

Annual Report of the Editors of the *American Political Science Review*, 2010–2011

Ronald Rogowski, *Lead Editor, APSR*

We report on the journal's operations during the year from July 1, 2010, to June 30, 2011. We once again express our thanks to the APSA: Presidents Brady and Pateman, the staff (especially Michael Brintnall and Polly Karpowicz), Council, and Publications Committee. (While we have enjoyed ready access to previous presidents, it has been a new experience to have an APSA president right down the hall from the lead editor.) Members of our Editorial Board, this year as last, have given us wise counsel on more than a few submissions. Joseph Riser, our senior editor, has continued his seemingly tireless and unflappable service; and our editorial assistants, Joslyn Barnhart, Darin Dewitt, and Beltrán Undurraga, have pulled together in harness as have few previous teams, keeping our technical processing rapid and our backlog almost always at zero. As rotation on the panel of co-editors continues, we express our profound gratitude to departing editor Jeff Lewis, who exhibited a new level of masochism by becoming UCLA department chair, but who also agreed to finish (and since has finished) all of his pending assignments and to be available for consultations on an "as needed" basis. We also thank, once again, the authors who submitted their papers for consideration, the referees who reviewed them, and the patience, dedication, and forbearance that all demonstrated.

SUBMISSIONS AND PROCESSING

The number of papers submitted

As table 1 makes clear, we have reached a gratifying "steady state" of submissions: this year's numbers, whether for total or for new submissions, varied by barely a percentage point from the previous year's. We extended 93 invitations to revise and resubmit (previous year: 104) and received back 101 revised manuscripts (last year: 93). Three thousand fifty eight invitations to review these submissions were extended (last year: 3003), and as

in previous years almost exactly three-quarters of these invitations (2,290) were accepted. We received back a total of 1,575 completed reviews, of which 54% recommended rejection, 22% major revisions, 17% minor revisions, and 7% acceptance. The average referee completed 1.2 reviews during the year and required 33 days to complete the review (we request 28 days). Forty-eight percent of referees, as against a small majority last year, completed the assignment within the requested time.

Turnaround times

We also seem to have reached a steady state with regard to turnaround times and believe we have achieved what is likely an irreducible minimum, at least for a team process, of about 70 days from receipt to first decision (table 2).

The mix of submitted papers

While again there was little variation from the previous year, two cumulative trends now seem significant. Submissions in American politics have declined (as they were doing also under Lee Sigelman's editorship), while submissions in comparative politics, after at first falling off sharply, have steadily risen during this team's term in office (table 3a). There has been little variation in other fields—and recall that the field is self-classified by the author(s).

Table 1.

Submissions per Year

YEAR	NUMBER OF SUBMISSIONS	
	TOTAL	NEW
2010–11	779	685
2009–10	770	677
2008–09	757	693
2007–08	829	778
2006–07	619	543
2005–06	692	596
2004–05	623	538
2003–04	611	523
2002–03	672	546
2001–02	615	509

As regards "Approach" (as classified by the editorial assistants), submissions that embody "Formal Theory" have continued their decline, while those in the "Interpretive/Conceptual" category have risen (table 3b: more on this below). Variation in the other approaches has been slight. Beginning with the 2011–2012 submissions, we will introduce a new and, we believe, more meaningful category, namely "Qualitative/Empirical."

Table 2.

Elapsed Time (Average Number of Days) in Review Process, 2010–11

PHASE OF REVIEW PROCESS	DAYS
Receipt to Editor Assignment	09.3
Editor Assignment to First Reviewer Assignment	10.6
Editor Assignment to First Decision	51.0
Receipt to First Decision	70.9

Table 3a.
Distribution of Papers Submitted, 2010–11 (%)

YEAR	FIELD							
	AMERICAN POLITICS	COMPARATIVE POLITICS	INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	NORMATIVE THEORY	FORMAL THEORY	METHODS	RACE, ETHNICITY, AND POLITICS	OTHER
2010–11	20	30	17	17	6	3	4	3
2009–10	23	29	16	18	6	4	3	2
2008–09	25	22	16	15	8	3	3	8
2007–08	26	21	17	14	7	4	3	8
2006–07	31	31	15	15	5	3	n.a.	n.a.

al relations and methods underrepresented, while with regard to the other fields the difference between submission and acceptance rates was slight. As regards “Approach” (cf. table 3b), acceptances this year (in contrast to last) were roughly in line with submissions (which, again, were mostly from the previous year).

We have made some breakthrough in drawing excellent qualitative work back to the *APSR*, although still not enough. The invitation that went (with the good offices of Colin Elman) to all members of the APSA organized section Qualitative and Multi-Method Research already seems to have elicited more submissions, and important qualitative work (including a lead article) has again begun to appear in our pages.

VISIBILITY

We are gratified to note that, continuing last year’s steep rise, the *APSR* has resumed its position, after a three-year hiatus, as the top-ranked journal (by Thomson-Reuters Impact Factor) in political science. The 2010 rankings were as follows for the top ten journals:

<i>APSR</i>	3.278
<i>Annual Review of Political Science</i>	3000
<i>AJPS</i>	2.588
<i>New Left Review</i>	2.333
<i>Global Environmental Politics</i>	2.231
<i>Politics and Gender</i>	2.107
<i>Public Opinion Quarterly</i>	1.933
<i>Journal of Conflict Resolution</i>	1.883
<i>Political Analysis</i>	1.864
<i>BJPS</i>	1.822

In fact, *APSR*’s current impact factor equals its previous decadal peak, achieved in 2005. Other metrics of course also matter, and will doubtless be cited by other journals: in both the Thomson-Reuters five-year “Article Influence Score” and “Eigenfactor Score,” *APSR* placed second (behind *Political Analysis*); in the five-year impact factor it was ranked third, behind *Political Analysis* and *AJPS*.

Table 3b.
Distribution of Papers Submitted, 2006–11 (%)

YEAR	APPROACH					
	FORMAL	QUANTITATIVE	FORMAL AND QUANTITATIVE	SMALL-N	INTERPRETIVE/ CONCEPTUAL	OTHER
2010–11	8	50	10	3	29	<1
2009–10	11	49	12	1	26	1
2008–09	12	49	13	2	23	1
2007–08	14	49	8	2	25	2
2006–07	11	55	4	2	24	4

Many of the submissions that really belong under this rubric have instead fallen into the “Interpretive/Conceptual” basket.

OUTCOMES

Encouraged by the APSA Council we have increased our use of summary rejections. This year we held such “desk rejects” about constant at 20%, re-introducing a category of “Inappropriate Submission” to describe the papers that are clearly misdirected op-eds, policy recommendations, and the like (tables 4a and 4b). We extended a revise and resubmit (R&R) or conditional accept to 6.3% of the papers newly submitted (table 4a), as against 9% in the previous year (table 4b). We note particularly, and will examine further, the sharp decline in initial invitations to revise and resubmit (5.7% this year, as against 8.2% last year—a year-on-year decline of some 30%). Impressionistically, however, we see (a) more referee recommendations, which we have often followed, of redirection to a more field-specific journal and (b) our own greater use of a second round of revisions (of the revisions we received back during the year just concluded,

51 were first-round revisions, while 50 were second-round revisions or conditional accepts. In 2009–10, 61 of those received back were first-round revisions, while only 35 were second- or third-round revisions. Of the first-round revisions received back during the year just concluded, 62% were accepted or conditionally accepted; of the second-round revisions received, 91% were accepted or conditionally accepted. Of all the papers on which a R&R had initially been extended, 85% (82/97) were ultimately accepted (last year the figure was 87%). As has been the case through many editorships, we endeavor to extend an R&R only in cases where we think the ultimate likelihood of acceptance is .8 or better.

The array of papers accepted for publication in the current year—a total of 51, more than in any previous year of our tenure—is categorized by field and approach in tables 5a and 5b. As regards field (cf. table 3a, 2009–10 submissions¹), and in comparison with shares of papers submitted, American politics and formal theory this year were overrepresented (both in sharp contrast to the previous year), internation-

Table 4a.

Outcome of First Round of the Review Process (%)

OUTCOME	2010-11
Withdrawn	0.8
Inappropriate submission	2.2
Summary reject (without reviews)	18.5
Reject after reviews	72.2
Invite R&R	5.7
Conditional Accept	0.6
Accept	0.0

Table 5a.

Distribution of Papers Accepted, by Field, 2009-10 (%)

FIELD	n
American Politics	24
Comparative Politics	38
International Relations	14
Normative Theory	16
Formal Theory	3
Methods	0
Race, Ethnicity, and Politics	3
Other	3

Table 4b.

Outcome of First Round of the Review Process (%)

OUTCOME	2009-10
Withdrawn, incorrect Submission	1.0
Summary reject (without reviews)	20.4
Reject after reviews	69.6
Invite R&R	8.2
Conditional Accept	0.8
Accept	0.0

Table 5b.

Distribution of Papers Accepted, by Approach, 2009-10 (%)

APPROACH	n
Formal	11
Quantitative	65
Formal and Quantitative	8
Small-n	0
Interpretive/Conceptual	16
Other	0

TRANSITION

We have all enjoyed our opportunity to contribute to the discipline, but we also look forward (some of us very eagerly) to handing off our responsibilities to the new editorial team at North Texas University on July 1, 2012. APSA has agreed to support a skeleton team at UCLA, as was done at George Washington University at the beginning of

the UCLA term, to smooth the transition. We actually expect this transition to be easier now that the *APSR* has switched to electronic submission and editing. As was also true in the previous transition, the present team will continue for a few months to handle articles that were “in the pipeline” on July 1. John Ishiyama, lead editor of the new team, has already met with us at UCLA and consulted frequently by e-mail; we all trust, and

will work in every possible way to make the transition easy and successful. ■

NOTES

1. Given the lag time between submission and ultimate acceptance, the previous year's submissions are the more appropriate basis of comparison.