

American Political Science Review Editorial Report: Executive Summary (Fall 2023)

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Editor's note: This report is adapted from the full report presented to the APSR Editorial Board in October 2023. Scan to read the full report online!

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The current editorial team began their editorship on June 1, 2020. We have worked to maintain and improve the quality and integrity of the *American Political Science Review* while broadening its readership, relevance, and contributor pool and expanding its commitment to research ethics. Our plan in our last year as editors is to continue these efforts.

- We have sought to expand our readership through our social media strategies, which include Tweeting and publishing blog posts with authors. These efforts have paid off, as evident in the significant jump in Journal Impact Factor (JIF) we experienced since our team took over (from 4.2 in 2019 to 8 in 2021 and a slight drop to 6.8 in 2022). The median Altmetric Attention Scores for articles published in 2020 increased to 49, dropping a little to 47 over the past two years. These measures are only one way of evaluating success, but they nevertheless speak to the viability of our social media strategies.
- We have substantially increased our Open Access articles so that almost 76.5% of our pieces have been published as Open Access articles in 2023 thus far, and 91% of the last issue was available through Open Access.
- Our submissions increased the year after our team started by 470 manuscripts. After 2020-2021, they dropped by 184 manuscripts, which we attribute to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the increase that often occurs in the first year when a team begins its tenure. Submissions have subsequently remained roughly the same this past year with a slight increase.
- Our overall acceptance rate stands at 7.9%, a 2% increase from last year. The percentage of desk rejects stands at 45.7%, and the proportion of papers rejected after peer review stands at 43.1%.
- We have reduced the median days from submission to first invitation for peer review from 13 (prior team) to 10; from submission to reject after peer review from 84 (prior

team) to 74.5; and from submission to invitation to revise after peer review from 129.5 (prior team) to 89. Our median days from submission to desk reject stands at 10, which is longer than the six days of the previous team due to our policy of requiring at least two editors to sign off on a desk reject.

- Our team committed to using the entire page allocation of the journal. In the first volume entirely managed by our team we published 1,524 pages or 102 manuscripts of research content, which is nearly double that of recent editorial teams. We maintained this page usage this past year, publishing 1,515 pages of content and 100 manuscripts.
- The proportion of accepted articles focusing on Race, Ethnicity, and Politics is the largest reported by the four most recent teams. The proportion of accepted manuscripts in International Relations has increased from those of the prior team.
- Looking at the proportion of accepted articles using specific approaches, we see that the most significant increases remain the proportion of articles that employ qualitative case studies, critical or post-structuralist approaches, and ethnographies, which is consistent with our vision for the journal.
- Our team has continued to see modest increases in the submission and acceptance of articles by people of color and people identifying as women.

THE TEAM

We are an all-woman team with broad past editorial experience, methodological expertise, and a background in every subfield of the discipline. Our team is also diverse along the lines of class background, race, ethnicity, and sexuality, and several of us bring research expertise in these areas to the table. Our expectations and beliefs are that the team's breadth has helped attract submissions from a broader cross-section of scholarship. We have designated two co-Lead Editors who oversee the smooth running of the journal, with one of the co-Leads changing every six months.

This past year, we lost two members of the team: Laurel Weldon, who became the Dean of Arts and Social Sciences at Simon Fraser University, and Valeria Sinclair Chapman, who took on a post outside of academia as Deputy Director of STEMM Equity Achievement at the American Association for the Advancement of Science. We did not attempt to replace them because we felt the existing team could absorb their tasks and that it would take too much time to identify, select, and onboard

new team members.

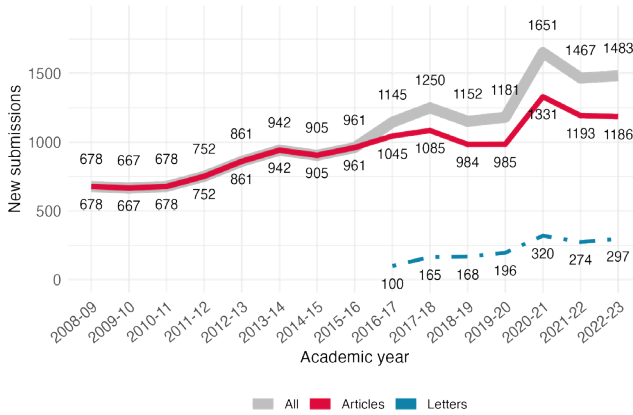
There have been minor changes in the makeup of the Board since the last Annual Report in August 2022, with two new members joining and one leaving. The Editorial Board currently includes 112 members.

SUBMISSIONS, TURNAROUND TIMES, AND DECISIONS

NEW MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSIONS OVERVIEW

APSR's submissions had been trending upward until 2020-21, and then they declined somewhat in 2021-22, where they have remained (Figure 1). The proportion of manuscripts submitted as letters, a format introduced in 2016, has substantially increased from 168 in 2018-19 to 320 in 2020-21 and leveling off at 297 in 2022-23.

Figure 1. New article and letter submissions, 2008-2023 academic years



AY2019-20 = 07/01/2019-05/31/2020 (11 months).
Starting AY2020-21, AY runs June 1-May 31.

Includes all new submissions, 07/01/2008-07/31/2023. Source: @APSRjournal (2023).

Note: "New" refers to manuscripts (either Letter or Article) submitted to the APSR for the first time.

WORKFLOW AND TURNAROUND TIMES

Our turnaround times remain comparable to or better than those of prior teams (Table 1). Our submission rates have been substantially higher than those of earlier teams, particularly the UCLA and UNT teams.

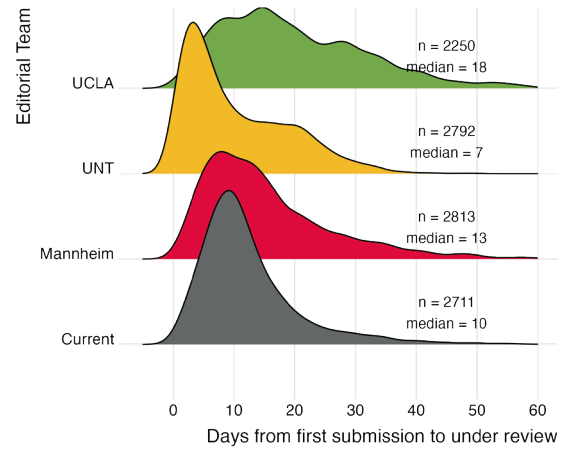
Table 1. Submissions, Decisions, and Turnaround Times

Indicator	UCLA	UNT	Mannheim	Current
Number of new submissions	2,753	3,663	4,719	4,901
Number of new submissions sent out for peer review	2,235	2,787	2,809	2,706
Number of new submissions desk rejected	517	874	1,910	2,126
Number of new submissions rejected after peer review	2,037	2,536	2,442	2,006
Number of invitations to revise after peer review	179	251	364	521
Median days from submission to first invitation for peer review	18	7	13	10
Median days from submission to desk reject	14	4	6	10
Median days from submission to reject after peer review	81	62	84	74.5
Median days from submission to invitation to revise after peer review	132	92	129.5	89

Note: The table includes manuscripts submitted between 07/01/2008 and 07/31/2023.

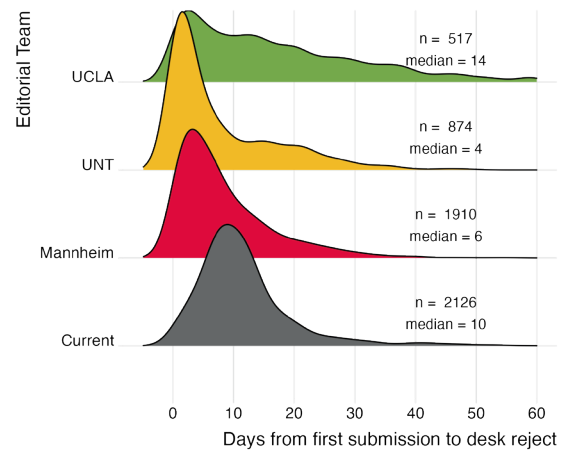
Figures 2-5 plot the distribution of turnaround days for new manuscripts.

Figure 2. Days from initial submission to under review



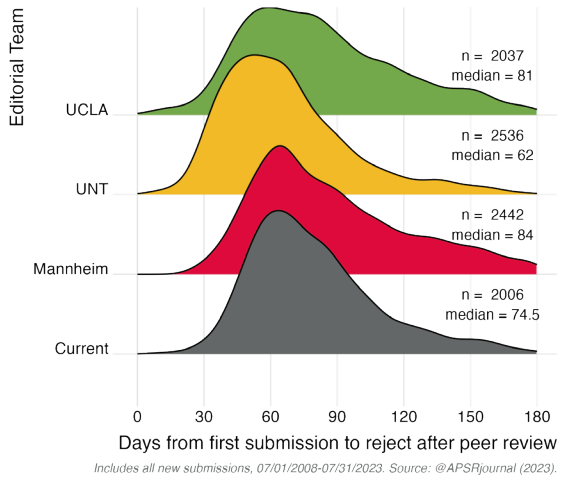
Includes all new submissions, 07/01/2008-07/31/2023. Source: @APSRjournal (2023).

Figure 3. Days from initial submission to desk reject



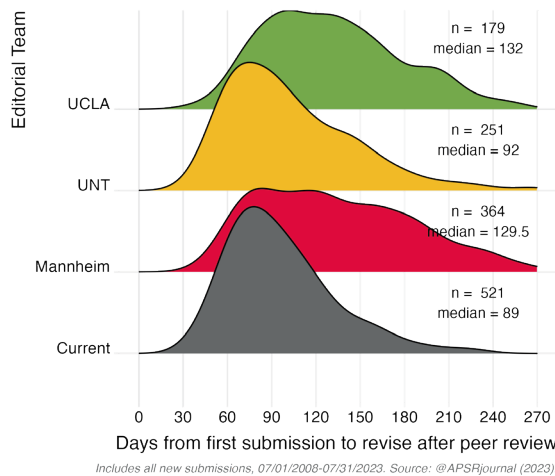
Includes all new submissions, 07/01/2008-07/31/2023. Source: @APSRjournal (2023).

Figure 4. Days from initial submission to reject after peer review



Includes all new submissions, 07/01/2008-07/31/2023. Source: @APSRjournal (2023).

Figure 5. Days from initial submission to revise after peer review



Turnaround times reflect not only the time needed to identify and invite reviewers but also the likelihood that invited reviewers will agree to review and complete their reviews before a decision is made (summarized in Table 2).

Table 2. Reviewers, All New Manuscripts with initial decisions, 2008-2023

	UCLA	UNT	Mannheim	Current
Mean reviewers invited per manuscript	5.2	6.3	5.1	6.3
Mean reviews completed per manuscript	2.7	3.0	2.9	3.0
Percent of total invited that are completed	51.8%	48.0%	56.9%	47.6%

Note: The table includes manuscripts submitted between 07/01/2008 and 07/31/2023.

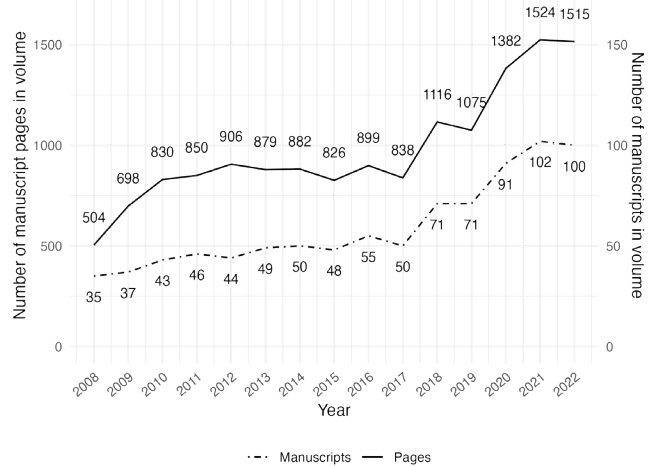
SUMMARY OF SUBMISSIONS AND ACCEPTANCE DECISIONS

We have so far desk rejected 45.7% of submissions compared with the prior team’s rate of 40.5%, which is higher than the UNT and the UCLA teams’ desk reject rates. As we have become more experienced at editing, our desk rejection rates increased by 4% in the last year. We have invited peer reviewers to provide feedback on about 55.2% of new submissions. Our team’s overall final acceptance rate for all submissions that were initially submitted and have a final decision by our team is 7.9%. We note that calculating annual acceptance rates can be fraught because, in any given year, some accepted manuscripts were initially submitted in previous years, and many new submissions may not have a final decision until a subsequent year.

OVERALL NUMBER OF PAGES AND MANUSCRIPTS

Our team committed to using the entire page allocation of the journal. Figure 6 shows the number of articles and letters published every year since 2008. The relative increase in both submissions (Figure 1) and published content (Figure 6) suggests that we are making gains toward our team’s stated goals of increasing submissions and acceptances, while only modestly increasing the overall acceptance rate. This is also consistent with our commitment to continue publishing the same types of research typically associated with the APSR while expanding the journal’s remit to embrace greater substantive and methodological diversity.

Figure 6. Number of pages and manuscripts in each volume of APSR



Note: Counts for 2019 corrected because vol. 113, n. 4 is missing from Web of Science database. Source: Web of Science (2023).

SUBMISSIONS AND ACCEPTANCES BY SUBFIELD AND METHOD

Table 3. New submissions by Subfield and Editorial Team, 2008-2023

	UCLA	UNT	Mannheim	Current
American Government & Politics	636 (22.9%)	725 (19.8%)	888 (18.8%)	980 (20.0%)
Comparative Politics	769 (27.7%)	1,142 (31.1%)	1,434 (30.3%)	1,491 (30.4%)
Formal Theory	193 (7.0%)	183 (5.0%)	264 (5.6%)	193 (3.9%)
International Relations	460 (16.6%)	616 (16.8%)	675 (14.3%)	701 (14.3%)
Methodology	96 (3.5%)	111 (3.0%)	197 (4.2%)	192 (3.9%)
Normative Political Theory	448 (16.1%)	565 (15.4%)	683 (14.4%)	685 (14.0%)
Other	82 (3.0%)	187 (5.1%)	408 (8.6%)	385 (7.8%)
Race, Ethnicity, & Politics	91 (3.3%)	140 (3.8%)	179 (3.8%)	283 (5.8%)
Total	2,775 (100.0%)	3,669 (100.0%)	4,728 (100.0%)	4,910 (100.0%)

Note: Section category chosen by the corresponding author. The table includes all new submissions from 07/01/2008 to 07/31/2023.

Regarding accepted manuscripts (Table 4), we note that the proportion of accepted articles focusing on Race, Ethnicity, and Politics, 6.2%, is the largest reported by the four most recent teams. The proportion of accepted manuscripts in International Relations has increased from those of the Mannheim team and has returned to comparable levels of the UCLA team.

Table 4. Accepted manuscripts by Subfield and Editorial Team making final decision, 2008-2023

	UCLA	UNT	Mannheim	Current
American Government & Politics	28 (22.4%)	38 (17.6%)	55 (20.4%)	88 (22.6%)
Comparative Politics	43 (34.4%)	80 (37.0%)	101 (37.5%)	143 (36.7%)
Formal Theory	11 (8.8%)	5 (2.3%)	28 (10.4%)	11 (2.8%)
International Relations	12 (9.6%)	24 (11.1%)	16 (5.9%)	37 (9.5%)
Methodology	2 (1.6%)	8 (3.7%)	12 (4.5%)	14 (3.6%)
Normative Political Theory	25 (20.0%)	56 (25.9%)	40 (14.9%)	57 (14.6%)
Other	2 (1.6%)	1 (0.5%)	8 (3.0%)	16 (4.1%)
Race, Ethnicity, & Politics	2 (1.6%)	4 (1.9%)	9 (3.3%)	24 (6.2%)
Total	125 (100.0%)	216 (100.0%)	269 (100.0%)	390 (100.0%)

Note: Section category is chosen by the corresponding author. The table includes manuscripts with final decisions between 07/01/2008 and 07/31/2023. Excludes manuscripts currently under review and may include manuscripts originally submitted under a previous editorial team.

PRIMARY METHODOLOGY ACCORDING TO CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

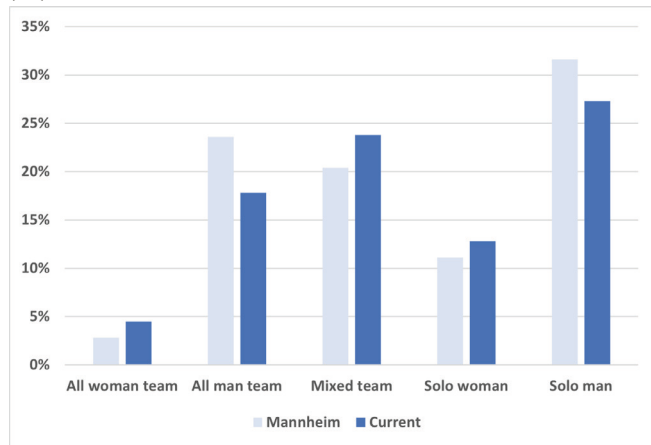
Table 5. New submissions and accepted manuscripts by Method and Editorial Team

Methodology	Mannheim		Current	
	New Submissions	Accepted Manuscripts	New Submissions	Accepted Manuscripts
Case study/Small N	151 (5.0%)	2 (1.0%)	269 (5.7%)	18 (4.7%)
Critical Theory/Post-structuralist	45 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)	92 (2.0%)	9 (2.4%)
Ethnographic	15 (0.5%)	0 (0.0%)	36 (0.8%)	2 (0.5%)
Experimental (lab, survey, or field)	476 (15.8%)	36 (18.3%)	925 (19.6%)	77 (20.3%)
Formal	261 (8.7%)	24 (12.2%)	269 (5.7%)	13 (3.4%)
Interpretive	234 (7.8%)	12 (6.1%)	359 (7.6%)	29 (7.6%)
Normative	240 (8.0%)	10 (5.1%)	413 (8.8%)	26 (6.8%)
Statistical-Observational	1595 (52.9%)	113 (57.4%)	2345 (49.8%)	206 (54.2%)
Total	3,017 (100.0%)	197 (100.0%)	4,708 (100.0%)	380 (100.0%)

Note: These categorizations are chosen by the corresponding author using a submission questionnaire approved by the APSA Council in January 2018. The corresponding author chose the primary methodology. The table includes new submissions from 01/01/2018 to 07/31/2023, excluding those with missing values. Accepted manuscripts may include manuscripts submitted initially under a previous editorial team.

DEMOGRAPHICS: AUTHORS

Figure 7. New submissions by Gender and Editorial Team (%)

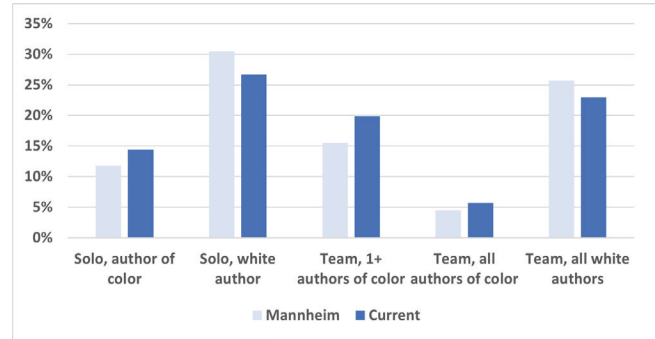


Note: Self-identified binary gender. As of 07/31/2023, 148 manuscripts (1.5%) have had one or more authors who identify as non-binary since 2018. 9,475 manuscripts have authors who report binary gender identities. The figure includes new submissions from 01/01/2018 to 07/31/2023.

MEASURES OF IMPACT: CITATIONS

A journal's impact factor (JIF) is the average number of citations in a given year to an article published in the last two years. It is calculated by dividing the number of citations to all articles in the two-year window by the total number of articles published in that period. The 2022 impact factor for APSR is 6.8, an increase from 4.2 since the current team took over in 2020

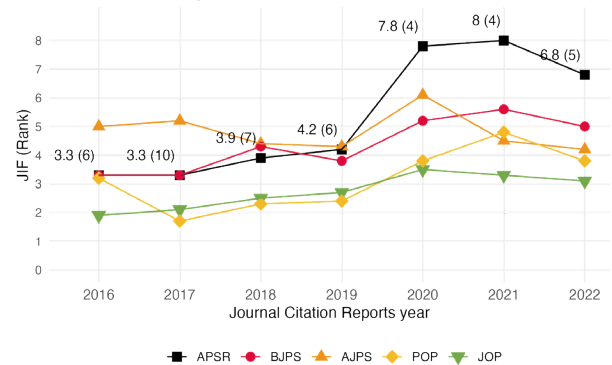
Figure 8. New submissions by Race and Ethnicity (%)



Note: Self-identified race or ethnicity. The figure includes new submissions from 01/01/2018 to 07/31/2023.

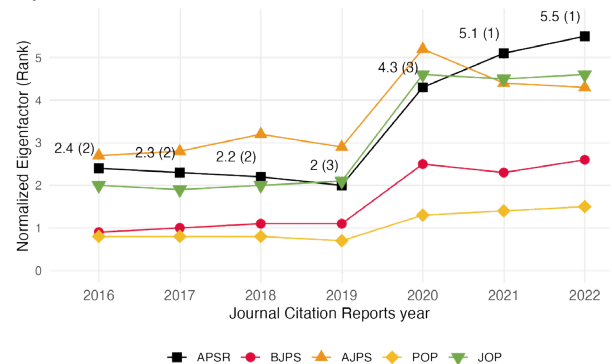
(Figure 9). This means that, on average, an article appearing in the journal in 2022 was cited about 6.8 times. Another way to measure the change is with the normalized Eigenfactor Score, which is the ratio of the number of citations to the total number of articles in the past five years and cited in the Journal Citation Reports adjusted for the number of journals in the collection. The APSR has more than doubled its Eigenfactor Score since 2019 (Figure 10).

Figure 9: Journal Impact Factor, 2016-2022



Note: American Political Science Review (APSR), British Journal of Political Science (BJPS), American Journal of Political Science (AJPS), Perspectives on Politics (POP), Journal of Politics (JOP).

Figure 10. Journal citation reports with normalized Eigenfactor, 2016-2022



Source: Journal Citation Reports, Clarivate, 2017-23.

Note: American Political Science Review (APSR), British Journal of Political Science (BJPS), American Journal of Political Science (AJPS), Perspectives on Politics (POP), Journal of Politics (JOP).

CONCLUSION

Based on our three years of editing the *APSR*, we can say that we have met or exceeded most of our goals. We have developed and implemented policies that aim to promote the principles we articulated in our initial proposal to serve as editors: editorial transparency; editorial checks and balances; a commitment to research ethics; substantive, methodological, and representational diversity; active engagement with APSA membership; and

modernizing the journal's communications. We have increased the journal's visibility through our social media outreach. These strategies resulted in significant journal impact factors and Altmetric increases. We have also managed to maintain reasonable turnaround times for authors despite the challenges posed by the global pandemic. We continue to monitor our submissions and will be redoubling our efforts to ensure that political scientists submit their best work to the *APSR*. As a cohesive, collaborative, and effective team, we are excited about what we have accomplished, even though we still have far to go. ■

APSA's Research Department: Datasets

The Research Department at APSA gathers, analyzes, and archives information to create a knowledge base on and identify trends in the political science discipline and the profession. Using administrative data and through surveys, we create datasets on **enrollments, curriculums, faculty, hiring trends, graduate placements, incoming graduate classes, job advertisements, and membership demographics over time**. Public, anonymized versions of these datasets, shown as icons below, are available for our members to download. Please see <https://bit.ly/3MG5IUN> for more information on how to access these datasets. Please note that, by downloading our datasets, you are agreeing to our Terms of Use, available here: <https://bit.ly/3ML03fx>. For any inquiries or questions, contact us at surveys@apsanet.org.

Datasets on the profession available for download include:



Departmental
Survey



Graduate
Placement Survey



Ejobs Data



P-Wam

To see the available datasets, you can go to **Data on the Profession** and select “**Tools & Datasets**” in our website, which provides links to all the available datasets in chronological order.

To download the datasets, you will need to use your account with APSA, and agree to our **Terms and Conditions** for using our data. Once you have logged in, your account will allow you to download the data, as well as the pertaining codebook and questionnaire.

Access all data downloads here:

<https://www.apsanet.org/RESOURCES/Data-on-the-Profession/Data-sets-on-the-Profession/Tools-and-Datasets>