

Notes from the Editors: Transparency

One of the goals of our editorship has been to provide transparency across different dimensions, including how the journal works internally, what measures we are taking to achieve our priorities, and how going from submission to publication works at the journal, to name just a few. As the flagship journal of the *American Political Science Association*, the journal serves an important role in the discipline, and members of the association and the discipline at large should know what is going on in the journal. Furthermore, our team has been committed to increasing the accessibility of the journal, not by lowering standards, but by taking some proactive steps that include providing more advice and information about how scholars might navigate the publication process. Academia can be a challenging environment in which a hidden curriculum of unwritten, unspoken rules and expectations can complicate members' ability (particularly those that are junior or who have been marginalized in any number of ways) to succeed. While exposing the hidden curriculum is not enough to rectify structural inequalities, it does provide valuable resources to those who might otherwise not have access to them.

We have tried to create transparency through our use of this space, “Notes from the Editors.” These notes are always open access. Starting with our first team-authored note in November 2020 (Notes from the Editors 2020), where we articulated our vision and commitments, we have used the notes to communicate to readers our approach, our policies, and the things we are seeing and learning from this side of the editorial process. In February 2021 (Notes from the Editors 2021a), we discussed our goal and efforts to make sure that the work we publish is ethically sound. We took up the topic of ethics again in May 2023 (Notes from the Editors 2023b) in our discussion of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Guidelines for Ethical Reviews and Suspicions about Plagiarism. In August 2021 (Notes from the Editors 2021c), we discussed our process of collaborative decision-making, including our policy of requiring a second editor to weigh in on decisions to desk reject. In May 2021 and November 2022 (Notes from the Editors 2021b; 2022c), we shared data about the potential impacts of the pandemic on submissions and the review process. In August 2022 (Notes from the Editors 2022b), we provided an insider's perspective on the editorial process, walking readers through the process from submission to publication for three *APSR* articles. In May 2022 (Notes from the Editors 2022a), we discussed our goal of increasing methodological diversity. In particular, we discussed qualitative research as being one of the areas we want to further develop. In February 2023 (Notes from the Editors 2023a), we talked about citation bias,

particularly as it pertains to gender, sexuality, race, as well as the Global South. In August 2023 (Notes from the Editors 2023c), we discussed how we have used increased page allocations to expand the kinds of work we published. While each article independently addressed a different aspect of the submission, review, and publication process, explained one of our core commitments, or provided data on the work the journal has received and published, we have intended that, taken together, they should help readers to gain a comprehensive sense of how the *APSR* has operated under our team and that they should inform members of the discipline about the successes and challenges we have faced along the way.

Another way that we have shared information with potential authors is through our [frequently asked questions \(FAQ\) section](#) on the journal webpage, which provides practical advice on a wide range of issues, spanning from how to format a manuscript and what kinds of manuscripts we consider to what to do if the data on which an author relies must be kept confidential (and much more). We have also sought to do this through two types of blogs. The first is our [Editors' Blog](#). In our first few posts, we elaborated on our visions and goals, such as in the post [A New Era for the American Political Science Review, Moving Beyond the Rhetoric of Diversity and Inclusion, and Implementing New Norms for Research with Human Participants](#). We have also shared our perspectives and advice (often plural for a team of 12 editors): [What Makes a Good APSR Article](#), [What Makes a Good Review](#), [Navigating an R&R](#), and [Publishing Your Qualitative Manuscript in the APSR](#). The second source of insight is our [Author Blogs](#), particularly our conversations with authors. In these conversations, we provide some behind-the-scenes insights from our authors regarding the research and publication process. Authors have shared what inspired particular projects, their challenges, and even how they have navigated the review process.

A final way we have tried to share information is by outreach efforts to prospective authors. Our editors have attended various regional, national, and even international conferences. We have spoken to individual scholars, presented on panels, and visited research section meetings. At every APSA Annual Meeting since we started our editorship, we have had a “Meet the Editors” panel in which we have shared what we have learned as editors, offered advice, and answered questions.

We know that the publication process can seem mystifying. As editors, we have learned many things since we started editing the journal, even though many of us came in with prior editorial experience. Editing a general interest journal with such a high submission rate and with such high stakes for the authors who

submit has its own challenges. While knowing more about the hidden curriculum cannot ensure publication, perhaps it can make the process less daunting for authors. The journal and the profession are at their strongest when they widen the scope of research. We can set and hold high standards while simultaneously endeavoring to help authors reach them.

REFERENCES

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