



Frequently Asked Questions

Below you will find answers to some common questions about the journal. If your question is not answered here, please contact the Managing Editor at apsr@apsanet.org

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The Review Process

Q: How does the editorial team work? Who is the lead editor? Who is the associate editor for my field?

A: Our team consists of twelve members, of whom two are rotating co-leads and ten are co-editors. All team members work closely and collaboratively, meeting regularly to discuss new and revised manuscripts. Currently, Clarissa Hayward and Julie Novkov are co-leads. Rather than having designated subfield editors, the lead editors distribute manuscripts among the members of the team, assigning them to individual team members in a way that takes into account both substantive and methodological expertise. To ensure continuity, the co-leads' terms are staggered; when one rotates off, the other stays on for the subsequent six months.

Q: What are the criteria for deciding whether an article is desk rejected or sent out for review?

A: Grounds for desk rejection include reasons related to remit, ethics, and substance. In all cases, a decision to desk reject a manuscript will be supported by two editors. Grounds for desk rejection related to remit include articles that fall outside the scope of the journal, such as, for example, papers that are not based in political science research, are not written in English, or that violate submission guidelines.

Ethical grounds for desk rejection include that the research has used unethical procedures or methods, as outlined in the APSA's *Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research* (approved by the APSA Council on April 4, 2020), that it represents a conflict of interest (that is, a situation in which financial interests or other direct influences call into serious question the author's capacity to conduct and report research independently), or that it includes plagiarized content.

Substantive grounds for desk rejection are ones that, in the editors' judgment, mean that a manuscript is unlikely to make it through the review process. This decision may be based on the editors' determination that the manuscript is insufficiently original or innovative, lacks evidence to support the claims it advances, employs an inappropriate research design, fails to engage the relevant literature(s), and/or is poorly written.

Q: Once my article has been assigned to an editor, can I contact that person if I have questions?

A: If you have a question about your manuscript at any point in the review process, please email the editorial team at apsr@apsanet.org.

Q: What are the criteria for deciding whether the author of a manuscript that has been reviewed will be invited to revise and resubmit it?

A: Authors may be offered the opportunity to revise and resubmit their papers, making either major or minor revisions. In neither case is publication of the revised paper guaranteed.

An invitation to revise and resubmit with *major* revisions may be extended in cases in which the editors see substantial value in a project but also determine that it requires some reframing or some further methodological, epistemological, or evidentiary refinement. Editors will use their judgement in each case about what constitutes substantial value, but if a paper requires both reframing and methodological refinement, it will typically be rejected. An R&R will be issued only if the editors believe the paper is likely to be successful after one revision. Major revisions will typically be sent back to the original reviewers for re-review.

An invitation to revise and resubmit with *minor* revisions may be extended in cases in which the editors see substantial value in the piece but judge that some small yet important changes must be made before the paper is ready for publication. Examples of minor changes might include requests that authors provide more details about a dataset, requests for slight refinements or adjustments to conceptual definitions, and the like. Minor revisions may or may not be sent back to reviewers.

Q: If I cannot complete a revision in the time allotted, may I ask for an extension?

A: Yes. If you require more time, please contact us at apsr@apsanet.org .

Q: Is there a process for appealing a decision to reject my manuscript?

A: Yes. You may review the appeals process in full here . Briefly, however, authors may appeal negative decisions by sending a request to the journal email address (apsr@apsanet.org).

Q: On what basis may I appeal an adverse decision about my manuscript?

A: Appropriate grounds for appeal include significant errors of fact in the editors' letter or in reviewers' comments; procedural irregularities or improprieties in the review process; unethical behaviour on the part of reviewers; or conflicts of interest. The appeal letter should specify the grounds on which the appeal is being made, and must explain why the author(s) believe that these concerns are material to the decision. The editors strongly discourage appeals that simply express disagreement with a review or reviews or with the editor's reasoned decision about the manuscript.

Communications with and about the Journal

Q: Where can readers, authors, and the broader public find information about the journal?

A: The journal's primary website is hosted by Cambridge University Press . Information about the journal can also be found on Political Science Now and on the website of the American Political Science Association .

Q: How can readers, authors, and the broader public communicate directly with the editorial team?

A: Please email us at apsr@apsanet.org

Q: How does the journal communicate with readers, authors, and the broader public online and through social media?

A: The journal has an editors' blog that is hosted on the Cambridge University Press website here . Its Twitter handle is [@apsrjournal](https://twitter.com/apsrjournal) . You can also "like" us on Facebook here .

Research Ethics, Data, and Transparency

Note: *The APSR is implementing new manuscript submission guidelines to promote adherence to the American Political Science Association's guidelines regarding ethical practices, transparency about research methods, and effective scholarly communication in the journal.*

Q: How do the APSR editors apply the Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research (approved by the APSA Council, April 4, 2020)?

A: APSR editors expect that authors of manuscripts that directly engage human participants in the research process (see the *Principles* for clarification) will discuss relevant aspects of their research practices (in the text or an appendix). In addition, on submission, authors should reply yes to the screening question ("does your research involve human participants?") and then either affirm adherence to the *Principles*, or include – in the manuscript and in an appendix if needed – a brief reasoned justification for why exceptions to particular principles are appropriate for this work. Note that "human participants" includes human subjects, expert witnesses, and those exposed to experimental interventions. Note, too, that the *Principles and Guidance* also covers research that an IRB ruled exempt from further review and research that an IRB determined to be Not Human Subjects Research (NHSR), so authors of such exempted research will also be asked to affirm adherence and to justify any exceptions. Reviewers will be asked to assess whether manuscripts adhere to these *Principles* and, if need be, whether exceptions to them were justified.

Q: My IRB deemed my research exempt from review. Do the Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research (approved by the APSA Council, April 4, 2020) still apply?

A: Yes. The *Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research* (approved by the APSA Council, April 4, 2020) apply to *all* research involving human participants, including that which may be deemed exempt from review by a particular ethics review board. During the submission process, when asked, authors of studies deemed exempt should report "Yes, my research involved human participants." A follow-up question provides authors the opportunity to indicate that their research was deemed exempt by one or more review board.

Q: Does the APSR publish preregistered reports?

A: No. The APSR does not currently published preregistered reports. We do, however, review and publish research that follows a preregistered research plan.

Q: I preregistered my research plan. What information will I need to include with my submission?

A: Normally, at the time of submission, authors will be asked to provide information sufficient for the editors and reviewers to evaluate the extent to which the reported analysis is consistent with the preregistered research plan. First, some preregistration platforms allow authors to link to a public, anonymized copy of the registered plan. If an anonymized, public copy of the registered research plan is available online, authors should provide a link to the plan in their manuscript, near where they first indicate that the research was preregistered. Otherwise, the authors should indicate that the preregistration address will be updated upon acceptance. Second, in all cases, authors should upload with their submission an *anonymized* copy (e.g., a pdf printed from the repository with redactions) of the research plan as a separate .pdf file. The *anonymized* research plan will be provided to reviewers.

Q: Can authors decline to make data and other evidence available if it will be difficult or impossible to preserve confidentiality or anonymity, even if the evidence is not explicitly covered by an IRB?

A: Yes. During the submission process, corresponding authors will be asked whether they are able to archive their data or evidence on the *APSR* Dataverse for public reproduction purposes. If the corresponding author indicates that it is not possible to share the data or evidence publicly, they will have an opportunity to explain why preservation of confidentiality and/or anonymity is essential. The editors will NOT ask authors to divulge information that may reveal identities of interview subjects who spoke on condition of anonymity, or to provide details that may endanger interview research participants.

Q: How do *APSR* editors treat Institutional Review Board (IRB) rules, or their institutional equivalents, regarding the use or dissemination of evidence, including requirements for confidentiality or anonymity of respondents?

A: *APSR* editors expect that authors will have obtained IRB or equivalent approval (or exemption) at their home institution (or other appropriate organizations, as required) for research that involves human participants. Authors will be asked during the submission process whether their research directly engaged human participants in the research process (see APSA's Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research) and whether the research was reviewed by relevant IRBs (and with what outcome, e.g. approved, ruled exempt, etc.). Any exception to IRB review requires justification in light of the Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research. At the conditional accept stage, corresponding authors will be asked to upload copies of their IRB certificates or other approvals to the *APSR* Dataverse as an appendix. Guided by APSA's 2020 Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research, the editors will prioritize harm reduction and protection of the rights of research participants, including but not limited to respecting IRB restrictions on data sharing to protect the rights and privacy of research participants.

Q: How do *APSR* editors treat transparency requirements for data, such as Wikileaks, for which the legality may be in question?

A: During the submission process, corresponding authors will be asked whether there are any ethical concerns related to their research, and to indicate where they discuss these ethical issues in the text or, if needed, in an appendix to their manuscript. The editors will review papers that employ data whose legality is in question in the same way as any other submission to the *APSR*. However, if the paper is accepted for publication, the authors will need to confirm that they have the legal right to use the data prior to the article appearing in FirstView.

Q: How do *APSR* editors treat transparency requirements for administrative datasets that, if combined with other datasets such as voter files, could reveal information about particular individuals?

A: In such cases, the corresponding author should discuss the limitations on sharing their data in text or an appendix at the time of submission. At the conditional accept stage, authors will consult with the editors about how to share data and/or related scripts/code without violating privacy expectations.

Q: Does transparency of archival material require active citation or TRAX? If not, what is needed in order for archival documents to be made sufficiently transparent?

A: The editors do not require that authors use active citation nor that they provide a Transparency Appendix (TRAX). Authors are expected, however, to provide clear and precise references to archival materials, with the objective of allowing others to locate the same materials by accessing the archives at which they are stored. However, if authors are legally or ethically allowed to share excerpts of such material as part of the *Dataverse* associated with the article, they are invited to do so.

Q: How much of my evidence must be made available if I use qualitative material such as quotations from interviews, coded open-ended survey questions, or contextual information derived from field notes to support an empirical claim in an *APSR* article?

A: Authors should provide—either through citations, footnotes or an online appendix—sufficient information about their qualitative evidence to be able to persuade the reader that the arguments in the article are a fair representation of the research findings. If authors are legally or ethically allowed to share excerpts of such material as part of the *Dataverse* associated with the article, they are invited – but not required – to do so.

Q: How do I show production and analytic transparency for research that is primarily ethnographic or based on participant observation—i.e., for which there is no precise interview protocol or systematic “procedures used to collect and/or generate” research materials (see *APSR* Submission Guidelines here).

A: The authors should include an analysis of their field research in the text, with further detail in an appendix if needed. Typically, this includes considerations such as authors' positionality in the field, the methods deployed, their adherence to the APSA's Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research (with reasoned justifications for exceptions to those principles), and an assessment of how their positionality affected the data collected. If authors are legally or ethically allowed to share excerpts of ethnographic material as part of the *Dataverse* associated with the article, they are invited to do so.

Q: How long may I keep my research evidence or data private, so that I can develop additional publications before other scholars obtain access to the materials?

A: Assuming that it is legally, ethically and epistemologically possible, authors are expected to provide only the portion of their dataset or materials that were used in producing the article published in the *APSR* and any related appendices. Authors can exclude variables, cases, or other materials that are part of the larger project but not referenced in the *APSR* article to protect future publication options. If authors have particular concerns, they should discuss them with the editors.

Q: When do authors need to prepare and provide their data to comply with APSA's data transparency policies?

A: Normally, authors will not be asked to prepare and provide their data and related research materials (e.g., scripts, code) until the article has been conditionally accepted.

Q: Will the APSR editors share data on ethical and transparency-related practices as they relate to submission and APSA guidelines?

A: Yes, we will include summary statistics about human subjects research, other ethical issues, and research transparency in the editors' annual report to APSA Council.

Q: My article has been conditionally accepted for publication in the APSR. What types of materials should I include in my appendix (if needed)?

A: Below are the typical kinds of material that would be included in an appendix for common types of research published in the *APSR*. In the case of mixed methods research drawing on a combination of methods, authors should provide material listed below for each one. Normally, the letter confirming conditional acceptance of an article for publication will specify the materials that should be included in the appendix. Corresponding authors should contact the Managing Editor, should they have questions about their submission.

Research relying on quantitative analysis of individual-level survey responses

- a copy of any/all research ethics certificates, or, in secondary use cases, a link to where the data are publicly available;
- affirmation of adherence to APSA's 2020 *Principles and Guidance for Research on Human Subjects*, or a reasoned justification of exceptions to particular principles;
- exact wording of survey questions and responses used in the analysis;
- if ethically and legally permissible, a copy of the final, complete dataset for all questions used in the analysis, including information about the collection procedures for newly generated datasets; and
- a copy of the command or script files necessary to reproduce all results presented in the article or any appendix.

Research relying on other types of quantitative datasets

- a copy of any/all research ethics certificates (if applicable), or link to where the data are publicly available in secondary use cases;
- if applicable, affirmation of adherence to APSA's 2020 *Principles and Guidance for Research on Human Subjects*, or a reasoned justification of exceptions to particular principles;
- if ethically and legally permissible, a copy of the final, complete dataset used in the analysis, including information about the collection procedures for newly generated or aggregated datasets; and
- a copy of the command or script files necessary to reproduce all results presented in the article or any appendix.

Research relying on ethnography (immersive research with participants in communities, workplaces, other social settings)

- a copy of any/all research ethics certificates;
- affirmation of adherence to APSA's 2020 *Principles and Guidance for Research on Human Subjects*, or a reasoned justification of exceptions to particular principles; and
- if needed, additional discussion of the field research sufficient to convey the depth of their understandings of the particular place, context, and topics analyzed in the manuscript, including further analysis of the authors' positionality in the field, the methods deployed, and how their positionality affected the data collected.

Research relying on semi-structured interviews or original surveys

- a copy of any/all research ethics certificates;
- affirmation of adherence to APSA's 2020 *Principles and Guidance for Research on Human Subjects*, or a reasoned justification of exceptions to particular principles; and
- any interview guides or related protocols used during data collection or analysis.

Research relying on archival or other primary documents that are not publicly available

- a description of the documents, including (if relevant) of the archive and its contents, including how access was obtained and what limitations on dissemination of primary data were imposed, if any.

Research relying on other types of research

- similar documentation of research practices as relevant.

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