

Political Research Quarterly

2017 Activity Report

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## Overview

On June 30, 2018, the current editorial board of *Political Research Quarterly* (*PRQ*) will officially end its term. Co-editors Clarissa Hayward (Washington University in St. Louis), Jeanette Mendez (Oklahoma State University), and James Scott (Texas Christian University), along with Associate Editor, Jacob Mauslein, would like to thank the Editorial Assistants (Oklahoma State University graduate students) who have worked with us over the past three years. We would also like to thank the members of the Western Political Science Association (WPSA) Executive Council, especially President Stephen Nicholson, Executive Director Richard Clucas, and Associate Director Elsa Favila; Mark Button at the University of Utah; and the staff at SAGE Publications for their support and guidance throughout our tenure at *PRQ*.

Our team has focused on promoting scholarly diversity and methodological and intellectual pluralism, in line with the values of the WPSA, while maintaining *PRQ*'s high standards of excellence. To that end, we have worked to raise the journal's profile among scholars in fields that were historically under-represented in *PRQ*, including comparative politics, international relations, and political theory. Early on in our tenure, we expanded our editorial board to increase the presence of leading scholars from each of those fields. We also organized and hosted roundtable panels at the annual meetings of WPSA, including a "Meet the Editors" roundtable in 2017, which included the *PRQ* editorial team, as well as fellow editors from *Contemporary Political Theory*, *Law and Society Review*, and *Politics, Groups, and Identities*. In addition, the editors attended specialized conferences where they worked to publicize the journal and to recruit manuscript submissions, especially from scholars in under-represented fields. In 2017, our editors attended meetings of the annual critical theory conference in Prague (Hayward), the International Studies Association Midwest (Scott) and the European International Studies Association (Scott).

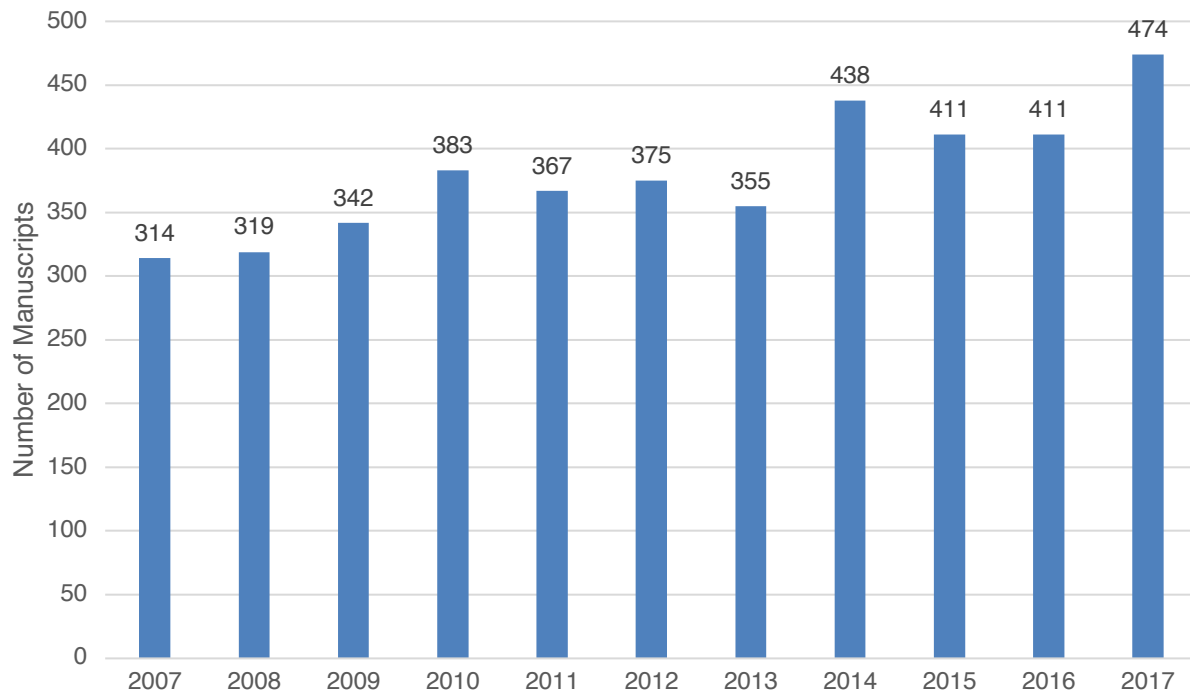
We have also worked over the course of our tenure to maintain the strong bond between WPSA and *PRQ*, by hosting well-attended receptions at the annual meetings of the WPSA and the APSA; by ensuring that winners of the WPSA's paper awards receive expedited review (that is, automatic invitations to "revise and resubmit" their papers); by informally reaching out to authors of many papers presented at the annual meeting to urge them to consider *PRQ* as a venue for publication; and by collaborating with WPSA to bring published articles and other journal news and events to members' attention.

Overall, we believe that *PRQ*'s intellectual diversity has grown over the past several years, while the quality of the work the journal publishes remains excellent.

## Manuscript Submissions

*PRQ* received a record-breaking 474 original submissions in 2017. Given the journal's page limits, this is toward the high end of the number of submissions we can receive while keeping our acceptance rate on par with other top journals (around 10-15%). A sizable increase in submissions above this level would mean an even lower acceptance rate.

**Figure 1. Original Manuscript Submissions, 2007-2017**

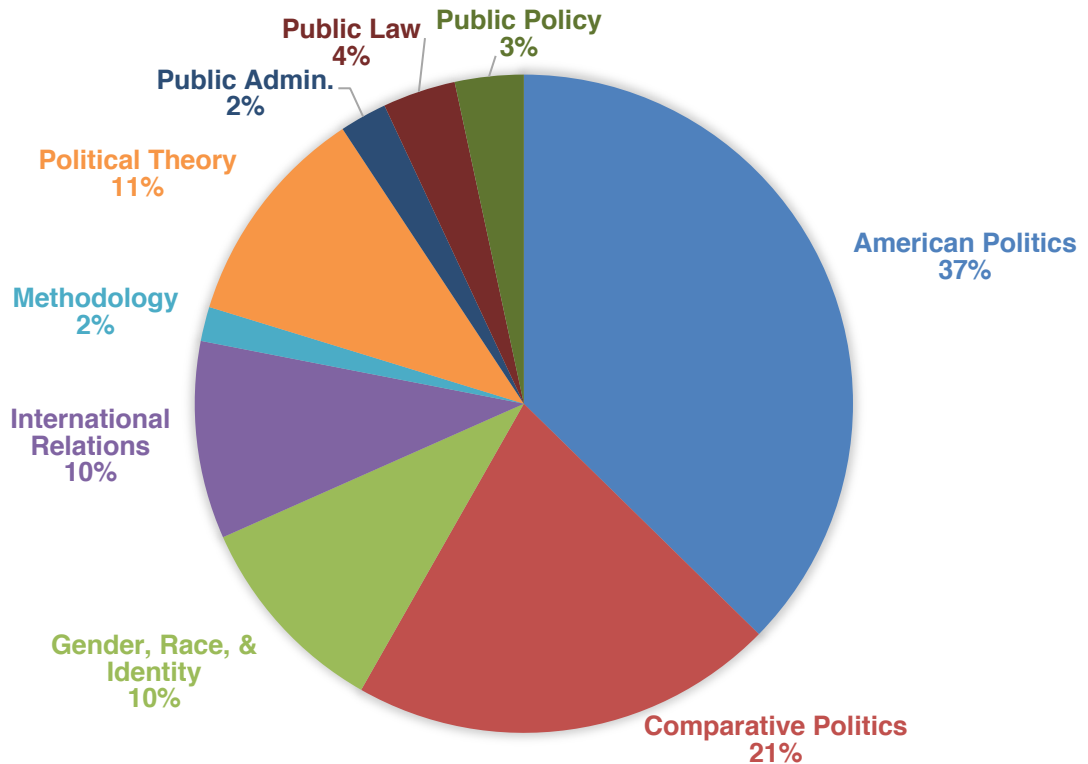


*PRQ* uses nine primary field categories for classifying manuscripts and reviewers. These are:

- American Politics
- Comparative Politics
- Gender, Race, and Identity
- International Relations
- Methodology
- Political Theory
- Public Administration
- Public Policy
- Public Law

When authors submit their research in the SAGEtrack online system, they are asked to select one of these categories as a primary field that best represents the nature of their research. Figure 2 (below) presents the breakdown of original submissions by the nine primary fields for 2017.

**Figure 2. Original Manuscript Submissions by Primary Subfield, 2017**



We are particularly pleased by the slow but steady increase in submissions from our two most under-represented fields, international relations and political theory. We are also pleased that gender, race, and identity—an important area of intellectual focus for the WPSA—constitutes ten percent of submissions. Overall, our three targeted subfields (comparative politics, international relations, and political theory) make up 42% of our submissions. American politics remains our largest field, at 37%.

In order to capture more accurately the substance of manuscripts submitted, we allow authors to designate more than one field per manuscript. Counting more than one field per manuscript (the “open count” method) fits the mission of our editorial team, since it encourages research that crosses or straddles the boundaries that demarcate fields and subfields within political science. It also may give a more accurate picture of the breakdown of submissions than does the “single count” method, which can force authors to make a difficult choice between fields when submitting their manuscript.

Table 1 (below) presents open-count submission data for 2017. These data show that, on average, about a quarter of the new submissions in 2017 made a substantial appeal to more than one field (hence the ratio of all fields to the number of manuscripts adds up to over 125%).

**Table 1. Original Manuscripts using “Open Count” Method, 2017**

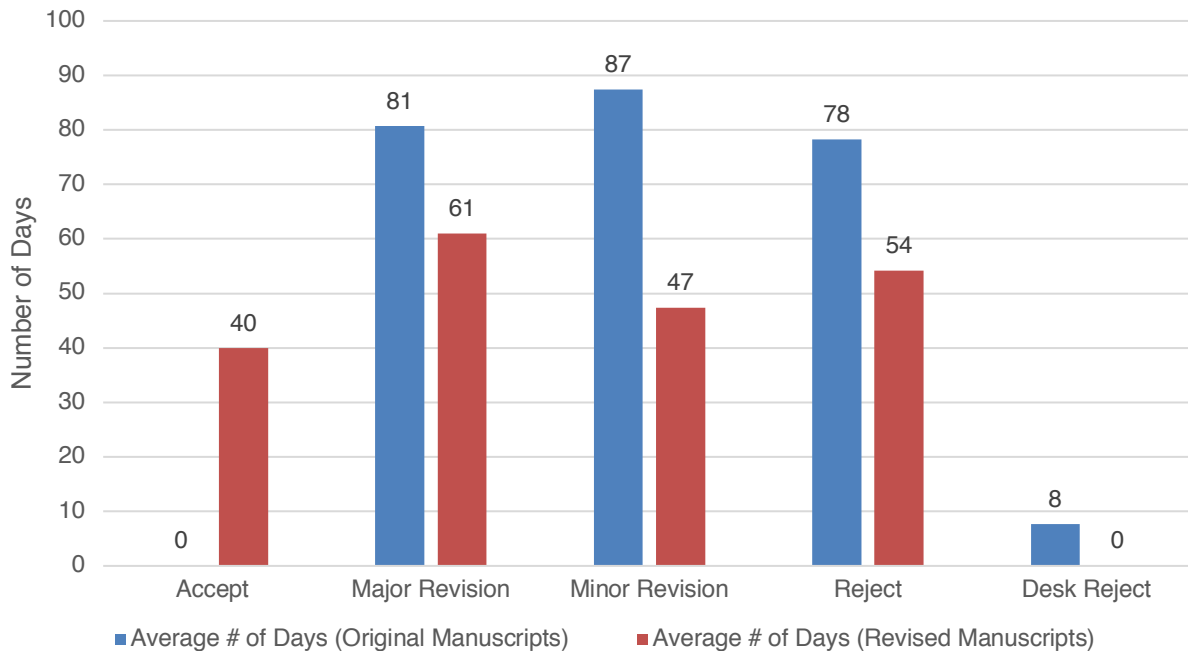
<b>Manuscript Type</b>	<b>Primary Field</b>	<b>Secondary Field</b>	<b>Total Fields</b>	<b>Percentage of all Manuscripts</b>
American Politics	177	40	217	45.78%
Comparative Politics	99	13	112	23.63%
Gender, Race, & Identity	48	13	61	12.87%
International Relations	46	5	51	10.76%
Methodology	8	6	14	2.95%
Political Theory	52	6	58	12.24%
Public Administration	11	4	15	3.16%
Public Law	17	13	30	6.33%
Public Policy	16	23	39	8.23%
<i>Summary</i>	<i>474</i>	<i>123</i>	<i>597</i>	<i>125.95%</i>

Finally, we would like to acknowledge that *PRQ* receives submissions from around the world. In 2017, while 71.3% of new submissions came from the United States, 4.2% came from the Canada, 2.3% were submitted from the United Kingdom, and between 1.5% and 1% came from Australia, Germany, Turkey, China, Denmark, Sweden, and South Korea.

### Processing Times

This year, as throughout its tenure, the editorial team maintained a streamlined review process to ensure timely decisions on manuscripts. The average time in review at the journal, from submission to first decision, remains slightly over two months for original submissions. The average time in review for revised manuscripts is 51 days. Figure 3 (below) provides data on the average number of days between manuscript submission and editorial decisions for both original and revised manuscripts.

**Figure 3. Average Number of Days from Submission to Decision, 2017**



In 2017, the average processing time for all original manuscripts receiving external review (68% of all submissions) was 82 days, while the average time for desk-rejected manuscripts (32% of all submissions) was 8 days. Our time of decision for revised manuscripts that are accepted was 40 days. Our time to decision for major revisions was 61 days. Overall, the time to decision in rejecting original manuscripts was 78 days, which meets our goal of keeping decisions at or under 3 months.

Of course, in the review process, we are at the mercy of reviewers submitting timely reviews. We closely monitor all reviewers who are over 30 days in submitting their reviews and contact them directly to encourage submission of the review. When we have been unable to make a decision about a manuscript after 60 days due to an overdue report, either use the existing reviews or reach out to editorial board members, who step in to help review the manuscript in timely fashion.

In 2017, we continued to reach our goal of avoiding an excessive backlog. Currently, we have a three-issue backlog. Thus, manuscripts accepted today (March 2018) will be published in the December 2018 issue. This means that, for the typical manuscript that undergoes two rounds of review (original submission plus one round of revisions), the time from initial submission to final publication is about 9 months, plus however long the author may take for revisions. Once manuscripts have been uploaded by journal staff to SAGE for copy editing, they typically appear on SAGE's OnlineFirst platform within four to six weeks. As a result, although it may take several months for an article to appear in print, the digital version is available for researchers to access and to cite well in advance of that time.

## Manuscript Decisions

*PRQ*'s acceptance rate is about 14 percent, a rate is comparable to that of other top-ranked journals in the discipline. Given our page limits and our goal of maintaining a reasonable backlog and time from acceptance to publication, we think an acceptance rate between 10-15% is ideal.

Table 2 provides a breakdown of the decisions made in 2017 for original submissions, and Table 3 does the same for revised submissions.

**Table 2. Decision for Original Submissions, 2017**

<b>Manuscript Decision</b>	<b># of Manuscripts</b>	<b>Percentage of Manuscripts</b>
Under Review	45	9.5%
Minor Revision	5	1.05%
Major Revision	86	18.14%
Reject	186	39.24%
Desk Reject	152	32.07%
<i>Summary</i>	<i>474</i>	<i>100%</i>

**Table 3. Decisions for Revised Submissions, 2017**

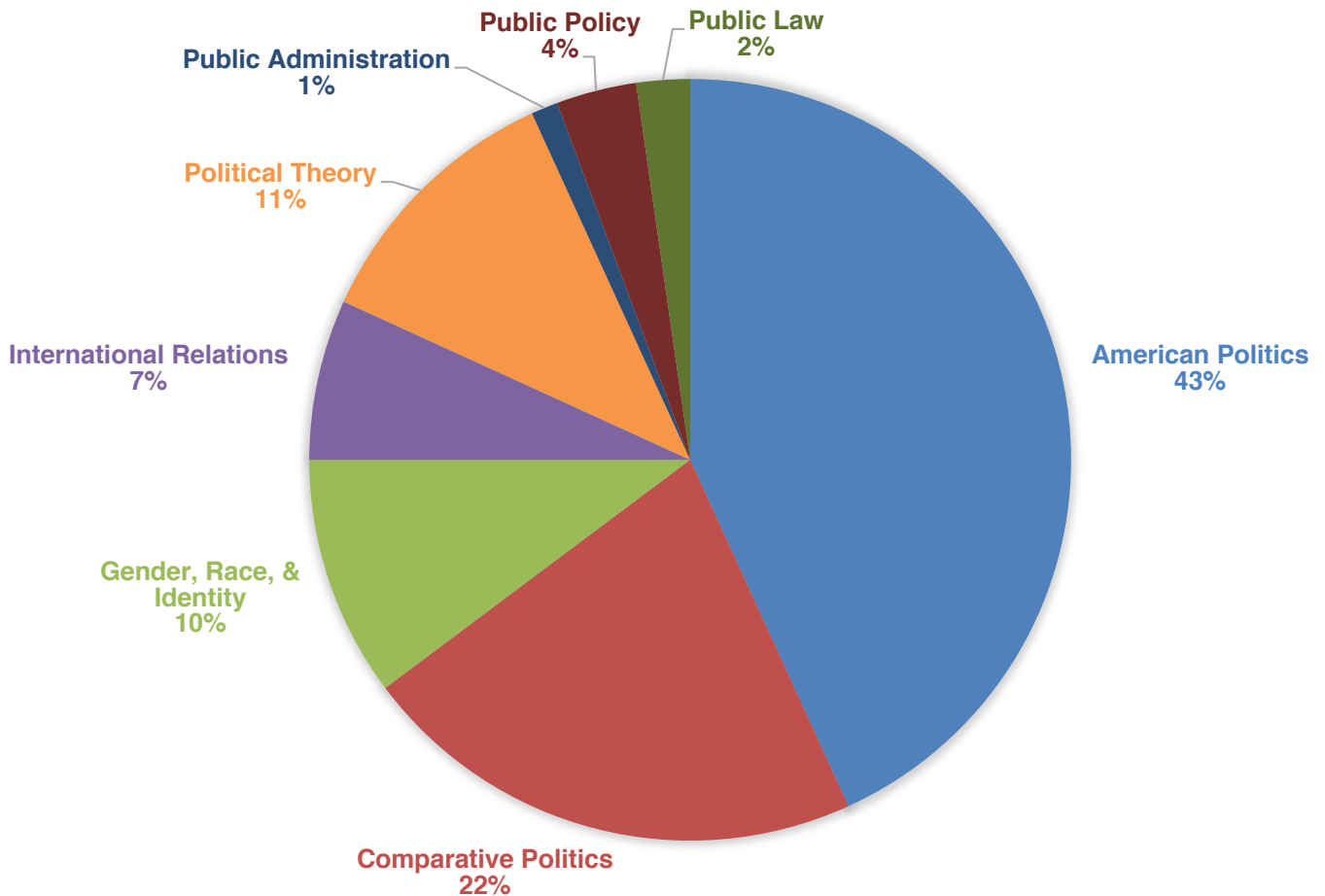
<b>Manuscript Decision</b>	<b># of Manuscripts</b>	<b>Percentage of Manuscripts</b>
Major/Minor Revision	33	25.98%
Accept	82	64.57%
Reject	12	9.45%
<i>Summary</i>	<i>127</i>	<i>100%</i>

We reject about 71% of original submissions (including those we desk reject). When it comes to revised manuscripts, we reject only about 9%. We accept 65% of revised manuscripts and offer the authors of 26% the opportunity to do a second round of revisions.

Figure 4 shows the distribution of articles accepted in 2017 by field. The acceptance rate was the

highest in American politics (43%), followed by comparative politics (22%). We believe that as, *PRQ* increases its visibility in historically under-represented fields, the quality of submissions in those fields should also increase, and we hope more proportionate acceptance rates across fields will be a by-product.

**Figure 4. Percent of Manuscripts Accepted by Field, 2017**



### Reviewer Awards

To thank *PRQ* reviewers for their time and effort, SAGE continues to offer 60 days of free access to all titles on the SAGE Journals Online First platform, as well as a 25% discount on SAGE books.

Following *PRQ* custom, we annually recognize our Top 20 Reviewers, each of whom receives a free one-year subscription to *PRQ*. The co-editors also send a message of recognition to each top reviewer's department chair.



The Top 20 for 2017 are (in alphabetical order):

Marisa Abrajano	<i>University of California, San Diego</i>
Elisabeth Anker	<i>George Washington University</i>
Lawrence Baum	<i>The Ohio State University</i>
Benjamin Bishin	<i>University of California, Riverside</i>
David Broockman	<i>Stanford University</i>
Barry Burden	<i>University of Wisconsin-Madison</i>
Paul Burstein	<i>University of Washington</i>
David Campbell	<i>University of Notre Dame</i>
Jamie Carson	<i>University of Georgia</i>
Jennifer Clark	<i>University of Houston</i>
Lisa Disch	<i>University of Michigan</i>
David Doherty	<i>Loyola University Chicago</i>
Kim Fridkin	<i>Arizona State University</i>
Jonathan Hanson	<i>University of Michigan</i>
Mirya Holman	<i>Tulane University</i>
David Hopkins	<i>Boston College</i>
Claire McKinney	<i>College of William &amp; Mary</i>
Efren Perez	<i>Vanderbilt University</i>
Jon Rogowski	<i>Harvard University</i>
Patrick Wohlfarth	<i>University of Maryland</i>

### Journal Impact

The Journal Citation Report (JCR) Impact Factor is one commonly used measure of the impact of academic journals. *PRQ* has seen steady growth in this measure over time, with a slight decline in 2016 compared with 2015 and 2014. The five-year impact factor remains over 1.8; five years ago it was 1.3. *PRQ*'s ranking slipped to 83 of 165 political science journals, which places it at about the median for all political science journals (compared to 36% in 2015). In 2016, citations rose to 2406, a record high.

**Table 4. *PRQ* Impact Factor data since 2007**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Cites</b>	<b>Impact Factor</b>	<b>5- Year Impact Factor</b>	<b>Journal Ranking (by Impact Factor)</b>
2007	636	0.486	0.902	56/93
2008	887	0.75	1.294	39/99
2009	963	0.915	1.219	36/112
2010	1187	1.018	1.249	40/141
2011	1189	0.921	1.298	45/149
2012	1323	1.044	1.281	48/157
2013	1550	0.985	1.46	58/157
2014	1831	1.149	1.561	47/161
2015	1956	1.116	1.539	59/163
2016	2406	1.053	1.816	83/165

Appendix A

**PRQ EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD – 2017**

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David Bearce	<i>University of Colorado</i>
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Jennifer Fitzgerald	<i>University of Colorado</i>
Justin Grimmer	<i>University of Chicago</i>
Nancy Hirschmann	<i>University of Pennsylvania</i>
Juliet Hooker	<i>Brown University</i>
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Cameron Thies	<i>Arizona State University</i>
Jack Turner	<i>University of Washington</i>
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Carolyn Warner	<i>Arizona State University</i>
Keith Whittington	<i>Princeton University</i>
Vicky Wilkins	<i>American University</i>
Laron Williams	<i>University of Missouri</i>