AMERICAN JOURNAL OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Report to the Editorial Board and the Midwest Political Science Association Executive Council
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This Report from the Editor of the *American Journal of Political Science* to the Editorial Board and to the Executive Council of the Midwest Political Science Association covers the *AJPS* and operations in the Editorial Offices at Michigan State University during calendar year 2016. The Report presents information about the *Journal*'s status and influence, usage of *AJPS* content, manuscript processing statistics, referees and reviews, and the Editorial Board. It also discusses some journal policies and poses some ideas for additional innovations. Finally, the Report will provide information about manuscript processing during the first three months of 2017.

IMPACT AND IMPORTANCE

The *AJPS* strives to maintain its position as one of the premier publication outlets, not only within the political science discipline, but also throughout the social sciences more generally. To that end, we continue to monitor closely the *Journal*'s performance on the various metrics that summarize its presence, visibility, and usage within the research community. The main indicators used for this purpose are the Thomson Reuters Impact Factors and the Google Scholar h5-index scores.

The 2015 Impact Factor for a journal is defined as the mean number of citations in that journal during 2015 to articles published during the preceding two or five years. The 2015 Two-Year Impact Factor for the *AJPS* is 4.515. This figure is very impressive, not only because it represents an increase of slightly more than 1.2 citations over the 2014 Two-Year Impact Factor (which was 3.269). I also am very pleased to say that this value ranks the *AJPS* in first place across all political science journals! Figure 1 plots the top fifty political science journals according to their Two-Year

Figure 1: Top fifty political science journals, according to 2015 Two-Year Impact Factors
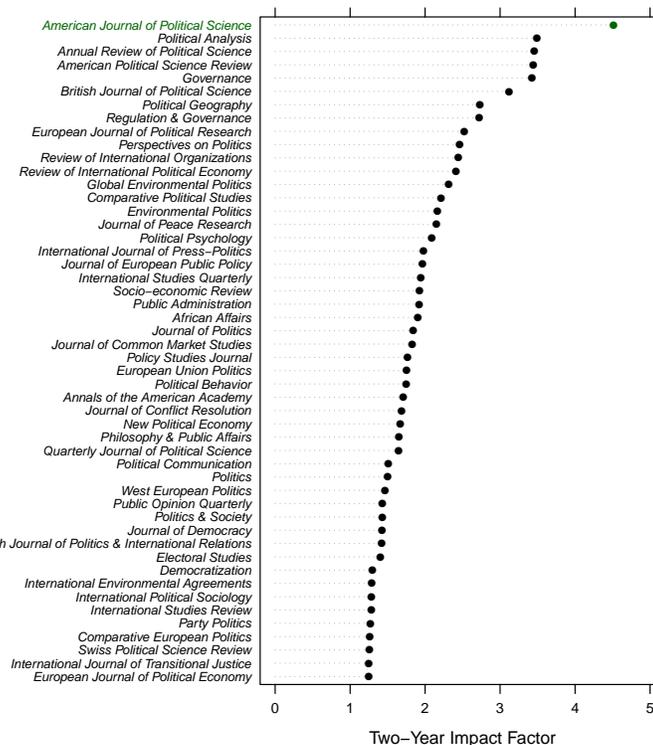
Impact Factors for 2015. This display shows that there is a fairly wide gap in scores after the *AJPS*; the next four journals are *Political Analysis* (2015 2-Yr IF = 3.491), the *Annual Review of Political Science* (2015 2-Yr IF = 3.457), the *American Political Science Review* (2015 2-Yr IF = 3.444), and *Governance* (2015 2-Yr IF = 3.424). I believe that this is the first time the *AJPS* has achieved a higher Impact Factor than the *APSR*.

The 2015 Five-Year Impact Factor for the *AJPS* is 5.424. Again, this represents a substantial increase over the 2014 figure of 4.506. Figure 2 plots the top fifty political science journals, ranked by their 2015 Five-Year Impact Factors. Here, the Five-Year Impact Factor puts the *AJPS* in third place among political science journals, behind the *American Political Science Review* (2015 5-Yr IF = 6.341) and *Political Analysis* (2014 5-Yr IF = 6.098). The figure also shows that there is a drop-off in the Five-Year Impact Factors after the *AJPS*; the next largest score is 4.288 for the *Annual Review of Political Science*, and only threee other journals have scores greater than 3.00 (the *Journal of Peace Research* at 3.283, *Perspectives on Politics* at 3.257, and *Political Geography* at 3.020). Thus, the *American Journal of Political Science* is retaining its position as one of the most widely-cited journals in the entire discipline.

Figure 2: Top fifty political science journals, according to 2015 Five-Year Impact Factors
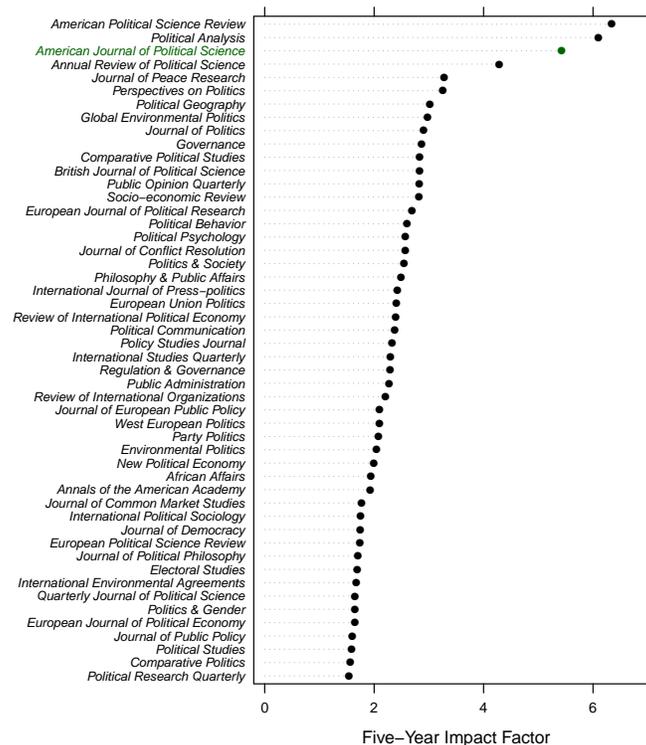
Additional grounds for optimism about the professional visibility of the *AJPS* are provided by current citation statistics from Google Scholar. The h5-index for the *AJPS* is 64; this means that 64 articles have been cited at least 64 times during the five-year period from June 2011 through June 2016. The h5-index value places the *AJPS* eighth among all social science journals and in first place within political science. Figure 3 plots the top twenty political science journals by their h5-index values. The *American Political Science Review* is just behind the *AJPS*, with an h5-index

value of 61. This ranks the *APSR* ninth among social science journals and second within political science. After that, the *Journal of Politics* has the next-highest h5-index, although there is a substantial gap between the two: The h5-index for the *JOP* is 48. All of these figures confirm that the *American Journal of Political Science* is maintaining— and perhaps even enhancing— its stature as one of the premier outlets for high-quality research in the social sciences.

Figure 3: Top twenty political science journals, according to 2015 Google Scholar h-5 index values
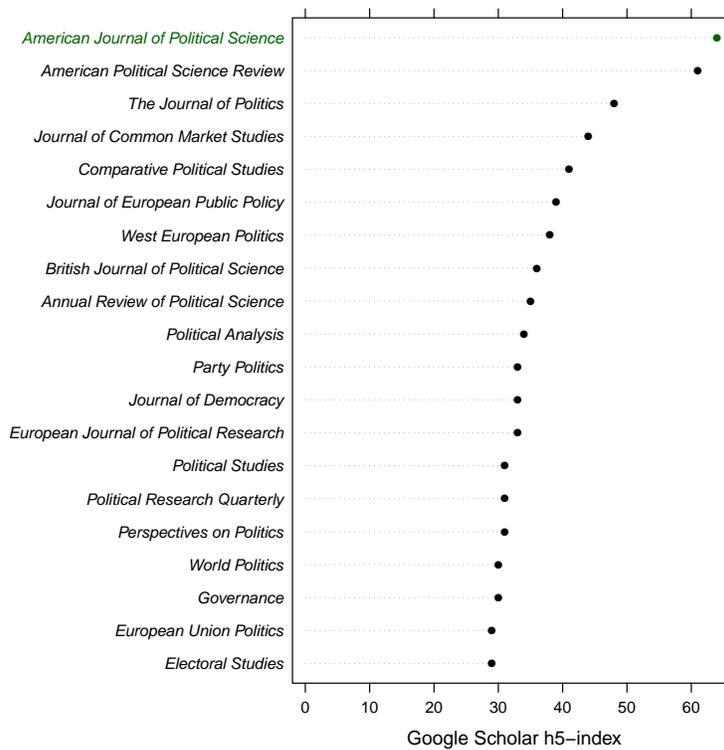
CONTENT USAGE

The *American Journal of Political Science* is disseminated very widely. According to the 2016 Report from the publisher, there are 4,399 institutional subscriptions throughout the world. Of these, 18% are from the United States and 36% are from Europe. There are 6,346 individual subscriptions. Of course, the vast majority of these are obtained through membership in the Midwest Political Science Association. Among individual subscribers, 92% are taking the electronic version of the *AJPS* only, with only eight percent obtaining the traditional, print version of the *Journal.*

Readers of the *AJPS* increasingly are accessing content by downloading articles from the internet and this provides a useful source of information about usage. Based upon the download figures, readership increased by 22% in 2016. This figure is impressive by itself, but it also exceeds the 18% average increase that occurred in all other political science journals over the same time period. The ten most frequently downloaded *AJPS* articles from 2016 are listed in Table 1. During 2016,

a total of 47 articles were downloaded more than one thousand times each! Interestingly, the most frequently downloaded piece from the AJPS last year was an Erratum. This clearly is an extreme outlier, with 12,716 downloads; the next largest number of downloads over the past year was a still-impressive 3,869.

Table 1: Ten most-frequently downloaded *AJPS* articles in 2016 (Number of downloads in parentheses).

1. Verhulst, Brad; Lindon Eaves; Peter K. Hatemi. 2016. "Erratum to 'Correlation not Causation: The Relationship between Personality Traits and Political Ideologies,' *American Journal of Political Science* 56(1), 34-51." *AJPS* 60: 1. (12,716)

2. Brader, Ted; Nicholas A. Valentino; Elizabeth Suhay. 2008. "What Triggers Public Opposition to Immigration? Anxiety, Group Cues, and Immigration Threat." *AJPS* 52: 4. (3,869)

3. Büthe, Tim and Helen V. Milner. 2008. "The Politics of Foreign Direct Investment into Developing Countries: Increasing FDI through International Trade Agreements?" *AJPS* 52: 4. (3,010)

4. Arceneaux, Kevin; Martin Johnson; René Lindstädt; Ryan J. Vander Wielen. 2016 "The Influence of News Media on Political Elites: Investigating Strategic Responsiveness in Congress." *AJPS* 60: 1. (2,852)

5. Bechtel, Michael M.; Dominik Hangartner; Lukas Schmid. 2016. "Does Compulsory Voting Increase Support for Leftist Policy?" *AJPS* 60: 3. (2,515)

6. Kanthak, Kristin and Jonathan Woon. 2015. "Women Don't Run? Election Aversion and Candidate Entry." *AJPS* 59: 3. (2,328)

7. Knutsen, Carl Henrik and Håvard Mokleiv Nygård. (2015) Institutional Characteristics and Regime Survival: Why Are Semi-Democracies Less Durable Than Autocracies and Democracies?" *AJPS* 59: 3. (2,273)

8. Abadie, Alberto; Alexis Diamond; Jens Hainmueller. (2015) "Comparative Politics and the Synthetic Control Method." *AJPS* 59: 2. (2,098)

9. Fraga, Bernard. 2016. "Candidates or Districts? Reevaluating the Role of Race in Voter Turnout." *AJPS* 60: 1. (2,084)

10. Hainmueller, Jens and Daniel J. Hopkins. 2015. "The Hidden American Immigration Consensus: A Conjoint Analysis of Attitudes toward Immigrants." *AJPS* 59: 3. (1,831)

Further insights about the extent to which scholars rely on *AJPS* content is shown in Figure 4, which presents the h5-median scores for the journals that received the twenty highest h5-index scores from Google Scholar. The h5-median gives the median number of citations to the articles that are used to create the h5-index score. The *AJPS* has the second-highest h-5 median score, at 85. This falls below the score for the *American Political Science Review* (at 99) and it is substantially above the next highest h-5 median score (75, for *Political Analysis*). Clearly, a very large number of scholars are citing work that appears in the *American Journal of Political Science.*

Along with aggregate figures about downloads and citations, there is now a great deal of information readily available about the usage and impact of specific articles. Since July 2014, the Wiley Online Library has been displaying Altmetric information for all *AJPS* articles. Michael Streeter, from Wiley, explains that "...Altmetric is a service that tracks and measures the impact of scholarly articles and datasets across traditional and social media, online reference managers, post-publication peer-review sites, and public policy documents." An Altmetric score is derived from three main

factors: The volume of distinct mentions and citations; the types of media in which the article is mentioned; and the originator of each mention. Altmetric assigns a score to each article and that is displayed as part of the article's entry in the Wiley Online Library.

Figure 4: The 2015 h-5 median values for the political science journals with the twenty highest 2015 h-5 index values.
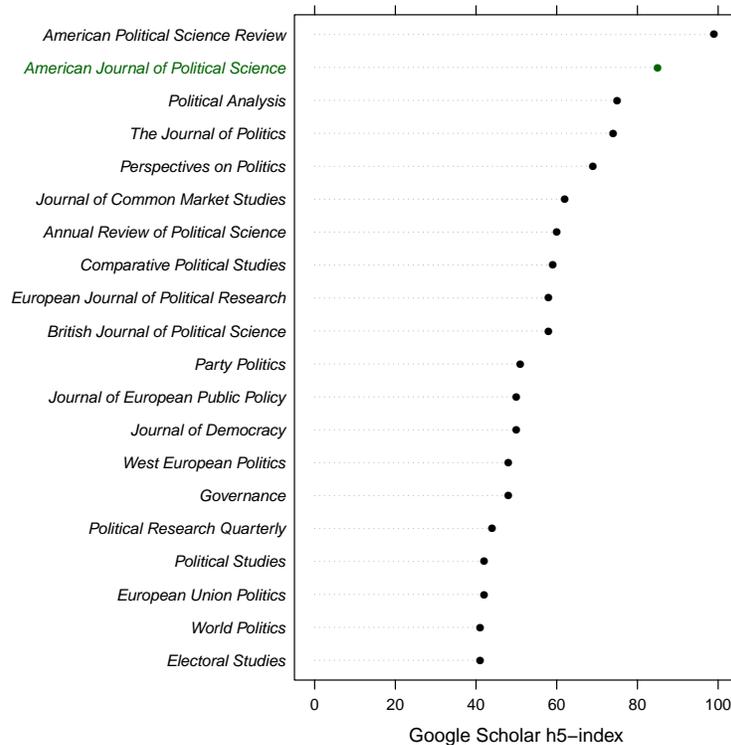
Larger Altmetric scores are better, but it is difficult to interpret specific values. Altmetric provides some guidance regarding interpretation. Each article's Altmetric score is linked to a web page that lists "Overview of Attention" information that places the score into a broader context and provides detailed information about the sources of the attention it has received. So, for example, "Conspiracy Theories and the Paranoid Style(s) of Mass Opinion" by Oliver and Wood (*AJPS* 58:4, pages 952-966) has an Altmetric score of 270 (as of March 18, 2017). The "About This Attention Score" information says that this score falls "(i)n the top 5% of all research outputs scored by Altmetric;" is "(o)ne of the highest-scoring outputs from this source (#3 of 797);" is a "(h)igh score compared to outputs of the same age (99th percentile);" and is a "(h)igh score compared to outputs of the same age and source (92nd percentile)." There is also a graphical display ("The Altmetric Donut") that uses color to indicate the types of media in which each article has been mentioned or cited.

According to Altmetric's FAQ page (accessed in March 2016), "most articles will score 0. A mid-tier publication might expect 30%-40% of the papers that it publishes to be mentioned at least once . . . ." Across all years of publication, 847 *AJPS* articles have been assigned Altmetric scores. Of these, 808 (or 95%) are non-zero. The mean Altmetric score for *AJPS* articles that have scores is 14.26. But the distribution is severely skewed and contains several high-end outliers. So the

median Altmetric score of 5 probably is more informative. According to Altmetric's "Overview of Attention" information, an article with a score of 5 is "(i)n the top 25% of all research outputs scored by Altmetric.

To provide another relative assessment, consider that the *AJPS* published a total of 513 articles from 2009 through 2016. Of these, 393 or approximately 77% have non-zero Altmetric scores. All of this information confirms that *AJPS* articles are attracting a great deal of attention in both absolute and relative terms— precisely what is to be expected for a top journal in the discipline.

It is important to emphasize that attention to, and usage of, *AJPS* content spans most fields of the discipline. Table 2 shows the distribution of subfields for the 100 most-frequently downloaded articles from 2016 and the 64 articles in the h-5 index. American political behavior is the modal category both for downloads and inclusion in the h5-index, at 35% and 30%, respectively. The results diverge somewhat for articles American political institutions, which comprise only 14% of the downloads but 23% of the h5-index. A sizable proportion of the articles receiving attention are from comparative politics: 26% of the most downloaded articles and 20% of the articles in the h-5 index. International relations articles make up 16% of the downloads and 13% of the h-5-index. While these latter figures are quite respectable in themselves, they are probably a bit low due to the sizable number of subfield-specific journals that focus on various aspects of international relations. Articles in methodology and formal theory represent 8% of the most frequently downloaded articles, 14% of the articles going into the h-5 index. Normative theory is the only subfield that is not represented very well in these usage statistics. Only one theory article appears among the top hundred downloads and there are none contributing to the h-5 index. So, with the admittedly serious and potentially troubling exception of normative theory, the *American Journal of Political Science* publishes content that attracts interest from across the entire discipline. That, in turn, solidifies the *Journal*'s position as one of the top general-audience publication outlets for political scientists.

Table 2: Distribution across subfields for the 50 most frequently downloaded articles and the 64 articles that contribute to the h5-index.

	100 most frequently downloaded articles	Articles contributing to the h-5 index
American political behavior	35%	30%
American institutions	14%	23%
Comparative politics	26%	20%
International relations	16%	13%
Methodology, formal theory	8%	14%
Normative theory	1%	0%

Still more information about the attention being paid to the *AJPS* can be gleaned from the metrics associated with social media. The *Journal* has had a Facebook page and a Twitter account for several years. The Facebook page currently (March 18, 2017) has 3,772 "likes." Note that this

number has been growing consistently, at a rate of about three or four every day. On Twitter, the *AJPS* has 5,624 followers and this figure also grows steadily at a rate of more than 130 new followers each month. One measure of an entity's influence on social media is the Klout score, which assesses the reactions to posts that originate with the entity. The *AJPS* Klout score is 49, a value that appears to be relatively high since the average Klout score is 40. Taken together, the information presented here confirms that the *American Journal of Political Science* is appealing to a large audience through several channels of communication.

SUBMISSIONS AND TURNAROUND TIMES

Table 3 provides the total number of manuscript submissions and the mean number of days from submission until the editorial decision for the past seventeen years, from 2000 through 2016. Across

Table 3: Yearly submissions and mean turnaround times.

| Year	Number of submissions	Mean turnaround time (days)
2000	530	46
2001	586	39
2002	657	51
2003	803	36
2004	783	36
2005	691	41
2006	694	67
2007	583	130
2008	531	118
2009	479	113
2010	760	101
2011	665	91
2012	750	107
2013	696	93
2014	874	73
2015	876	45
2016	928	54

the 2016 calendar year, 928 manuscripts were submitted to the *AJPS*. This produces a submission rate of 2.95 manuscripts per day (counting only the days that the *Journal* was open for submissions)! It also sets a new record for yearly submissions, exceeding last year's record-setting figure by a substantial margin: there were 876 submissions in 2015 so the figure for 2016 represents an increase of nearly 6%. The 2016 submissions also represent an increase of 33% over submissions in 2013, the year immediately preceding the start of my editorial term.

The mean turnaround time (i.e., the number of days from submission to editorial decision) for manuscript reviews in 2016 was 54 days. This is an increase of nine days over the mean turnaround from 2015 (45 days). But, it still is nearly three weeks faster than the mean turnaround time in 2014 (73 days), and over a month faster than the mean turnaround from 2013 (93 days).

Note that the average overall turnaround time includes manuscripts that are not sent out to external referees. These "desk rejects" are processed very quickly: The mean turnaround time is less than one day (0.90 to be precise). Once the desk-rejected papers are removed from the calculation, the mean turnaround time is 73 days. This represents a nine-day increase over the comparable figure in 2015 (64 days).

Figure 5 provides more detailed information about manuscript turnaround times. The figure shows the distribution of times from submission to editorial decision for all externally-reviewed manuscripts in 2016. The graphical display shows that the distribution is heavily skewed in the positive direction. The mode for 2016 is sharply defined, just above 50. The median turnaround time for 2016 is 62 days, with an inter-quartile range of 37 days. In 2015, the median turnaround time was 48 days with an IQR of 44 days. Thus, median turnaround was two weeks longer in 2015 than in 2014. Of course, I want to improve this figure in 2017! But, it is still the case that half of the submissions to the *AJPS* received decisions in two months or less during 2016.

Figure 5: Distributions of turnaround times for externally-reviewed manuscripts in 2016.
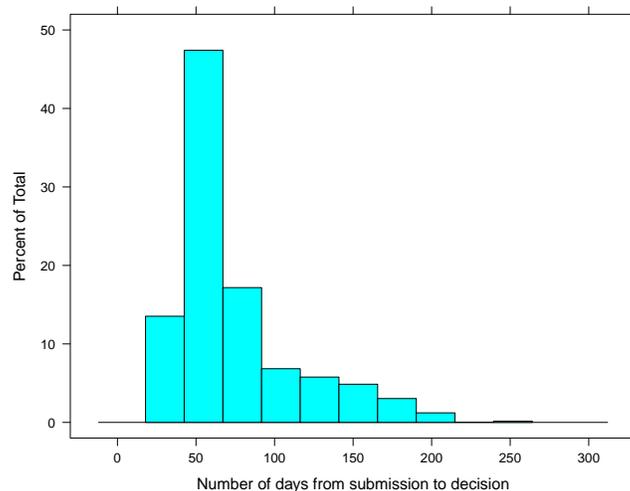
SUBMISSION RATES BY SUBFIELD

Table 4 shows submission rates by subfield for each year, from 2011 through 2016. Note that the subfield for each manuscript is determined by the submitting author's own designation. Authors are allowed to select more than one subfield for a manuscript, but the figure uses only the first subfield selected by the author.

American political behavior is the modal category, with about 26% of the total submissions (up slightly from about 23% in 2015). Comparative politics is the next largest category, with just under 22% in 2016 (down from about 36% of the total in 2015). Submissions in American political institutions and international relations each comprise 20% of the total in 2016. These latter figures are about five and six points higher than the comparable 2015 percentages. Submissions in methodology and formal theory have remained stable at just under eight percent of the total in 2016, a figure that is down very slightly from the 2015 value of just *over* eight percent. Submissions in normative political theory remain low, at slightly more than five percent.

Table 4: Manuscript submissions by subfield, for each year from 2011 through 2016.

	Year					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
American political behavior	23.3%	24.9%	23.4%	26.1%	23.1%	25.7%
American political institutions	16.4%	18.3%	16.7%	16.3%	14.6%	20.0%
Comparative politics	33.7%	36.5%	37.7%	32.1%	36.2%	21.5%
International relations	13.6%	11.1%	11.1%	14.8%	14.0%	20.0%
Methodology and formal theory	7.3%	6.4%	7.5%	7.8%	8.4%	7.5%
Normative theory	5.4%	2.7%	3.6%	3.0%	3.7%	5.3%

The distribution of submissions across subfields for 2016 differs from those in the previous years. Up through 2015, the modal category of submissions was comparative politics (averaging about 34% of total yearly submissions), followed— usually at some distance— by American political behavior (averaging just under 24% of yearly submissions. American political institutions (about 16% of submissions each year) and international relations (averaging about 13%) were further below those categories, followed by methodology/formal theory (slightly more than seven percent each year) and normative theory (between three and four percent in most years).

This fairly stable mixture of subfields changed in 2016, where we see a fairly even distribution of submissions across the four largest categories— American political behavior, comparative politics, American political institutions, and international relations. Methodology/formal theory shows about the same proportion of submissions as previous years, but normative political theory actually increases by more than a percentage point. Of course, it is far too early to discern about any real trends in patterns of submissions. And, it is difficult to specify any "appropriate" levels of submissions for the respective subfields. But, it seems to me that it is not an unreasonable state of affairs for a general-audience journal to be receiving roughly equal numbers of submissions from most of the subfields within the discipline. The smaller proportion of submissions in methodology and formal theory has remained very stable over time; it probably reflects the fairly small number of political scientists who are working actively to generate new methodological innovations, as opposed to using sophisticated methodological strategies that have been developed elsewhere. The extremely low submission rates for normative theory are a bit troubling, but they probably reflect the general reputation of the *AJPS* as an outlet for quantitative empirical work. It is not clear whether the Editor should try to take steps in order to increase submissions in this (or any other) subfield and, if so, exactly how to go about doing that. So, ideas and suggestions are especially welcome on this point!

EDITORIAL DECISIONS

During calendar year 2016, I made 987 editorial decisions on manuscripts (down slightly from 1,002 decisions in 2015). From this total, 867 were decisions on an initial submission. Of the remainder,

106 were decisions on a resubmitted first revision, and 14 were decisions on second revisions. The distributions of editorial decision outcomes, calculated separately for initial submissions, first, and second revisions are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Editorial decisions for calendar year 2016.

	Initial submission (n = 867)	First revision (n = 106)	Second revision (n = 14)
Desk reject	25.7%	—	—
Reject	66.9%	7.5%	—
Revise and resubmit	7.4%	27.4%	—
Accept	—	65.1%	100.0%

If desk-rejected manuscripts are eliminated from consideration, then 90.1% of submissions were rejected after the initial review and 9.9% were issued a "revise and resubmit" decision. Combining those manuscripts that were accepted after one and two or more revisions, the total acceptance rate for manuscripts submitted to the *American Journal of Political Science* during 2016 is 8.4%. With desk-rejected manuscripts omitted from the calculation, the *AJPS* acceptance rate for 2016 is 10.9%. These figures seem very reasonable for a top-tier journal.

Table 6 breaks down the editorial decisions by subfield, separately for initial submissions and for revised resubmissions. (Note that the table only includes manuscripts that have been assigned

Table 6: Editorial decisions from 2016, by subfield. Percentages are calculated separately for decisions on initial submissions and on revise and resubmits. (Figures in parentheses are numbers of submissions for each subfield).

	Initial submissions:			Revise and resubmits:	
	Desk reject	Reject	Revise and resubmit	Accept	Reject
American political behavior (244)	24%	70%	6%	93%	7%
American institutions (188)	23%	70%	7%	85%	15%
Comparative politics (199)	32%	63%	13%	83%	17%
International relations (166)	24%	68%	8%	100%	0%
Methodology, formal theory (73)	12%	73%	15%	80%	20%
Normative theory (34)	34%	57%	9%	100%	0%

a final disposition; therefore the total number of manuscripts in the table does not sum to the total number of decisions for 2016). For the most part, there are not any major differences in the distributions of review outcomes from one subfield to the next. And, one feature that may appear to be distinctive in Table 6 is more illusory than real: Comparative politics and normative theory show higher percentages of desk rejections than the other fields, at 32% and 34% respectively. These figures are due entirely to the surprisingly large number of nonviable submissions that we receive from individuals in Russia, the Middle East and Africa, and from non-academic authors (especially for normative theory). If we were to adjust for the inappropriate manuscripts, the distributions for these fields would look much like those for American political behavior or institutions.

REVIEWS AND REFEREES

Across calendar year 2016, the *AJPS* Editorial Office received 2,067 referee reports; this is up from the 1,947 reports that we received in 2015. For completed reviews, the mean number of days from the invitation to review until receipt of the review is 36.1 (or 33.9 days from the time the referee accepted the invitation). These numbers are slightly higher than the comparable figures from 2015 (34.3 and 32.1, respectively). The distribution of recommendations from the reviews we received is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Reviewer recommendations, calendar year 2016.

Recommendation	Percentage ($n = 2,067$)
Reject	54.7%
Revise and Resubmit	32.8%
Publish with Minor Revisions	8.6%
Publish as Is	3.9%

Of course, we only receive reviews from a subset of the individuals who are invited to serve as referees. Across calendar year 2016, I invited 2,835 people to review manuscripts for the *AJPS*. It takes an average of 0.9 days from initial submission to invite the initial set of referees for a submitted manuscript. Considering only those who responded to the invitation, the mean number of days to provide the response (either positive or negative) was 3.0. The distribution of responses (and non-responses) to the invitation is shown in Table 8.

Based upon the information in Table 8, referee responsiveness and performance remained very stable over the past two years. I did issue about 200 more invitations— 2,835 in 2016 compared to 2,642 in 2015. But the percentage of referees who completed their reviews is virtually identical in each of the two years: 73.6% in 2016 and 73.7% in 2015. Similarly, the percentage of invited referees who did not provide reviews is basically stable at 23.2% in 2016 compared to 23.6% in 2015. Thus, we receive reviews from about three-fourths of the people who are invited to serve as referees. This is an improvement over the first year of my editorial tenure, when only 70% of the

invitees provided reviews. But, we still hope to do better in getting people to respond to reviewer invitations.

The database of potential referees for the *AJPS* currently contains information on 10,588 individuals. During 2015, 773 new people were registered into the database. Of these, the *AJPS* Editorial Staff registered 286 individuals while searching for new referee candidates. The remainder of the new registrations were almost all authors or co-authors of submitted manuscripts who registered

Table 8: Responses to Editor's invitation to review a manuscript for the *AJPS* during 2016.

Response	Percentage $(n = 2,835)$	Subtotal
Completed review	72.9%	
Review in progress	0.7%	
		73.6%
Declined invitation	17.7%	
Never responded	5.5%	
		23.2%
Did not need review	3.2%	3.2%

themselves. The Editorial Staff edits the database contents when carrying out other tasks, and one of the Student Assistants is assigned to check entries and update information systematically.

EDITORIAL BOARD

The *American Journal of Political Science* Editorial Board currently is composed of 80 people. Most are mid-career scholars, along with a number of senior professors and a few junior faculty. All Board members are professionally active and highly visible members of the political science discipline. The composition of the Board has changed a bit since its initial creation. Several people left the Board and a number were added, not only to replace the vacancies but also to cover subfields in which we have had more submissions than originally expected.

I have relied very heavily on Editorial Board members for assistance with my editorial activities. As I stated at the outset of my Editorial term, I regard the Editorial Board more as a set of 80 Associate Editors than as mere names on the masthead of the *Journal*. Members of the Board have regularly provided me advice regarding desk rejections, decisions on manuscripts with divided referee recommendations, and author appeals of negative decisions. I also have asked several Board members for suggestions about possible additional members.

More than anything else, members of the Editorial Board review *many* manuscripts. I tell incoming Board members to expect up to one invitation to review a manuscript per month. In fact, I have never asked for that many from any Board member. But, the frequency with which I request reviews from Board members is almost certainly much higher than that for Editors of other journals or for previous *AJPS* Editors. Table 9 shows the distribution of the number of reviews completed by each of the active Board members who served during 2015. The mean number of reviews per Board member was 2.5 in 2015. This is quite a bit lower than the mean for 2015, which was 3.3 reviews per Board member.

Table 9: Distribution of reviews completed by Editorial Board members during 2016.

	Percentage of Board members ($n = 73$)
No reviews	9.6%
One review	13.7%
Two reviews	21.9%
Three reviews	27.4%
Four reviews	24.6%
Five reviews	1.4%
Six reviews	1.4%

The members of the 2017 *American Journal of Political Science* Editorial Board are:

James Adams, *University of California, Davis*
Claire Adida, *University of California, San Diego*
E. Scott Adler, *University of Colorado*
David Armstrong, *University of Western Ontario*
Ryan Bakker, *University of Georgia*
Jason Barabas, *Stony Brook University*
William Bianco, *Indiana University*
Cristina Bodea, *Michigan State University*
Cheryl Boudreau, *University of California, Davis*
Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, *University of Chicago*
Gregory Caldeira, *Ohio State University*
David Campbell, *University of Notre Dame*
Eric Chang, *Michigan State University*
Kevin Clarke, *University of Rochester*
Darren Davis, *University of Notre Dame*
Michelle Dion, *McMaster University*
Robert Franzese, *University of Michigan*
Guy Grossman, *University of Pennsylvania*

AJPS Editorial Board (continued):

POLICIES AND INNOVATIONS

Manuscript processing operations continue to run very smoothly. The procedures implemented by the *AJPS* Editorial Staff to encourage timely submission of reviews clearly have paid dividends. I believe that we are fulfilling our commitment to submitting authors by providing them with informative and timely critiques from referees. The feedback we have received from various participants in this process— including a sizable number of authors who received negative editorial decisions— has been overwhelmingly positive. The remainder of this section briefly lists some policy changes for the *Journal* that have either been implemented recently or will be carried out in the near future.

AJPS Cover and Website Redesign

In consultation with the *AJPS* Editorial Staff, the designers at Wiley Publishers created a new cover design for the *AJPS* that we have been using since the first issue of Volume 60 (January 2016). Along with the new cover for the *Journal*, Melissa Heeke, from the Midwest Political Science Association, redesigned the *AJPS* website. The new version of the website reorganized the existing content and added new content. The site currently emphasizes the *Journal*'s content, along with editorial objectives, submission procedures, and useful information for *AJPS* authors and manuscript referees. In the near future, we plan to add manuscript processing statistics to the website, along with more bibliometric information about specific articles.

Participation in Pre-Registered Research Competition

The *AJPS* is participating in the Election Research Preacceptance Competition (ERPC), organized by Arthur Lupia and Brendan Nyhan, and Funded by the Laura and John Arnold Foundation. Competing scholars design papers with analyses based upon items in the 2016 American National Election Studies (ANES) Interview Schedule, and pre-register their designs. The *AJPS*, along with eight other journals, has agreed to review the pre-registered designs and make editorial decisions prior to the release of the 2016 ANES data. Scholars whose work is accepted at one of the participating journals will also receive a cash award. The ERPC funders will pay for the page space required for the articles if any of the pre-registered designs are accepted for publication at the *AJPS*.

Submissions intended for the competition will be accepted up until the release of the ANES data, which is currently expected to occur in mid-April 2017. So far (March 31, 2017), the *AJPS* has received two submissions for the competition. One of these submissions was rejected on the basis of negative recommendations from the referees. The other manuscript is still out for review.

Publons and Formal Recognition for Referees

As part of a broader initiative at Wiley Publishers, the *American Journal of Political Science* is working with an organization named Publons to provide formal recognition for manuscript referees. As explained on their website, Publons "collects information about peer reviews and builds public reviewer profiles for participating reviewers." The Publons system is mentioned in the text of the invitation message that is sent to prospective manuscript referees. When referees submit their reviews to the Editorial Manager system, they are asked if they want to receive credit for the review in a Publons profile. Profiles for *AJPS* referees only include the number of reviews each person has completed; there is no information provided about either the content of the review or the manuscript that was reviewed. The Publons system is entirely voluntary and each individual manuscript referee can decide whether he or she wants to participate. So far, only 64 referees have recorded the completion of their reviews on Publons.

Replication and Verification Policy: Revisions and Innovations

The *American Journal of Political Science* is strongly committed to the general principles of data access and research transparency. As part of this general orientation, we have created and implemented one of the most rigorous replication policies in the entire scientific community. Authors of all accepted articles that include empirical analyses are required to submit replication files to the *AJPS* Dataverse within the Dataverse Project (formerly the Harvard Dataverse Network). The *AJPS* provides detailed guidance about what materials must be provided. And, replication materials are verified to make sure that they really can be used to reproduce the analyses reported in the *AJPS* article. Article acceptances are conditional upon successful reproduction of results using replication materials submitted by the authors.

During 2016, we modified the replication and verification process in several ways. First, authors are now asked if they will comply with the *AJPS* replication policy as part of the manuscript submission process. If they request an exemption from the policy, then they are asked to explain the situation leading to the request. This makes the Editorial Office aware of any potential issues at the outset of the review, thereby enabling the *AJPS* Editor and the author to work out a resolution before the manuscript is sent out for review.

Second, the *AJPS* Guidelines for Preparing Replication Files were updated to include new requirements for qualitative data and analyses. Preparing the new guidelines was a very challenging task, since qualitative information can take many different forms and the very idea of replication can mean something quite different for qualitative analyses, relative to quantitative analyses. As part of the revisions to the guidelines, we now describe the kinds of situations in which an author can request an exemption from the replication and verification requirements. I believe strongly that the latest version of the *AJPS* guidelines addresses directly the major objections and concerns about research transparency that have been articulated by various sources within the social science community. And I am very grateful for the important contributions to the new version of the guidelines provided by Colin Elman (Syracuse University), Diana Kapiszewski (Georgetown University), and other scholars from the qualitative research community.

Third, the *AJPS* Replication and Verification Policy, itself, was revised to differentiate explicitly between quantitative and qualitative data. And, the verification process has been modified in a similar way. Verifications of quantitative analyses will continue to be carried out by the Archive Staff at the University of North Carolina's Odum Institute for Research in Social Science. But, verifications of qualitative analyses will be carried out by the staff of Syracuse University's Quali-

tative Data Repository (QDR). In this manner, we guarantee that the the verification process will
be carried out by staff researchers who have particular expertise in the relevant materials.

Fourth, the *AJPS* began awarding the Center for Open Science (COS) "Open Data" and "Open
Materials" badges to all articles that have completed successfully the replication and verification
process. Articles that have been granted exemptions from the full replication policy do not receive
the "Open Data" badge, but they still qualify for the "Open Materials" badge if the other replication
files are provided (as is required in the guidelines). The badges, themselves, appear in the metadata
for the article's Dataverse Dataset and in the replication statement for the electronic version of the
article in the Wiley Online Library. And, starting with the January 2017 issue (*AJPS* Volume 61,
Issue 1), the badges will appear just after the article's title in the print version of the *Journal*. The
open practices badges go beyond a mere cosmetic enhancement. Instead, COS reports that they
"dramatically increase the rate of data sharing." So far, badges have been adopted by thirteen
journals, most of which are in psychology. The *AJPS* is the only political science journal to use
the badges.

Fifth, I engaged in several outreach activities to increase awareness of the *AJPS* Replication and
Verification Policy and the principles of research transparency more generally within the scien-
tific research community. I participated in two conferences devoted specifically to these themes:
"Making Social Science Transparent" at the University of California, Davis and the "Dataverse
Community Meeting" at Harvard University. I chaired roundtables on data access and research
transparency at the 2016 Annual Meetings of the Midwest Political Science Association and the
American Political Science Association. I also participated in a roundtable on Research Pre-
registration at the 2016 APSA Annual Meetings. I gave a presentation on replication issues as
an entry in the Hubert M. Blalock Memorial Lecture Series at the 2016 ICPSR Summer Program
in Quantitative Methods of Social Research. And I am writing an article, tentatively titled "Why
More Journals Should Require Replications," for *Inside Higher Ed*.

Finally, there are several revisions and innovations to the replication and verification procedures
that are in progress or planned for the near future. Probably most important, the *AJPS* Editorial
Staff and I are working with our colleagues at the Odum Institute, Wiley Publishers, and Aries
Systems (the owners of the Editorial Manager software system) to incorporate the replication and
verification steps more fully into the regular workflow of manuscript processing. On another front,
I intend to revise the current guidelines for accepted manuscripts to require that authors provide
complete citations to the sources of the data that they analyze. This will not only facilitate access to
the data; it also gives appropriate scholarly credit to the individuals and institutions that produce
the data. I also am working with the Archive Staff from the Odum Institute and staff at the
Center for Open Science to help develop a new "Reproducibility" badge. This would be awarded to
articles that pass successfully through the *AJPS* verification process. Thus, the *AJPS* Replication
and Verification Policy will continue to evolve.

Replication and Verification Policy: Experiences So Far

The *AJPS* Dataverse on the Dataverse Project (formerly known as the Harvard Dataverse Network)
was first announced in July 2012. The first Study (i.e., set of replication files for an *AJPS* article,
now called a "Dataset") was released for public use on the Dataverse in September 2013. The *AJPS*
Dataverse currently (March 26, 2017) contains 262 Datasets.

The current *American Journal of Political Science* Replication and Verification Policy was an-
nounced on March 26, 2015. Since that date, I have accepted 117 manuscripts for publication. Of

these, 13 manuscripts had no empirical component, because they either presented strictly formal analyses or fell into the subfield of normative political theory. And three of the manuscripts were accepted so recently that the authors have not yet sent in the replication materials. The remaining accepted articles with empirical data have all been quantitative analyses. Thus, the Odum Institute staff have worked with replication materials for 101 accepted manuscripts. From these, 89 manuscripts (or 88% of the total 101) have gone through the verification process successfully. Their replication files have been released and they are now freely available on the AJPS Dataverse. This leaves 12 manuscripts (12%) awaiting verification of their replication files. Of these, the Odum staff currently are processing the materials for five manuscripts (5% of the total 101) and they are awaiting resubmission of replication files from the authors of seven more manuscripts (7%).

The initial replication files almost always need additional work. Most are sent back to the authors one or more times after an initial submission for correction and resubmission. The maximum number of resubmissions (across the 89 manuscripts that have completed the verification process) is four and the mean number of resubmissions is about 1.7. There are only seven cases out of the 89 (about 8%) in which the replication files successfully reproduced all analyses on the first try. Most of the resubmissions involve requests for more information (e.g., more detail in the codebooks describing the datasets), incomplete replication materials (e.g., the author leaves out the code to produce a table or figures), or minor inconsistencies in the results (e.g., the coefficients estimated from the replication file do not match those presented in the manuscript). In virtually all cases, authors have been able to make the necessary corrections and adjustments very easily, with no major changes or modifications to the accepted manuscripts.

The replication and verification process does add some time to the publication workflow. The number of days from the arrival of replication files at the Odum Institute to the release of the Dataverse Dataset ranges from 8 to 401, across the 89 manuscripts for which the verification process has been completed. Figure 6 shows the histogram for the turnaround time and it shows that the high end of the range is due entirely to two outlying cases, where the verification process took 391 and 401 days, respectively. All of the remaining 87 replication files were verified in less than a year, and more than three-fourths of them (68 out of 87, or about 78%) were verified in less

Figure 6: Distribution of time (in days) from submission of replication files to public release of the Dataverse Dataset.

Number of days from submission of replication
files to public release of the Dataverse Dataset
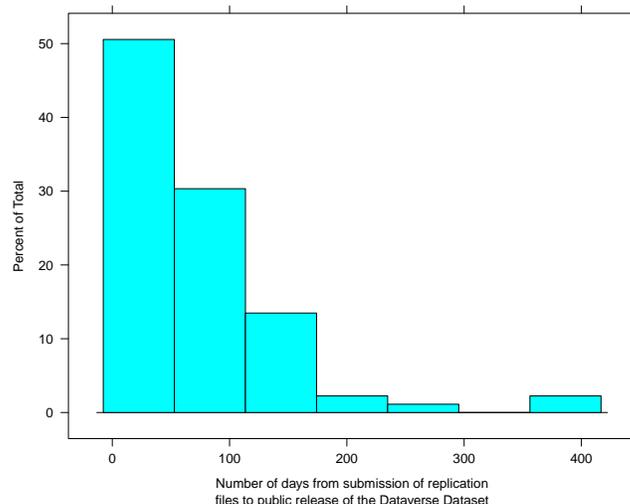
than three months. The mean length of the verification process is 71.93 days and the median (a more appropriate measure of central tendency, due to the skew in the distribution) is 52 days.

Much of the time spent in the verification process is due to the time it takes the author to respond. Figure 7 shows the histogram for the number of days from the arrival of replication files at the Odum Institute to the initial Verification Report (which is sent immediately to the author). This time interval ranges from 1 to 63 days, across the 89 manuscripts that have proceeded this far in the verification process. The mean time interval until the initial Verification Report is 24.99 days and the median is 20 days. Thus, half of the corresponding authors of accepted manuscripts hear back from the Odum Institute in less than three weeks. And more than two-thirds (69.7%) receive the first Verification Report in less than a month.

Figure 7: Distribution of time (in days) from submission of replication files to initial Verification Report from the Odum Institute.
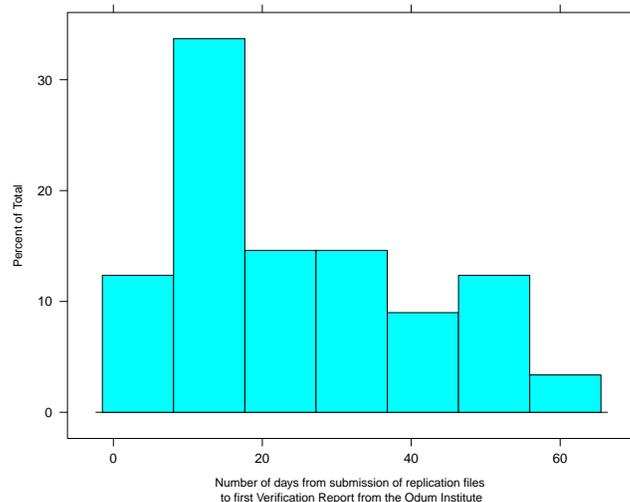
Of course, there have been some reservations expressed in the social science community regarding stringent data access and research transparency requirements. As explained back in the 2016 Annual Report, I received the "Petition to Delay DA-RT Implementation" in November 2015 and a letter from 20 former APSA Presidents expressing reservations about the implementation of DA-RT guidelines in January 2016. Beyond the preceding communications, only two other people have contacted me expressing opposition to the Replication and Verification Policy. I believe that the latter represent atypical and unusual reactions. The requirements of the *AJPS* Replication and Verification Policy should be non-controversial for most empirical researchers. The ideas motivating this policy and the procedures it entails comprise a central element of scientific practice, regardless of subject matter, specific investigative strategy, the nature of the data, or the analytic procedures employed in the knowledge generation process. They pertain to the vast majority of the work that is submitted to the *American Journal of Political Science*. So far, there has been 100% cooperation (and often enthusiastic support) from authors with respect to the replication policies. Requests for exceptions have been based upon practical considerations (e.g., confidentiality protection; proprietary data, etc.), not epistemological objections.

In addition, the *AJPS* is being recognized throughout the broad scientific community for our innovations and leadership in the area of data access and research transparency. For example, our

guidelines for preparing replication files have been adopted by other journal editors. And, both the Center for Open Science and the Dataverse Project have used the *AJPS* repeatedly as an example of "best practices" procedures in research transparency.

In summary, the *AJPS* Replication and Verification Policy is proceeding very smoothly and successfully. This policy makes an important contribution to the infrastructure of social scientific research. Its benefits far outweigh any costs to authors, the Editor, or the publisher. The procedures guarantee that complete replication materials are available and operate satisfactorily for all articles that appear within the *Journal*'s pages. This ensures the quality of the analyses reported in the *AJPS*, contributes to the fairness of the review process, and provides an invaluable resource for teaching and facilitating further research.

Editorial Staff

It is with decidedly mixed feelings that I say there will be some major changes in the *AJPS* Editorial Office during summer 2017. First, I am extremely happy to report that the Managing Editor, Robert Lupton, and the two Editorial Interns, Adam Enders and Miles Armaly, have all taken tenure-track faculty positions starting in fall 2017! Bob will be heading to the University of Connecticut, Adam is going to the University of Louisville, and Miles is going to the University of Mississippi. These are excellent institutions and will be great places for Bob, Adam, and Miles to start their careers as university faculty. I know their experiences at the *American Journal of Political Science* help them "hit the ground running" and of course I hope you will join me in wishing them all the very best of luck.

Second, I have to admit that I view their departures with some anxiety and sadness. Bob, Adam, and Miles have been with me at the *AJPS* since the beginning of my editorial term. I think they would agree that we have grown into an effective and efficient team that works very well together. Their ongoing efforts and dedication deserve much of the credit for the wonderful success that the *Journal* has experienced over the past three years. I certainly know that I would not be able to function as Editor without their essential contributions. So, they will all be missed!

Third, it would be impossible to "replace" Bob, Adam and Miles. But, I was extremely fortunate to find three highly capable individuals who will fill their positions. Marty Jordan will become Managing Editor upon Bob's departure. The new Editorial Interns will be Jessica Schoenherr and Nate Smith. All three are students in the Michigan State University Political Science Ph.D. program and they are very well-qualified to take on the various responsibilities within the *AJPS* Editorial Office. I know that we will have a smooth transition and definitely look forward to working with Marty, Jessica, and Nate in the coming months.

Finally, I am pleased to report that the President and Executive Council of the Midwest Political Science Association have offered me another term as *AJPS* Editor. While there are some minor details to be worked out, I have accepted the offer. I consider it a great honor to be the editor of what I have long believed to be the best journal in the discipline. And I am very happy that I will be able to continue in this position for the next few years.

JOURNAL OPERATIONS IN 2017

While most of this Report focuses on *AJPS* operations during 2016, I do want to provide a brief update on the first three months of 2017. As already noted, the number of submissions remains very

high. From January 9 (the *Journal*'s opening date for the year) through March 29, we received 240 manuscripts. This is a substantial increase over the number of manuscripts we received during a similar period in 2016 (216 submissions from January 11 through March 28, 2016) and it represents a submission rate of 3.04 manuscripts per day!

The breakdown of 2017 submissions across subfields is shown in Table 10. For the most part, the distribution is very similar to that from the first three months of 2016. The proportions of submissions in American political behavior, American institutions, and comparative politics are virtually identical to those from last year— the differences in each subfield are less than one percent. International relations is up about two percent from the corresponding 2016 figure. The two largest differences from 2016 occur in the subfields with the smallest numbers of submissions. Methodology/formal theory is down about six percent from the 2016 figure, while submissions in normative political theory are up by more than three percentage points.

Table 10: Manuscript submissions by subfield, January 9 through March 29, 2017.

	Percent of total ($n = 240$)
American political behavior	29.2%
American political institutions	21.7%
Comparative politics	19.6%
International relations	18.4%
Methodology and formal theory	5.4%
Normative theory	5.8%

From January 2 through March 28, I made a total of 206 editorial decisions. The mean turnaround time for all of these manuscripts is 51.4 days and the median is 51. With desk rejections excluded, the mean turnaround is 70.7 days, but the median is 60 days. From the total number of decisions, 27.7% were desk rejections, 56.8% were rejections after external review, 8.2% were invitations to revise and resubmit, and 7.3% were conditional acceptances.

In conclusion, the *American Journal of Political Science* had a very successful year in 2016, and operations continue to run very smoothly during the first quarter of 2017. *AJPS* articles are highly influential and widely cited, manuscript submission rates are high, review turnaround times are relatively low, and *Journal* policies help maintain the integrity of the scientific process. For all of these reasons, the *American Journal of Political Science* is widely recognized as a premiere publication outlet for research of the very highest quality and a leader in promoting open science principles, not only within the political science discipline, but also throughout the entire social scientific research community.