

# **Political Research Quarterly Activity Report 2007-2008**

by

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## OVERVIEW

*PRQ* celebrates its sixtieth anniversary in 2008. The past year was an active period for the Quarterly. The journal has experienced an extraordinary increase in submissions over the past two years. While the increase reflects broader trends in the discipline, it also reflects the improving reputation of the journal as the current editors have made efforts to modernize and expedite the review processes and to reach out to diverse kinds of scholarship. *PRQ* published a mini-symposium on Diversity and Democracy in the June 2007 issue and the September issue will include a symposium on Coalition Politics (see more on mini symposia below). The Quarterly continues to encourage submissions that take multiple methodological perspectives and that are problem driven. The editors also have continued efforts to reach out to authors in substantive areas that have been under-represented in the journal in the past (e.g. political theory and public administration). Representing the disciplinary diversity and internationalization of the Quarterly, the Editorial Advisory Board has played an important role in the success of *PRQ* (see list below).

In 2007, the journal also adopted SAGE's "On-line first" system. Articles are now pre-published on our website as soon as the copyediting process is complete. This allows subscriber access to articles much more quickly, in some cases as early as six months after acceptance depending on author's response to copy editing queries.

To mark the Quarterly's sixtieth anniversary, we conducted a content analysis and constructed a database of the more than 2700 articles published over the course of the journal's history.\* This database is now found on our website and available to the public. We also prepared a special anniversary issue of the journal published in March 2008. The issue includes:

- An essay by the editors reviewing publishing trends in the journal and its relationship to developments in the WPSA and the discipline.
- Short essays on the top twelve cited articles in *PRQ*'s history, written by the authors of those articles (when possible) or other experts in the related field.
- A short essay on the founding of *PRQ* in relation to the WPSA.

## SUBMISSIONS

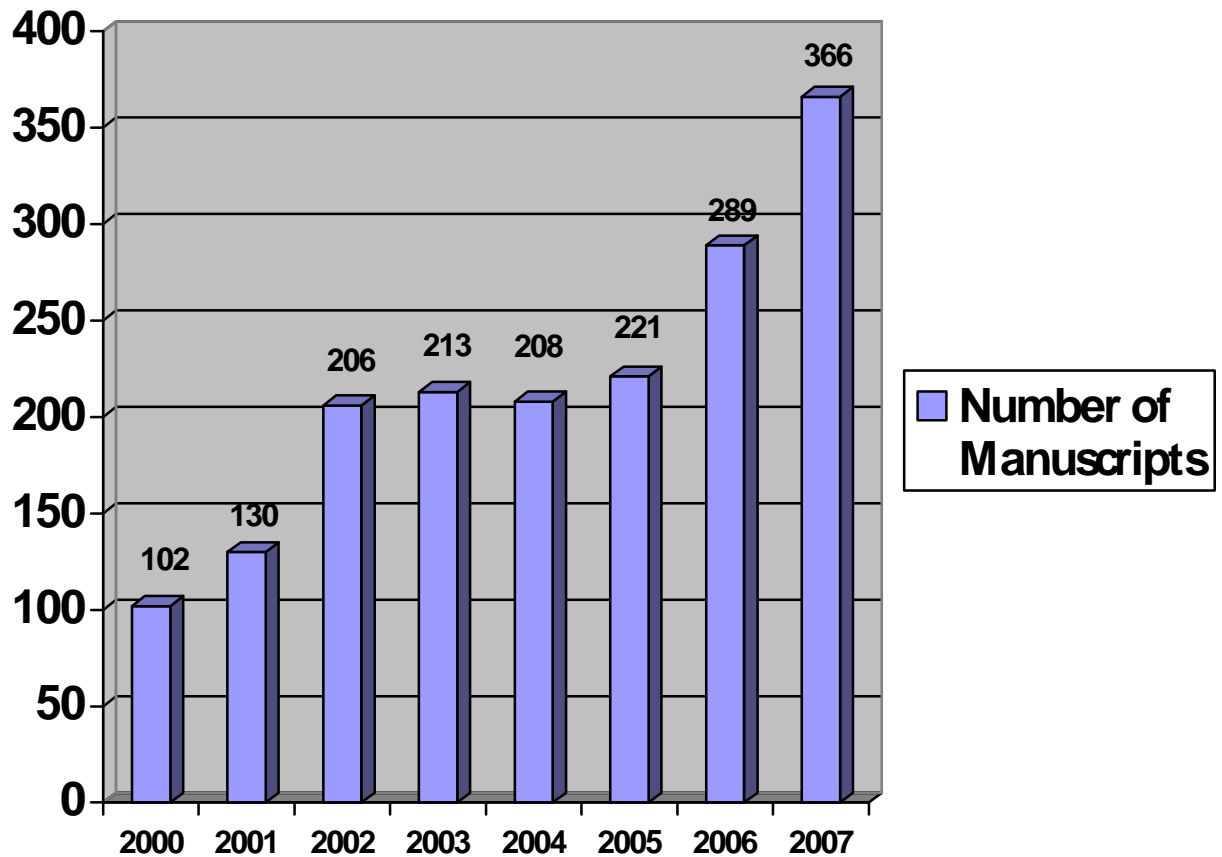
As Figure 1 below indicates, *PRQ* has experienced a dramatic increase in submissions during the past two years. Last year, we reported a 30 percent increase in the submission rate for 2006. Once again this year the submissions have continued to increase at approximately a 30 percent rate in comparison with the previous year, from 289 submissions in 2006 to 377 in 2007. Overall, this represents a 71 percent increase in submissions since the current editors assumed responsibility in 2006. Moreover, the remaining pre-2006 paper files inherited from the period before the journal switched to its on-line editing and review system (Manuscript Central) have finally been cleared, and

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\* Our assistant Aaron Ley provided invaluable assistance in this project.

the journal's manuscripts are now handled entirely on-line. During the first seven months in 2008, the *Quarterly* has received 252 submissions (194 new manuscript and 65 revise and resubmits) 20 more submissions than what we had received last year at this time. At this pace, total submissions in 2008 will certainly exceed that of last year.

Figure 1. Manuscripts Received, 2000 - 2008

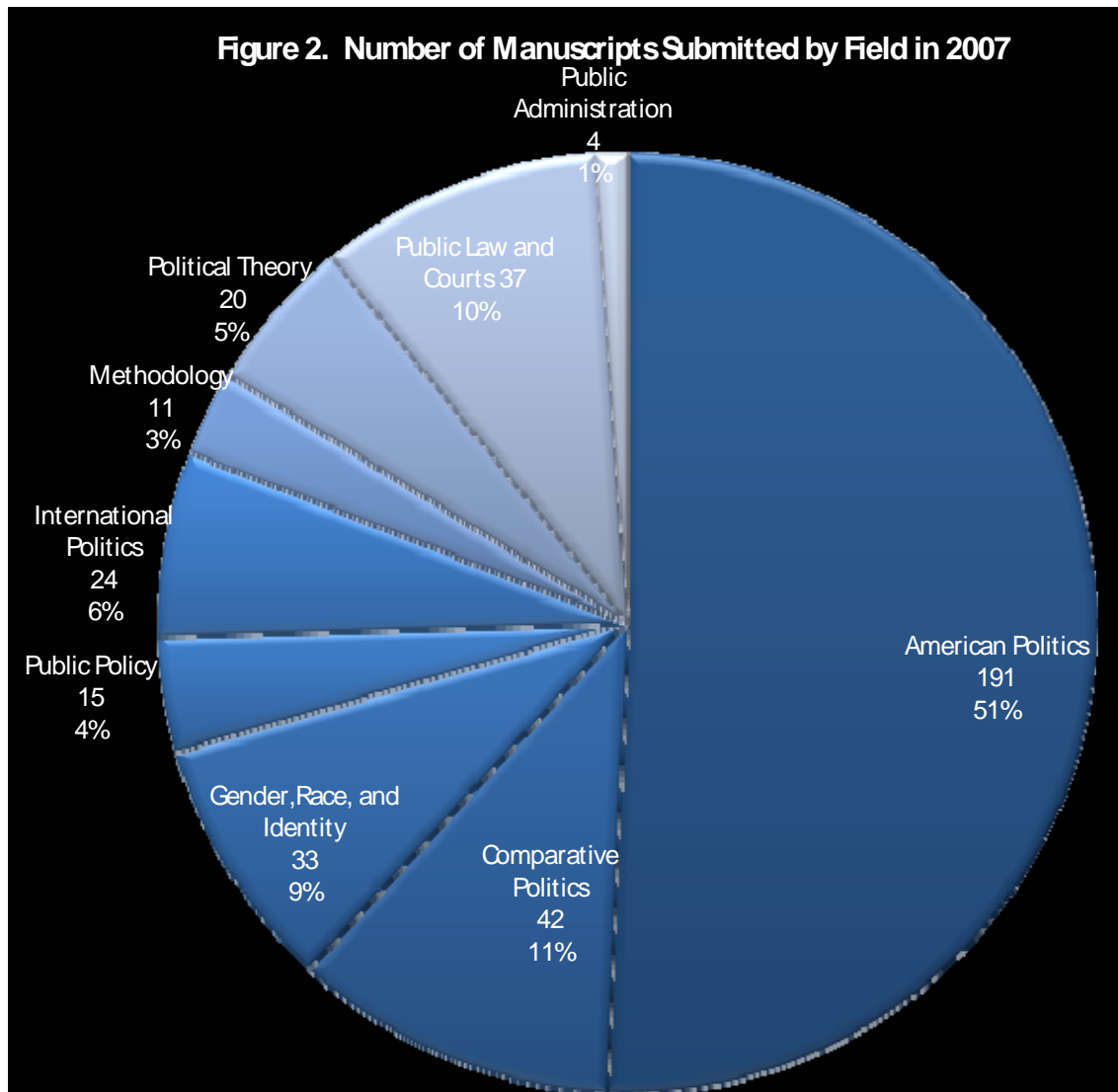


*PRQ* uses seven primary field categories for classifying manuscripts and reviewers, which are used in this report.

- American Politics
- International Relations
- Comparative Politics
- Public Policy and Public Administration
- Political Theory and Philosophy
- Law and Courts

- Gender, Race and Identity<sup>†</sup>

When authors and reviewers register in our on-line system they are asked to select one of these seven categories as a primary field. They are also asked to select from a list of 50 secondary field categories based on the APSA organized sections or to write-in additional secondary fields. Figure 2 presents the breakdown of submissions by the seven primary fields.




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<sup>†</sup> This last category, created for administrative expediency, is a combined category of Gender and Politics, Race, Ethnicity and Politics, and Sexuality and Politics research and includes work in all categories.

Figure 3 presents data on manuscript decisions in 2007. The overall acceptance rate was 15 percent in 2007. This rate fell by 3 percent compared to 2006. *PRQ*'s acceptance rate is now comparable to that at other top-ranked political science journals. This rate is likely to drop still further in 2008 as submissions are already at a pace ahead of 2007 and as we work to reduce a back log of articles that currently stands at about one year between the time an article is accepted and publication. Nearly all manuscripts are sent out for review; in 2007 only 18 manuscripts were deemed by the editors to be inappropriate for review by the journal.

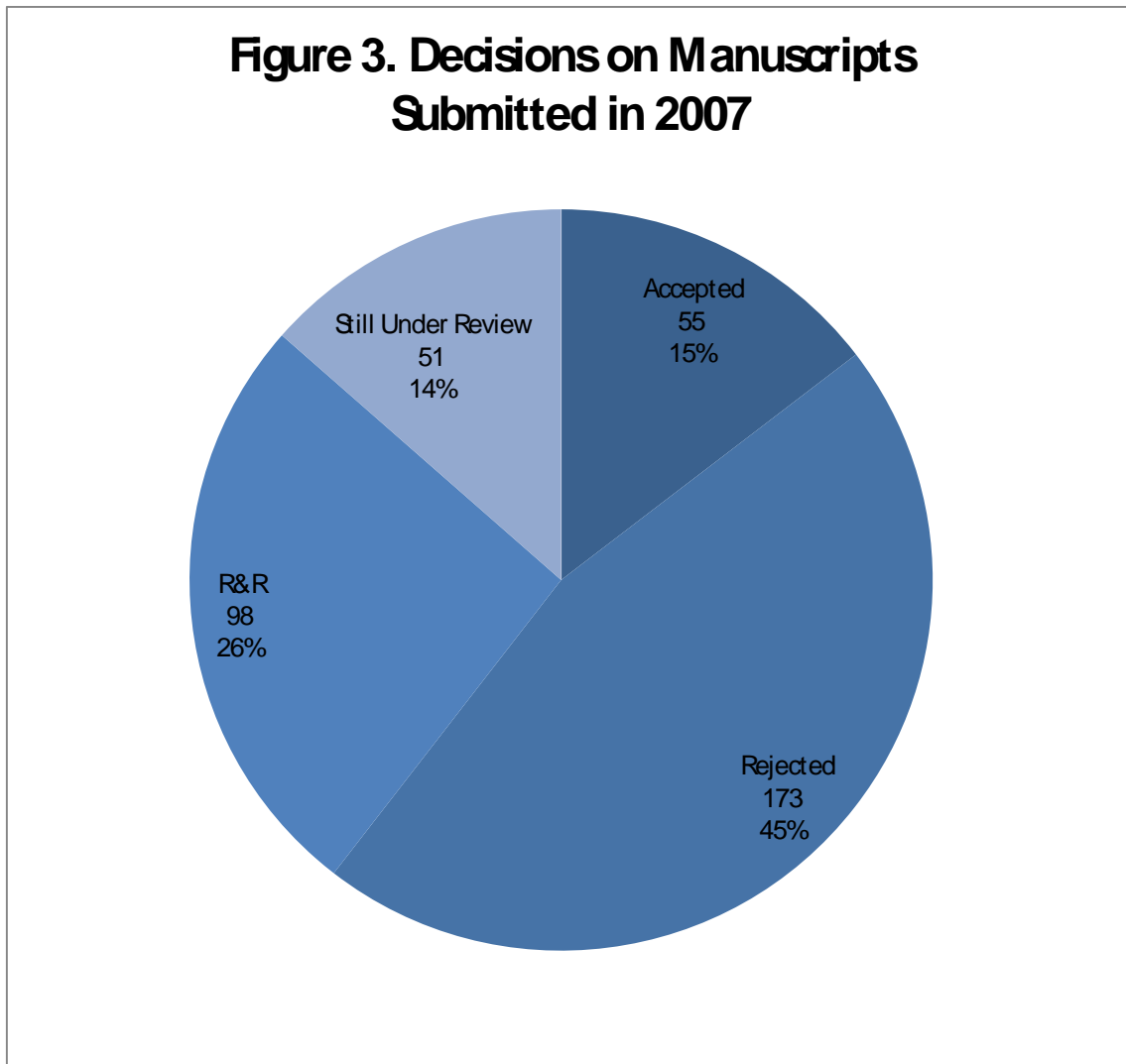
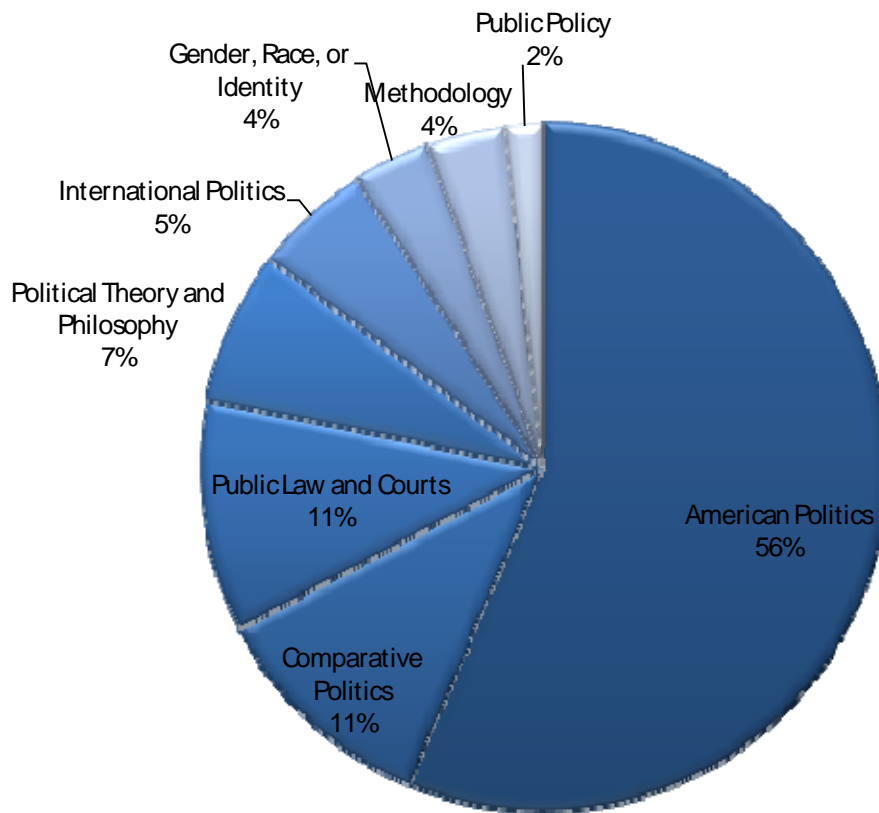


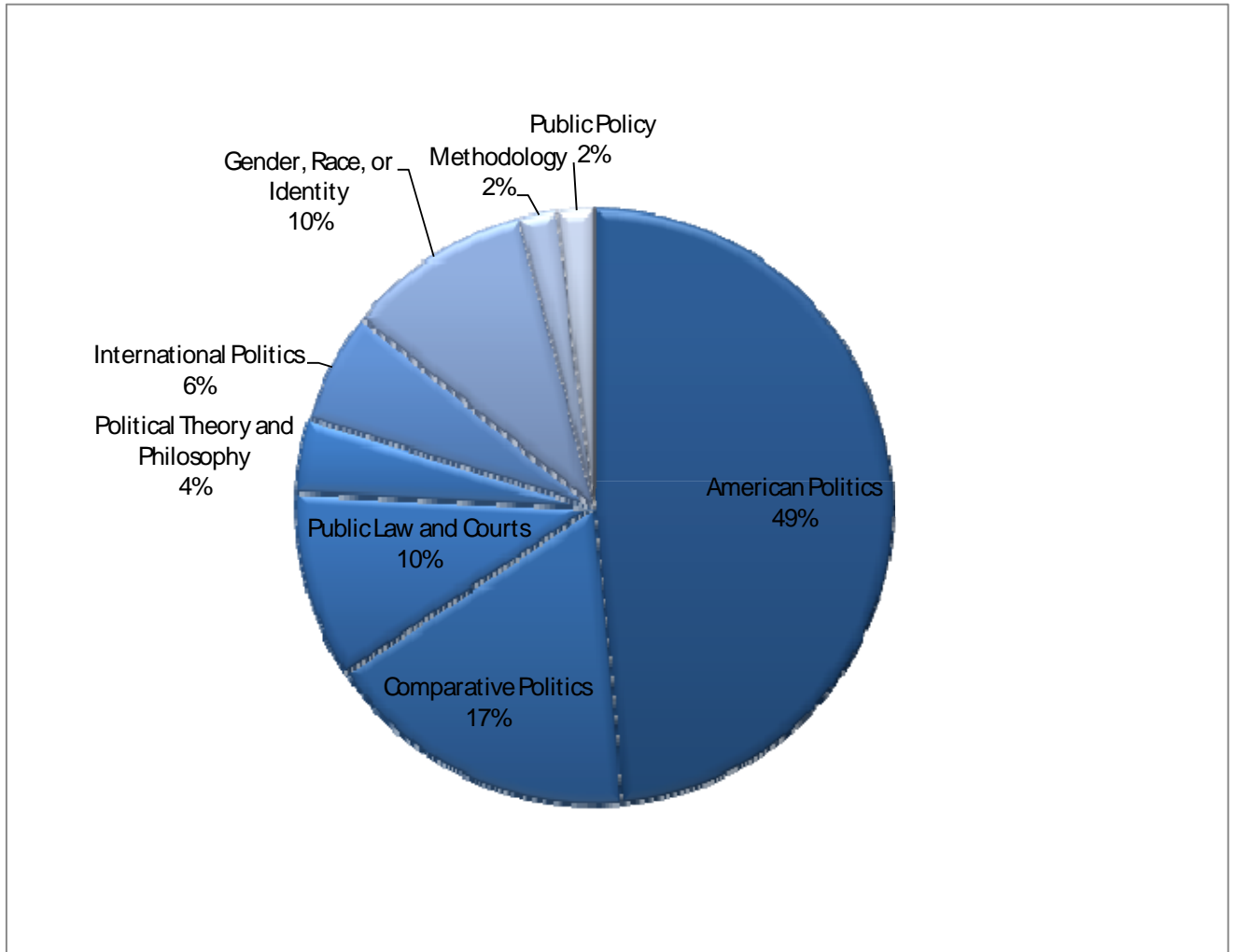
Figure 4 indicates the acceptance rate of manuscripts by field in 2007 and Figure 5 presents the divisions by field of the 252 manuscripts submitted to the Quarterly through July 2008. The rates of acceptance closely reflect submission rates: with American, Policy, Theory and Philosophy, Methodology, Law and Courts, and

Comparative Politics all experiencing the same or slightly higher rates of acceptance compared with rates of submission; and International Politics and Gender-Race-Identity experiencing marginally lower ones.

**Figure 4. Manuscripts Accepted in 2007 by Field**



**Figure 5: Percentage of Submissions by Field: January 1, 2008 – July 25, 2008**



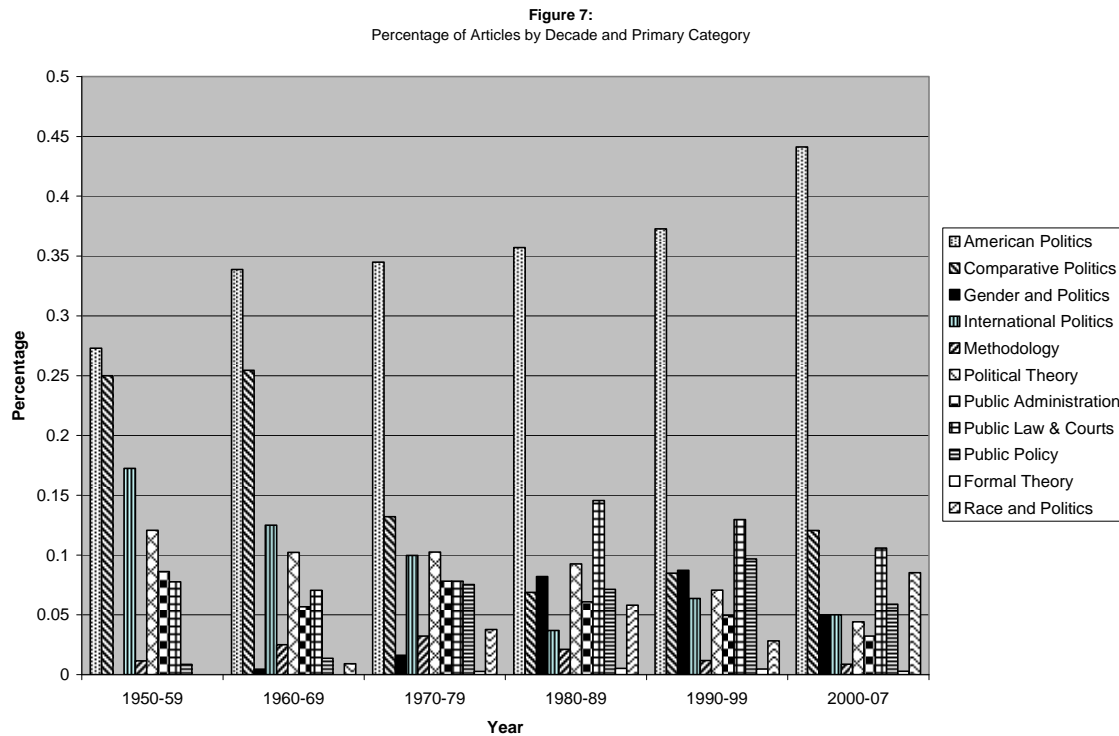
As a result of the continuing effort to attract international authors and readership, in 2007, the journal received 8 percent of its submission (27 manuscripts) from authors living in countries outside the United States. This represents the highest rate of foreign submissions since 1957. The bulk of these submissions came from authors living in the United Kingdom, Israel and Taiwan, followed closely by Thailand, Korea, and Canada.

A major priority since the current editors took over the journal has been to reduce the time that manuscripts are in review. Since August of 2006 the average time under review has been reduced from 90 plus days to less than 50 days in 2007. Reviewers on

average return their assessments of original manuscripts within 24 days and reviews of resubmissions within 21 days.

## CONTENT

Under the current editorial team, the journal has continued to publish in the areas of strength of the Quarterly as outlined in the content analysis published in the Sixtieth Anniversary issue (Mazur and Clayton 2008). The table below presents the evolution of article content of *PRQ* since the 1950s.



In 2007, the substantive breakdown of articles was the following:

American Politics = 15  
 Comparative Politics = 11  
 Gender = 1  
 International Politics = 1  
 Methodology = 5  
 Political Theory and Philosophy = 6  
 Public Administration = 7  
 Public Law and Courts = 6  
 Public Policy = 9  
 Formal Theory = 0  
 Race = 6

Since 2007, *PRQ* has published mini symposia on a range of topical themes. Guest editors work with the editorial team to put together 3-5 articles with an introduction and sometimes response essays. Articles go through the same review process as regular articles. Since initiating the regular mini- symposia—five have been proposed and three have been published. These include:

“Diversity and Democracy”, Todd Donovan, Symposium Guest Editor (March 2007)

“Dynamic Theories of Coalition Politics”, Jamie Druckman, Symposium Guest Editor (September 2008)

“Race and American Political Development” Julie Novkov, Symposium Guest Editor (December 2008)

Currently, articles from three mini symposia are under review.

## **REVIEWERS**

The editors have also made a concerted effort to expand the reviewer pool utilized by the journal. We believe this is essential both to better represent the breadth of research interests and approaches within the discipline and to avoid “reviewer fatigue.” Thus far we have expanded *PRQ*’s online reviewer database to nearly 2623 reviewers. The distribution of registered reviewers by primary field follows:

- American politics: **30%**
- International relations: **7%**
- Comparative politics: **15 %**
- Public policy and public administration: **15%**
- Political theory and philosophy: **6 %**
- Law and Courts: **10%**
- Gender, race and Identity: **10%**
- Methodology: **7%**

We continue to work with the Editorial Advisory Board to expand the journal’s reviewer base. As part of this effort, we have created Outstanding Reviewer Awards which are given out each year and recognize outstanding service to the journal (see below).

## **BEST ARTICLE AWARD**

Each year, an award is presented to the best article in *PRQ* published the previous year. The recipient receives \$1000 and the award is announced at the WPSA annual meeting. The 2007 Best Article Committee was chaired by Ted Lascher (California State University, Sacramento, and included Keith Whittington (Princeton University) and Anna Sampaio (University of Colorado-Denver). The 2007 winner was Rene Rocha for his article, “Black-Brown Coalitions in Local School Board Elections,” Volume 60, Number 2 (June), pp. 315-327. The article can be accessed directly through the *PRQ* website.

## **OUTSTANDING REVIEWER AWARDS**

*Political Research Quarterly* is honored to have the contribution of dedicated scholars to serve as reviewers for the Journal. With the support of SAGE, each year the Editors select 10 exceptional reviewers that have shown their dedication through careful reviews with an “Outstanding Reviewer Award.” Each selected reviewer receives a \$60 gift certificate from SAGE. Five awards are announced at the WPSA meetings in March and five at the APSA meetings in August. The five reviewer awards in 2008 go to:

1. John Laursen – University of California Riverside
2. Brian Schaffner – American University
3. Susan Scarrow – University of Houston
4. Jana von Stein – University of Michigan
5. Alvin Tillery –University of Notre Dame

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