Dear Mr. Trinh,

The review of your manuscript, "Tea Leaf Elections: Inferring Purpose for Authoritarian Elections from Post-election Responses to Defeats," is now complete. The referee reports are included in this message. The referees agree that this paper has solid potential to make a significant contribution to the literature, and we agree. But we also share the reviewers' belief that the manuscript can be improved. Thus, we invite you to revise and resubmit the paper to the American Journal of Political Science.

In revising the manuscript, you should take seriously all the points raised by reviewers, but pay particular attention to a common question that comes up in two different forms -- the challenge of making generalizations from just one election and moreover, an election that Reviewer 1 points out is closely related to changes in the budget process that would render the results spurious. Finding a way to demonstrate that the argument works in earlier elections and that the theorized mechanism -- the rewarding rather than punishing of unruly districts -- is plausibly at play is the central challenge. Given the potential data limitations noted by Reviewer 1, this may not be possible, but we would like to offer you the opportunity to try. There are other comments to address as well, including the issue of the generalizability of the Vietnamese case in the absence of multiparty contestation.

When you return the revision, please provide a memorandum explaining how you have responded, or why you have chosen not to respond, to the points we mention above and to the issues the referees raised in their initial reviews. The memorandum should be completely anonymous. We will not impose a strict length limit, but please try to make your response as succinct as possible. About five single-spaced pages (or fewer) would be ideal.

In addition to responding to the various comments, critiques, and suggestions from the reviewers and us, the revised version of the manuscript must conform to the same formatting, anonymity, and length requirements (no longer than 10,000 words) that were used for the original submission. The revision should be submitted online through Editorial Manager. Similarly, your memorandum responding to the referees should be inserted into the Editorial Manager text box labeled "Response to Reviewers" or uploaded as a separate Word or PDF document, ordered first, and labeled "Response to Reviewers."

Note that if you return a Supplemental Information (SI) file with your revision, it should be limited to the approximate length of the SI on the original submission, or no longer than 20 pages if there was no SI submitted with the original submission. We are happy to make exceptions to the 20-page limit when additional pages are required to respond to explicit issues raised by reviewers. Just email us to request an exception.

Please keep in mind that, regardless of the changes you make to the current manuscript, there are simply no guarantees about the final outcome, as reviewers may not be satisfied with the revisions, or the revisions may reveal "new" concerns. We will send the revised manuscript to all three reviewers and evaluate the revisions carefully before making a final decision. We always intend to terminate the review process after one revision, so to move forward all reviewers must endorse publication.

Please inform us if you will not be resubmitting the manuscript, or if preparing the revision will take more than three months. If a revised submission is not received within six months, we may withdraw the offer to revise and resubmit.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the review process, please contact us at ajps@mpsanet.org.

Congratulations on the R&R. We look forward to receiving your revised manuscript.

Best,

Graeme Robertson, Associate Editor

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and

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