and evidence of bias. Is the sample size big enough to justify firm conclusions?
Does the literature review, if any, provide an indication of the state of knowledge in the subject? Is your topic placed in the context of the area of study as a whole?	Indicate the gaps in literature/our understanding of a subject/topic and where your work fills those gaps. But do not put other authors down to increase the apparent importance of your work. Do not clutter the critical literature review with too many items ("Look what I read!"). Focus strictly on literature necessary for your paper's argument.

Are the selected methods of data collection accurately described? Are they suitable for the task? Why were they chosen?	If you did a qualitative study and heavily relied on interview data or document analysis, discuss representativeness, self-selection, limitations, triangulation. It's all about selecting, organizing and classifying information. So, lots of choices are required.
If the article is (partly) about understanding relationships between phenomena or meant to suggest better classifications, did you make these relationships explicit?	Not all facts speak for themselves. (If you have a different opinion, ask Donald Trump.)
Are all references included?	Check for omissions and incomplete references.
Why did you choose this journal for your paper?	Think about your audience. And insert a few references to articles that were published earlier in this journal. Ask yourself if your paper covers debates of interest to your chosen journal and why your paper helps the journal advance those debates.
Is the article perhaps a bit too long?	Check length is according to the journal's requirements.
Do you need to thank someone?	Include acknowledgements and thank yous.
Any conflicts of interest?	Mention the sponsors (if any) of your study.
Is this all your own (original) work?	Avoid plagiarism. And also avoid self-plagiarism. If you are standing on the shoulders of giants, give them a mention/reference.
Why not use a bullet list or a picture to brighten up the story?	Bullet lists or pictures stand out in the text.