

Introduction: A Retrospective of LSQ's First 40 Years

As I mentioned in the February 2016 Introduction, I am casting about for an innovative way to make use of the pages previously dedicated to the editor's take on the contents of an issue. If any of you have suggestions, I would be more than happy to hear about them. For this issue, I asked a Ph.D. candidate at Washington University in St. Louis with strong interests in legislative studies, Constanza F. Schibber, to prepare a brief retrospective of the *Legislative Studies Quarterly's* first 40 years.

—Brian Crisp
Executive Editor

A Retrospective of *LSQ's* First 40 Years

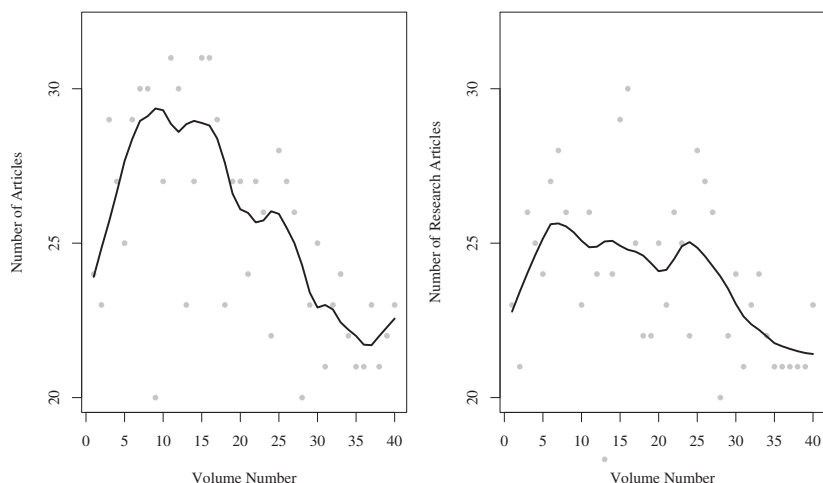
Between 1976 and 2015, *LSQ* published 40 volumes or 160 issues. From thousands of submissions received, the journal published 939 research articles, 9 research notes, 24 articles as part of the *Continuities in Legislative Research* series (review articles written by well-known scholars), 18 book reviews, and 3 sets of rejoinders involving controversies between authors.

Of 160 issues, 16 were dedicated to special topics. Some of these originated from conferences and symposiums, while others were simply aimed at advancing research in new areas. Topics varied from “New Directions in Coalition Research” and “Formal Models of Legislatures,” to “State Legislative Elections,” “Internal Operations of the U.S. Senate,” and, more recently, “British Political Development.” Additionally, there were four series of articles across multiple issues on specific topics. One of these series, for instance, aimed at encouraging comparative legislative research and spanned six issues published between 1999 and 2000.

Articles

The number of articles included in each volume increased in the early years of the journal, reaching an average of 28 articles per volume

FIGURE 1
Total Number of Articles per Volume (left panel) and
Number of Research Articles per Volume (right panel)



in the 1980s, where it leveled out through the 1990s (Figure 1, left panel). The trend then reversed, with articles per volume decreasing from 28 articles in the 25th volume (2000) to 22 articles in the 34th volume (2009). For the past five years, each volume has included, on average, 22 articles (in 2016 the journal will publish over-sized issues to avoid a backlog that would lengthen the time between acceptance and publication).

However, even though the *total number* of articles per volume in the past 15 years has decreased, the number of *research* articles per volume has remained relatively constant since the publication of the first volume (Figure 1, right panel). Each volume had, on average, 24 research articles. Half of the volumes included between 22 and 26 research articles. Because the length of each volume has varied little over time, we can infer that the journal increasingly centered its attention on publishing longer research articles, devoting less space for review articles and research notes.

Topics

Relying on the titles of the research articles, we can get a broad picture of the topics studied in *LSQ*. Of all the legislative

characteristics studied, committees were named in more than 7% of the titles of the research articles. The series of articles edited by Shepsle and Weingast in 1994 on “Formal Models of Legislatures” was a crucial contribution to our understanding of legislative organization and particularly of committee structures. The series included five articles that sparked a groundbreaking debate on the origins of legislative institutions. These well-known and highly-cited articles were written by Shepsle and Weingast; Gilligan and Krehbiel; Aldrich; Rohde; and Maltzman and Smith.

Roll-call votes have been under consideration in at least 3% of the articles. The most cited *LSQ* article written in the past 15 years has been Poole and Rosenthal’s (2001) update of their findings in “Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll-Call Voting,” which also included a comparison of NOMINATE results for the United States to both European legislatures and the United Nations General Assembly. According to Google Scholar, this article has been cited more than 400 times.

Gender has been explicitly named as a subject in 3.51% of the research articles. As a matter of fact, two of the ten most cited *LSQ* articles compare the attitudes and behavior of female and male legislators. In an innovative piece of research, Susan Welch (1985) showed that female legislators were more likely to vote in the liberal direction than their male counterparts. More than ten years later, Michele L. Swers (1998) concluded that women are not necessarily more liberal than their male colleagues on all policy issues, but instead women are more likely to vote together on women’s issues. Each paper has been cited almost 300 times.

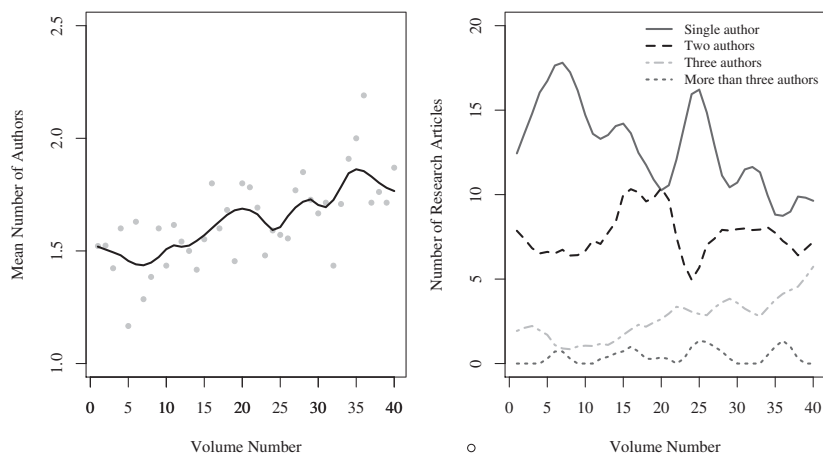
Other topics covered in *LSQ*’s first 40 years include legislators’ careers (2.66%), electoral campaigns (2.98%), bills and cosponsorship (2.02%), and legislative rules, structure, or organization (3.73%).

Geographic Subfields

We can also make use of the titles of the research articles to gain some sense of geographic focus. Although most articles do not specify which country or region they study, works not focused on the United States Congress often include such information. So, while this information is incomplete, it can still provide some sense of the balance across geographic subfields.

Just over 17% of the articles named the U.S. House of Representatives in their titles, while only about 7% mentioned the U.S. Senate. About 15% of the articles named a U.S. state or states in their titles. In

FIGURE 2
Mean Number of Authors per Volume (left panel) and Number of Research Articles per Volume by Number of Authors (right panel)



other words, about 40% of all research articles published by *LSQ* during this period named some aspect of American politics in their title. By contrast, about 18% of the article titles named a country or region other than the United States. Most of these focused either on a single European parliament or conducted a cross-national analysis of cases in Europe.

Authors

Almost 1,200 scholars published in *LSQ*, about 42% of them more than once. As in most political science journals, the mean number of authors per research article has slowly increased over time. Whereas in the journal's first decade the mean number of authors per research articles was 1.46, in the last decade it was 1.79. The current average number of authors per manuscript is similar to that found in *American Political Science Review* and in *Comparative Political Studies*, but considerably lower than the mean number of authors writing manuscripts published by the *Journal of Politics* and the *American Journal of Political Science*.

Even though the number of articles per volume written by a single author has gradually decreased over time, they still constitute the plurality of articles published (Figure 2, right panel). The current number of articles written by two authors is similar to that found in the early

volumes of the journal (except in the 90s, when the number of articles written by two authors almost doubled). The number of articles written by three authors, on the other hand, has gradually increased over time, coming very close to the number of articles written by two authors. The number of published manuscripts written by more than three authors has been very small across the 40 volumes of the journal.

Summary

In its first 40 years *LSQ* remained at the forefront of the field by flexibly adapting to trends in the broader discipline. Perhaps more importantly, it played a leadership role by identifying and promoting the best scholarly work. The new editorial team intends to maintain these traits.

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[Correction added on 30 May 2016, after first online publication: Constanza F. Schibber, whose historical comments introduced the May 2016 issue, has been added to the author byline.]