

ISQ Annual Report, 2015

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Welcome to the 2015 annual report for *International Studies Quarterly*. As per International Studies Association policy, this document mainly covers the period of 1 October 2014 to 30 September 2015. However, a significant number of manuscripts submitted during each "journal year" remain under consideration at the time of the annual report. This means that *first*, some of the data that we provide remains provisional and, *second*, this report includes updated information for the 2013-2014 period covered in our previous report. Finally, this report includes pooled data from both periods. However, unless otherwise noted, all figures pertain to the 2014-2015 reporting period.

Highlights from this year's report include:

- ISQ received 544 first-time (original) submissions from 1 October 2014 to 30 September 2015. This constitutes an increase of around 13% from the previous period, breaking a few years of relative stability in submission rates.
- Our submissions included 480 research articles, 49 research notes, two responses to published pieces, 10 theory notes, and three invited articles.
- The proportion of co-authored manuscripts continues to trend upwards. 40% of manuscripts submitted in 2014-2015 had at least 2 authors, compared to $\approx 35\%$ in the previous two years and $\approx 30\%$ in the two years before that. Co-authored manuscripts seem to perform significantly better in the review process.
- The gender breakdown of submissions remains largely unchanged. 35% of manuscripts submitted had at least one female author, the same as last year. However, the percentage of manuscripts with only female authors decreased (16.7% in 2014-2015 versus 21% in 2013-2014).
- Around 20% of manuscripts had PhD students as authors, either alone (14.7%) or co-authoring with other PhD students (2%) or faculty (3.5%).
- As of 1 October 2015, 63 (11.6%) manuscripts were still awaiting a first decision (either with the editorial team or awaiting reviewer reports). Of original manuscripts with decisions (481), about 40% (193) were rejected without external review, a six percentage point decrease compared to the previous reporting year (but still more than 10 percentage points higher than the average for the previous team). 45.3% (218) of the manuscripts were rejected after external peer review; 13.7% (66) were offered revise-and-resubmit decisions after review; four (.8%) were offered conditional acceptances.
- The editorial team has only accepted a small number of manuscripts submitted since October 2014. As of 1 October 2015, 78 (14.3%) manuscripts still awaited a final decision (63 awaiting a first decision as noted above, 15 R&Rs awaiting a new decision). Of those that have received decisions, 41.4% (193) received editorial rejections, 47.6% (222) were rejected after one or more rounds of review, 7.3% (34) were being revised for resubmission, and 3% (14) were accepted.
- Although we saw a six percentage point drop in the rate of editorial rejections from the previous year, we also saw a six percentage point increase in the rate of rejections after initial review. The rate of revise-and-resubmit decisions after initial review decreased by less than one percentage point.
- 300, or 55% of the manuscripts, came from scholars based in the United States. The other nine countries with the most submissions were UK (53, 9.7%), Canada (30, 5.5%), Germany (21, 3.9%), Israel (14, 2.5%), Australia (13, 2.4%), Switzerland (8, 1.5%); Sweden (8, 1.5%), Denmark (7, 1.3%), and Norway (7, 1.3%).

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Important updates from the 2013-2014 report include:

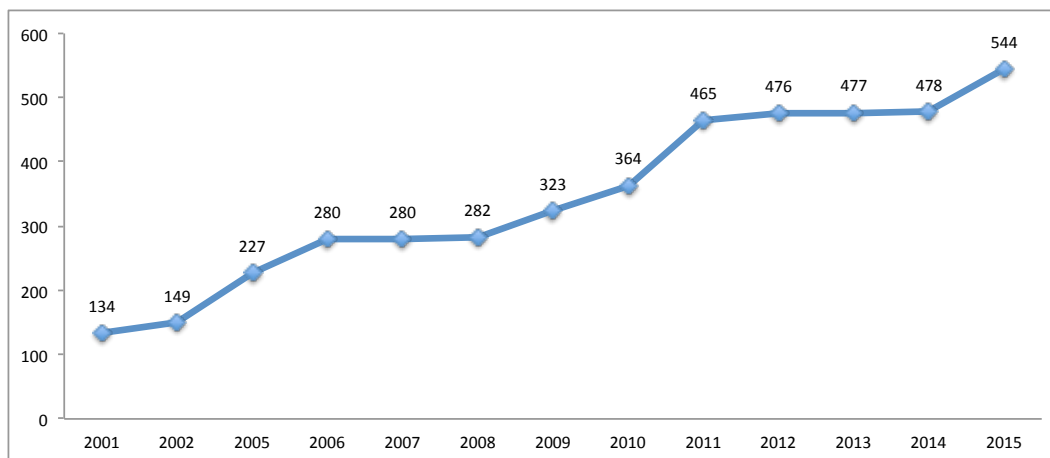
- ISQ accepted 48 manuscripts initially submitted during the 2013-2014 journal year. This represents an approximate acceptance rate of 10%. We accepted 47 manuscripts subsequent to revise-and-resubmit decisions, and one after a conditional acceptance. 68 manuscripts received revise-and-resubmit offers as a first decision. Thus, the "conversion rate" for revise-and-resubmit decisions stands at 70.5% during 2013-2014.
- Of these 48 manuscripts, 6 were solo-authored by female scholars (13%), 17 by male authors (35%), 9 co-authored by at least one female scholar and one male scholar (19%), 14 co-authored exclusively by male scholars (29%), and 2 (4%) were co-authored exclusively by female scholars.
- 34 (71%) of the manuscripts accepted came from authors based in the United States. Manuscripts originating from the United States comprised 56% of all manuscripts submitted, suggesting, *ceteris paribus* a small but significant "overrepresentation" of US-based scholars. The UK (three, or 6%) and Canada (two, or 4%) constitute the only other countries with more than one manuscript accepted.

1. Manuscript Flow

During the 2014-2015 period, ISQ processed 544 first-time submissions. This represents an increase of around 13% from the previous period. ISQ also received six proposals for special sections. Of these, five received rejections after consideration by ad-hoc committees, while one proposal received a revise-and-resubmit decision. One special section, originated under the prior team, will see publication in 2016. This includes three short pieces debating the appropriateness of dyadic analysis. These pieces underwent a peer-review process and all received acceptances.

For figure 1, we combined available historical data on original submissions with data in ScholarOne. A variety of considerations suggest caution for any comparison other than between 2013-2014 and 2014-2015.¹

Figure 1: Number of Original Manuscripts Submitted



Original submissions for 2014-2015 included 480 research articles (88.2%), 49 research notes (9%), two responses to published pieces (.4%), 10 theory notes (1.8%) and three invited articles (.6%). As of October 1st 2015, ISQ accepted 14 of these manuscripts (2.6%), offered conditional acceptances to three (.6%), declined 222 (47.6%) after review, and desk rejected 193 (41.4%). 34 (7.3%) had outstanding revise-and-resubmit decisions, were awaiting reviews, or were undergoing internal processing.

Figure 2 shows the percentage breakdown of these decisions. In terms of manuscript submission type, ISQ accepted 10 research articles, two research notes, two responses to published articles, and three invited contri-

¹Details of our procedures and methodology appear in the 2014 report. In brief, we restrict these numbers to first-time submissions and emphasize issues of missing data and how we approached them.

butions (pieces in special issues or responses generated from dissenting reviews). Table 1 presents the overall breakdown of decisions by manuscript type in more detail. Table 2 does the same for the 2013-2014 period.

Figure 2: Latest/Final Decision, 2014-2015

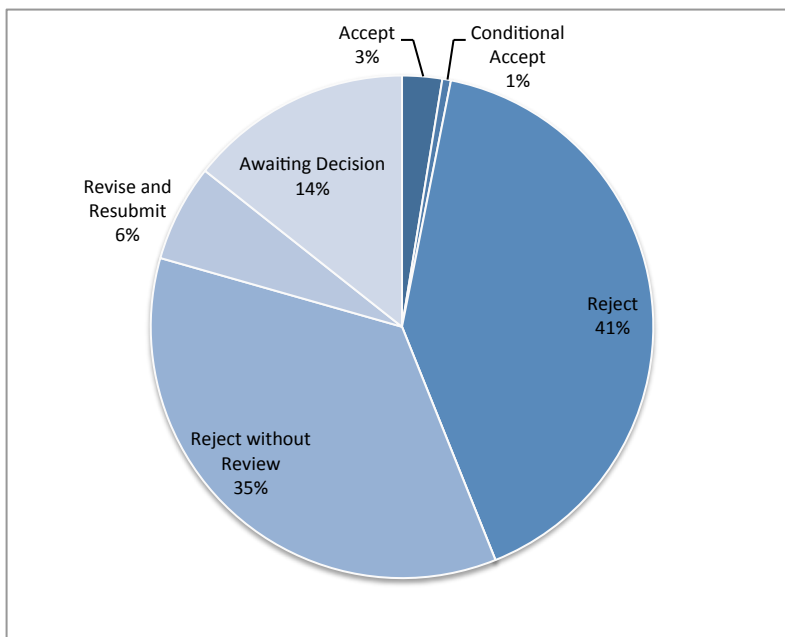


Table 1: Percentage Breakdowns of Types of Submissions and Final Decisions

	Accept	Conditional accept	Reject	Desk Rej.	R&R	Awaiting Decision	Total
Original Article	7	3	203	172	30	65	480
%	1.5%	0.6%	42.3%	35.8%	6.3%	13.5%	
Research Note	2	0	16	18	2	11	49
%	4.1%	0.0%	32.7%	36.7%	4.1%	22.4%	
Response to Published	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Theory Note	0	0	3	3	2	2	10
%	0.0%	0.0%	30.0%	30.0%	20.0%	20.0%	
Special issue	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	

Table 2: Percentage Breakdowns of Types of Submissions and Final Decisions 2013-2014

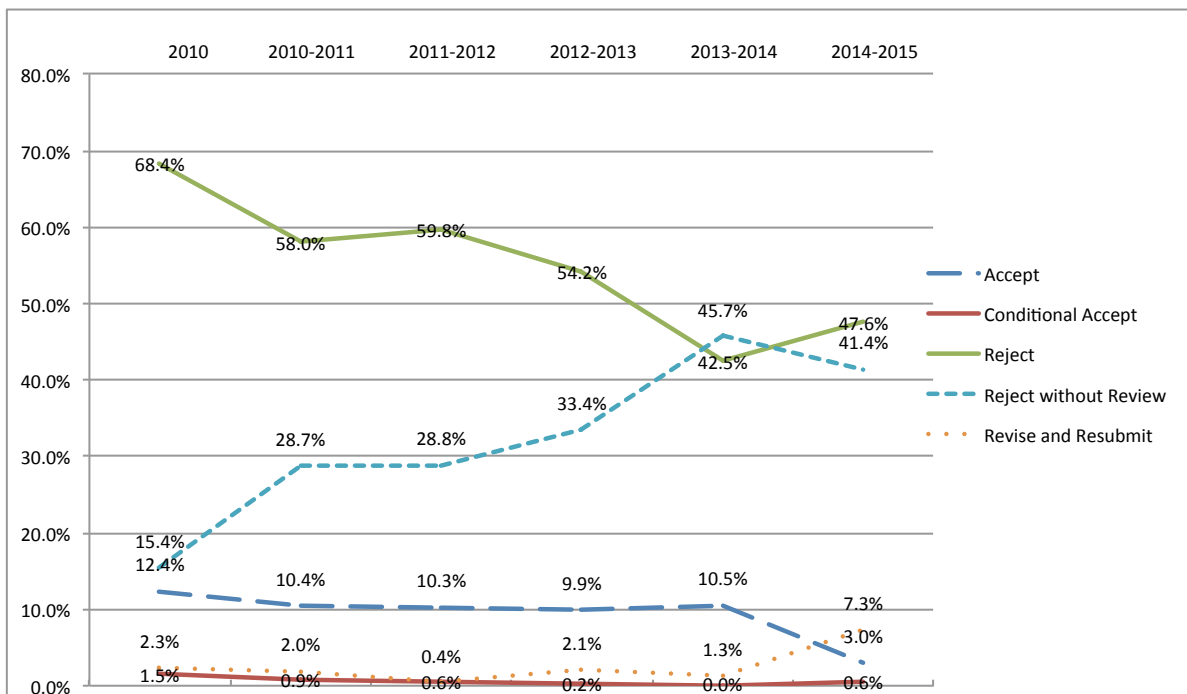
	Accept	Conditional accept	Reject	Desk Rej.	R&R	Awaiting Decision	Total
Original Article	44	0	184	208	6	0	442
%	9.3%	0.0%	38.9%	44.0%	1.3%	0.0%	
Research Note	4	0	11	5	0	0	20
%	0.8%	0.0%	2.3%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	
Response to Published	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	
Theory Note	0	0	6	4	0	0	10
%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	

Our commitment to a greater use of editorial rejections remains controversial. Figure 3 shows all latest decisions

logged in ScholarOne from 2010-2015, broken down by the time frame for annual reports.²

Readers may find the comparative trends of interest.³ While between 2010 and 2014 the desk-rejection rate increased from 33.1% to 45.7%, the rejection-after-review rate fell from 52.4% to 39%. So far in 2014-2015, a decrease in the rate of desk rejections saw a corresponding increase in the rejections after review. The total first-round rejection rate remained pretty consistent throughout the periods reported, at around 85%. Of course, the total rate of rejection does not answer the most pressing question raised by more aggressively screening manuscripts prior to review. That is, the rate of "false positives" that might have gone on to acceptance in the absence of a desk rejection. Because Figure 3 presents the latest decision, it underrepresents the number of offers to revise and resubmit (as some of the manuscripts with revisions have already been accepted or rejected after subsequent review). A better picture of first-round decisions can be found in Figure 4.

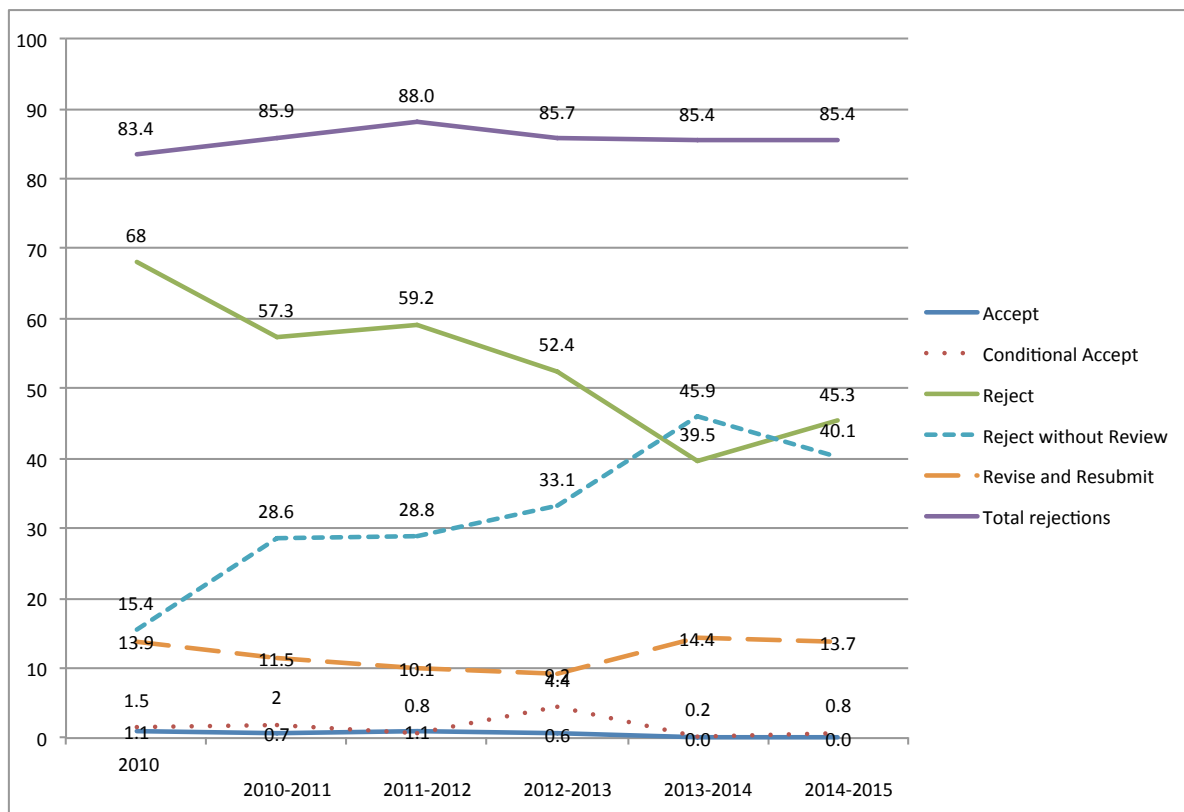
Figure 3: Distribution of Final Decisions for All Original Manuscripts Submitted During 'Journal Year'



²For purposes of additional comparison, it might prove appropriate to total "conditional acceptances" and "revise and resubmit" manuscripts prior to 2013-2014. That is, we relabelled "minor revisions" as "conditional acceptances" in the system and use that category almost exclusively for manuscripts requiring only style-and-presentation changes.

³We calculated percentages for 2014-2015 based on the number of manuscripts with decisions. 63 manuscripts submitted in the period were still awaiting a first decision when we downloaded the data from the system.

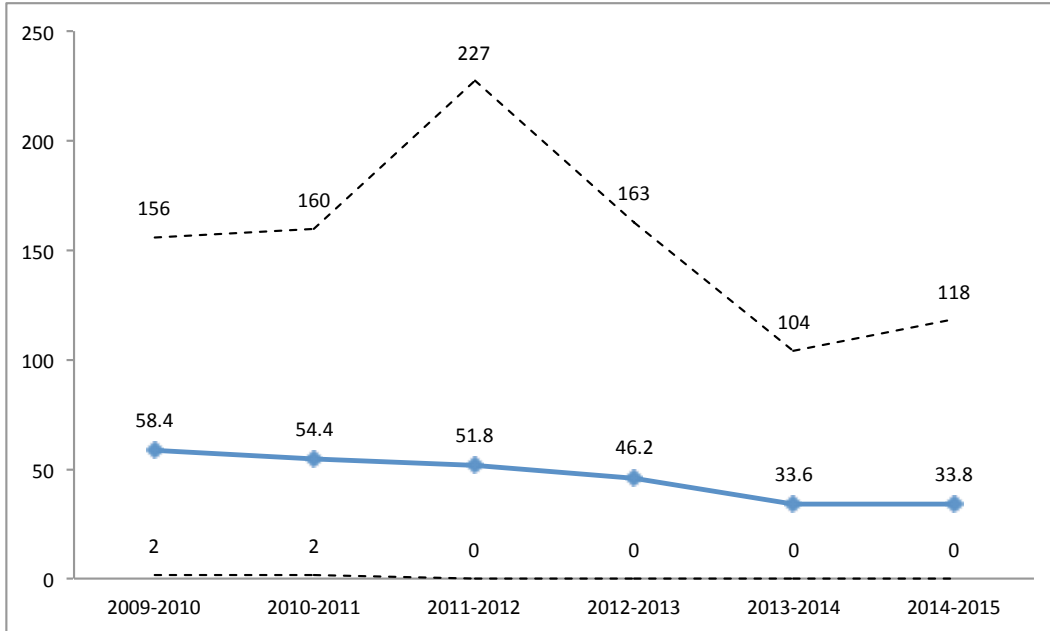
Figure 4: Distribution of First Decisions for All Original Manuscripts Submitted During 'Journal Year'



2. Turnaround Time

ISQ reports by previous teams provided average turnaround time—the length of time between receipt of a manuscript and the transmission of a decision letter—for all manuscripts. We add 2013-2014 (33.4 days) and 2014-2015 (33.8 days) to those data in Figure 5. However, as we noted in our prior report, two factors might artificially drive down aggregate turnaround time. First our increased desk-rejection rate may improve aggregate performance for 2013-2014 and 2014-2015. Second, the current team’s use of "conditional accepts" for style-and-presentation changes may artificially reduce turnaround time.

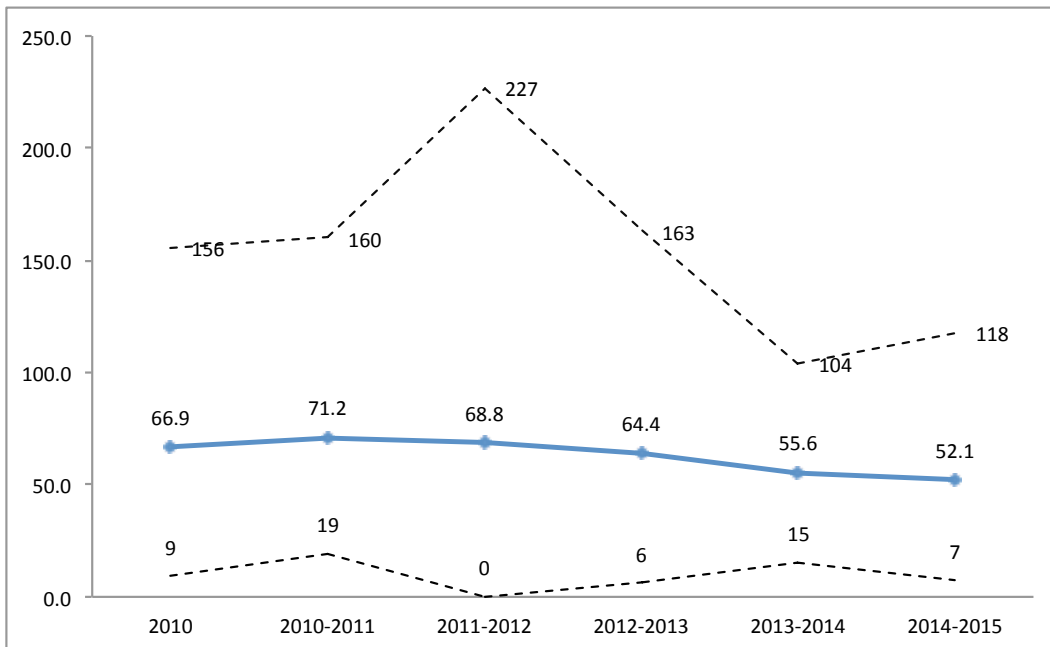
Figure 5: Average Number of Days from Submission to Decision



(a) Dotted lines: minimum and maximum times

A more reliable approach for comparing turnaround time involves disaggregating time-to-decision by decision type and manuscript status. The average turnaround time for desk rejections in 2014-2015 was a relatively fast 6.6 days (a slight improvement over the 7.7 of the previous year). Manuscripts sent out for review took an average of 52 days (also slightly better than the previous year, which averaged 55 days from submission to decision. See figure 6). Revise-and-resubmit decisions averaged the longest, 54 days; rejections averaged a bit less time, at 51.6 days.

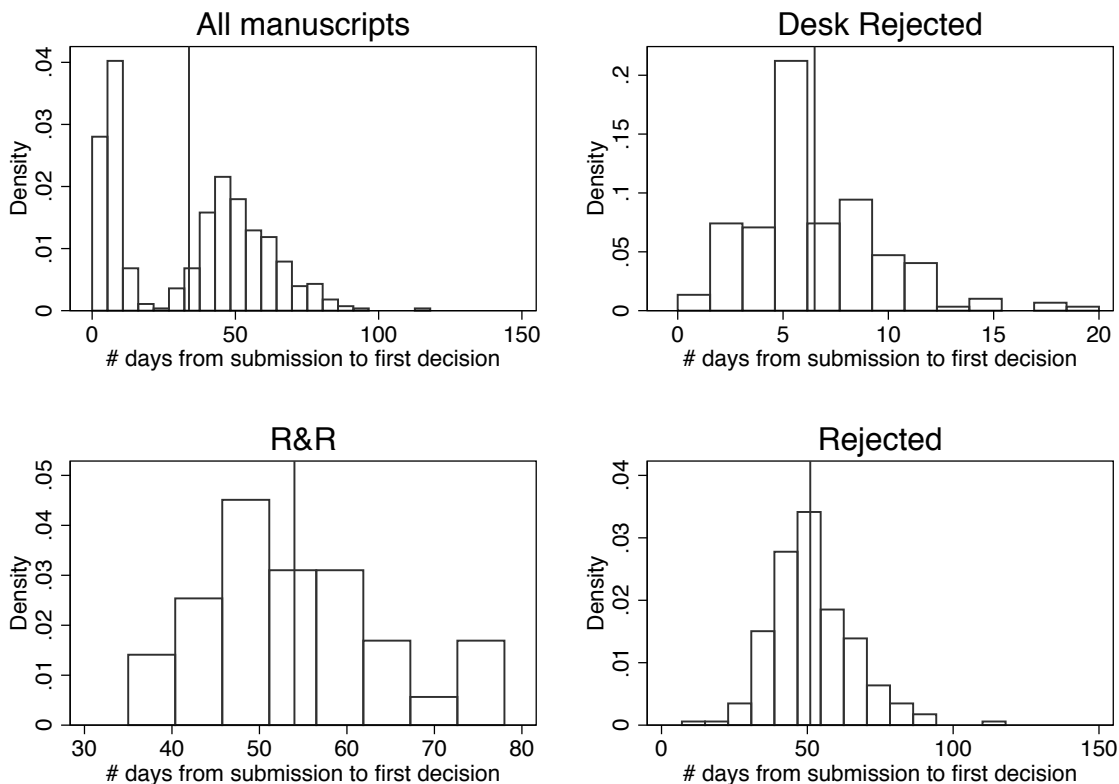
Figure 6: Average Number of Days for Decision after Review



(a) Dotted lines: minimum and maximum times

Too much focus on the averages obscures substantial variation within each category. To better illustrate the extent of that variation, we provide histograms of the turnaround time. Figure 7 shows turnaround time for a) all manuscripts, b) desk rejections, c) revise-and-resubmit decisions on first-time submissions, and d) submissions sent for review but got rejected.⁴

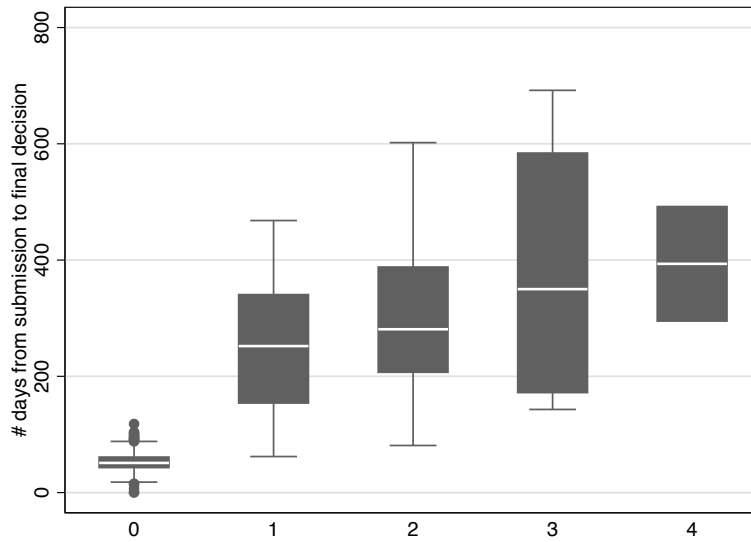
Figure 7: Turnaround time by First Decision, 2014-2015



What about the time to final decision depending on the number of revise-and-resubmits a piece goes through? That is, how long does it take for manuscripts to work through the review system? Figure 8 provides this for 2013-2014. We lack enough revised manuscripts with final decisions in 2014-2015 for a meaningful comparison, but will provide that information in the 2016 report.

⁴We provide 2013-2014 updated data for each of these categories in Appendix B.

Figure 8: Time to Final Decision, by # of Revisions, 2013-2014



3. Author Demographics

The breakdown of 2014-2015 original submissions by sex appears in Figure 9. 91 submissions had all female authors (16.7%), compared to 21% the year before. 354 (65.1%) had all male authors, the same percentage as the year before. This means that we received more manuscripts co-authored by men and women (18.2%, compared to 14% in 2013-2014). Figure 10 shows the breakdown for 2013-2014.

Figure 9: Submissions by author sex 2014-2015

Figure 10: Submissions by author sex 2013-2014

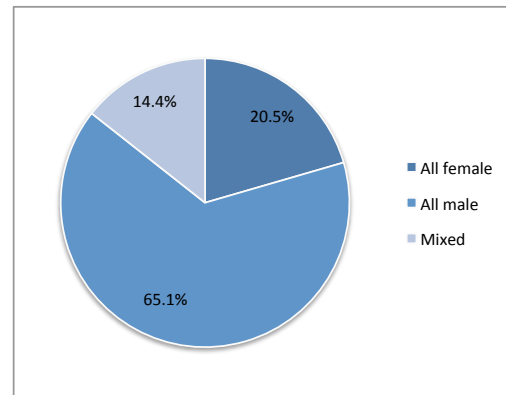
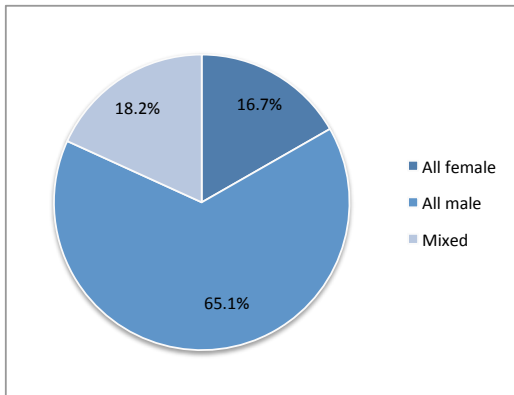
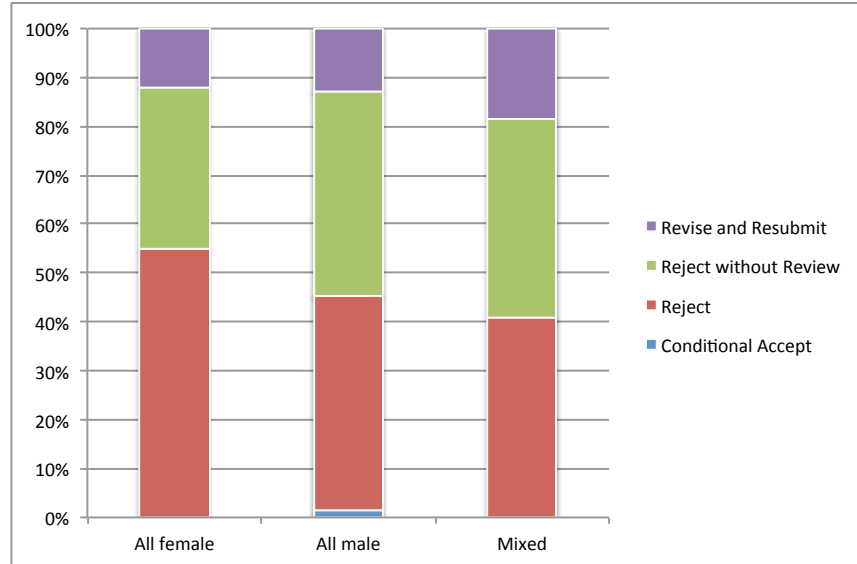


Figure 11 provides the breakdown for the sex of authors by latest decision (as of October 2015). Despite visual differences, author sex has no statistically significant relationship with these outcomes. But this may be due to the small number of observations in some of the categories. In one of the models presented in table 12 on page 13 below, manuscripts with only female authors seem to be slightly less likely to receive desk rejection, but those results are not robust.

Figure 11: Final Decisions by Author Sex



Tables 3 and 4 present information on the country where the submitting author is based and the degrees of all authors (only includes manuscripts for which all authors report their degrees), respectively.

Table 3: Submissions by Country of Submitting Author

Country	n.	%	Country	n.	%	Country	n.	%
United States	300	55.15	Hong Kong	4	0.74	Finland	1	0.18
United Kingdom	53	9.74	Netherlands	4	0.74	Hungary	1	0.18
Canada	30	5.51	Belgium	3	0.55	India	1	0.18
Germany	21	3.86	France	3	0.55	Iran, Islamic Republic of	1	0.18
Israel	14	2.57	Ireland	3	0.55	Korea, Republic of	1	0.18
Australia	13	2.39	Italy	3	0.55	Lao	1	0.18
Switzerland	9	1.65	Mexico	3	0.55	Lebanon	1	0.18
Sweden	8	1.47	Singapore	3	0.55	Luxembourg	1	0.18
Denmark	7	1.29	Spain	3	0.55	Macao	1	0.18
Norway	7	1.29	Taiwan	3	0.55	New Zealand	1	0.18
Japan	6	1.1	Austria	2	0.37	Poland	1	0.18
Korea (the Republic of)	6	1.1	Czech Republic	2	0.37	Saudi Arabia	1	0.18
Turkey	6	1.1	Kuwait	2	0.37	Tunisia	1	0.18
China	5	0.92	Russian Federation	2	0.37	United Arab Emirates	1	0.18
Brazil	4	0.74	Chile	1	0.18	Total	544	100

Table 4: Authors' Degrees

Single author	n	%	% of total
PhD	214	65.8%	39.3%
PhD candidate	80	24.6%	14.7%
No PhD	8	2.5%	1.5%
No data	23	7.1%	4.2%
Subtotal	325		
Co-authored			
All PhD	143	65.3%	26.3%
All PhD candidates	11	5.0%	2.0%
PhD and candidate	19	8.7%	3.5%
Insufficient data	46	21.0%	8.5%
Subtotal	219		

It is clear that that the majority of manuscripts come from authors based in the US. The UK is a distant second with 9.7% of submissions. This distribution finds reflection in acceptances. Table 5 shows the countries of submission for manuscripts accepted in 2013-2014. Table 6 shows the countries of manuscripts R&Rd in 2014-2015.

Table 5: Manuscripts Accepted in 2013-2014, by Country of Submission

	n	%
United States	34	71
United Kingdom	3	6
Canada	2	4
Australia	1	2
Austria	1	2
Germany	1	2
Hungary	1	2
Macao	1	2
Mexico	1	2
Spain	1	2
Sweden	1	2
Switzerland	1	2
Taiwan	1	2

Table 6: Manuscripts R&Rd in 2014-2015, by country of submission

	n	%
United States	44	66.7%
United Kingdom	6	9.1%
Canada	6	9.1%
Switzerland	3	4.5%
Israel	2	3.0%
Spain	1	1.5%
United Arab Emirates	1	1.5%
Germany	1	1.5%
Denmark	1	1.5%
Austria	1	1.5%

4. Submissions: A More Granular View

Table 7 breaks down manuscripts by self-reported substantive areas of research. Table 8 shows the regions of interest. Table 9 shows the distribution of manuscripts by aggregating methods baskets. All categories are self-

reported by the authors. There was a small but insignificant drop in the share of "purely statistical" manuscripts and a correspondingly small increase in "purely qualitative" manuscripts from last year.

Table 7: Submissions by Substantive Issue Area*

International Security	234
IR Theory	135
IPE	128
Foreign Policy	125
Comparative Politics	124
IOs	110
Methodology	50
Political Sociology	38
Human Rights	30
Political Psychology	27
Philosophy of Science	12

*Multiple issue areas allowed

Table 8: Submissions by Region of Interest

Global	277	US	72
Western Europe	59	MENA	52
Subsaharan	39	China	37
Transregional	36	East Asia	32
No Region	32	East Europe & Cent Asia	29
EU	22	LAC	22
Southeast Asia	21	Japan	16
North America	16	Russia	13
India	7	South Asia	6
Afghanistan	5	Pakistan	4

*Multiple regions allowed

Table 9: Submissions by Self-reported Methods

Methods	2014-2015		2013-2014	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
Formal	4	0.7%	5	1.1%
Qual	212	39.0%	170	35.9%
Qual+Formal	4	0.7%	8	1.7%
Stats	241	44.3%	214	45.2%
Stats+Formal	14	2.6%	13	2.7%
Stats+Qual	66	12.1%	60	12.7%
Stats+Qual+Formal	3	0.6%	3	0.6%
Total	544	100%	473	100%

In line with findings from other studies we also find that co-authorship is becoming more common, though it is not yet the norm. Figure 12 shows the uptrend in co-authorship as percentage of total submissions. Table 10 provides information about the fate of single-authored and co-authored manuscripts. Table 11 presents the results of a simple bivariate logit estimating the odds of acceptance for single- versus co-authored submissions. The independent variable is coded as 1 for manuscripts with one author and 0 for co-authored manuscripts. Co-authored manuscripts are about 13% more likely to be sent out for review.

Figure 12: Percentage of Co-authored Manuscripts

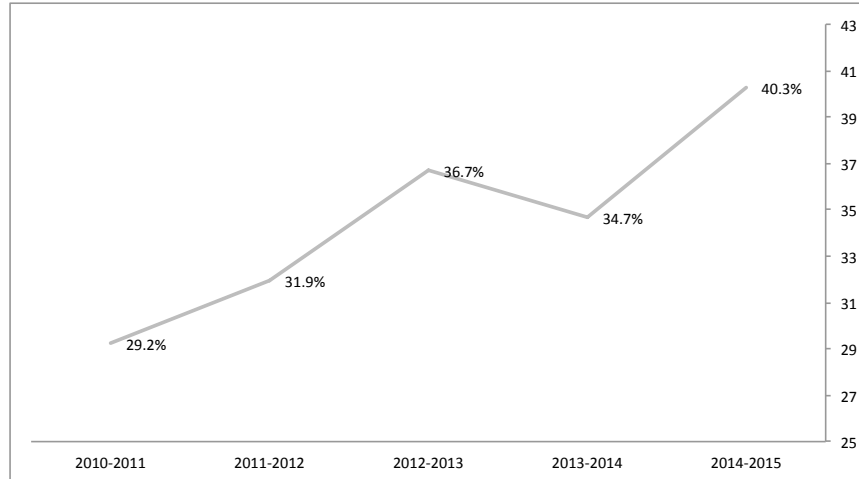


Table 10: Decisions on Single- and Co-authored Manuscripts

2013-2014			2014-2015		
Desk Rejected			Desk Rejected		
Co-authored	0	1	Co-authored	0	1
0	50.81%	49.19%	0	58.64%	41.36%
1	60.84%	39.16%	1	61.83%	38.17%
Pearson $\chi^2 = 4.38 Pr = 0.036$			Pearson $\chi^2 = 0.481 Pr = 0.488$		

Table 11: Logit model of external review

Sent for review	
singleauthor	-0.28** (0.14)
Constant	0.46*** (0.11)
Observations	954
Pseudo R^2	0.003

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Of course, co-authorship is potentially correlated with other factors, such as methodological orientation. Indeed, manuscripts using statistics and game theory are more likely to be co-authored. It also may correlate with geographical location and author sex. All of these may affect—or at least correlate with—editorial decisions and/or reviewer recommendations.

To account for that, and to investigate these correlations in their own right, we subjected the data to more detailed statistical analysis. Table 12 presents the results of logistic regressions modeling decisions to send for review (i.e. not desk reject), revise-and-resubmit (only for manuscripts sent for review), and ultimately accept (only for manuscripts that have received a final decision of accept or reject, excluding those with outstanding R&Rs). For this analysis, we pooled data from both reporting periods (2013-2014 and 2014-2015).

The multivariate analysis suggests some interesting relationships. Manuscripts using statistics are considerably more likely to be sent for review, but are not more successful in subsequent stages. The effect of single-authorship on desk rejection loses significance when we control for other factors, but remains consistent and negative in subsequent stages (about 35% less likely to be R&Rd and about 53% less likely to be accepted). Submissions originating in the anglophone world are not only the majority, but they are also much less likely to be desk

rejected (about 75% more likely to be sent for review). Manuscripts that are tagged as policy evaluation papers are rarely sent for review, as they tend not to conform to the modes of inquiry that the journal strives to publish. The very few manuscripts that make the cut are those that embed policy analysis in theoretical or empirical puzzles, and these have tended to be more successful (though the N here is too small to allow for any kind of generalization).

Manuscripts with only female scholars appear to be, if anything, slightly more likely to be sent for review⁵, but not clearly more or less likely to be R&Rd or accepted.

Table 12: Logit Models of Editorial and Peer-review Decisions

	Send for review	Revise and Resubmit	Accept
Single author	-0.25 (0.16)	-0.57** (0.22)	-0.71** (0.32)
Game Theory	0.71 (0.44)	-0.14 (0.46)	0.31 (0.57)
Statistics	0.59*** (0.17)	0.10 (0.25)	0.37 (0.35)
Policy Evaluation	-1.97*** (0.48)	0.69 (0.80)	1.70** (0.83)
Interpretive	0.46* (0.26)	0.20 (0.38)	-0.81 (0.78)
Experiments	-0.11 (0.37)	-0.02 (0.51)	-0.19 (0.80)
Anglophone world	1.04*** (0.16)	0.14 (0.27)	0.23 (0.41)
All female authors	0.34* (0.19)	-0.06 (0.28)	0.16 (0.41)
At least one PhD candidate	-0.34* (0.18)	-0.05 (0.26)	0.16 (0.36)
Senior Editor Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Observations	910	525	470
Pseudo R ²	0.108	0.032	0.083

Exponentiated coefficients (odds ratio)

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

5. Reviewer Information

One of our initiatives involves building granular data on the peer-review process. We ask a variety of demographic questions as part of ScholarOne's user-account profiles. Unfortunately, response rates remain low, particularly for users with pre-existing accounts or users who declined invitations to review. We therefore hand-coded the sex of all active users (reviewers and authors) in the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 period, leaving in place existing answers for those who filled out this part of the demographic battery. This not only allowed us to derive the data in Figure 9, but also provided some insight into the possible role of reviewer sex in the peer-review process.

⁵Though the coefficient for the variable doesn't reach conventional levels of significance in two-tailed tests in most models, including the one presented here, we can be much more confident that the relationship here is *non-negative*.

Table 13: Reviewers' sex

	Agreed	Invited
Male	750	1,184
%	73.4	70.5
Female	272	496
%	26.6	29.5
Total	1,022	1,680

Table 14: Response to Request by Reviewer Sex

	Male	Female	Total
Decline	321	167	488
%	30.0	38.0	32.3
Agree	750	272	1,022
%	70.0	62.0	67.7
Total	1,071	439	1,510

Pearson $\chi^2 = 9.27 Pr = 0.002$

As shown in Table 13, during 2014-2015, 750 (73.4%) of ISQ's reviewers were male, while 272 (26.6%) were female. The ratio of invited reviewers was slightly more balanced (70.5%-29.5%), but, as seen in Table 14, men were more likely to accept invitations to review (70% vs. 62%).

In the future, we would like to provide meaningful information on other characteristics for reviewers. Here we provide information on self-reported methodological competencies of referees as percentages for manuscripts coded according to author-reported methodologies. Because of missing data we pooled data for 2013-2014 and 2014-2015. Note that only about 20% of manuscripts have methods information for *all* reviewers. We suspect that this missingness is most likely completely random. That is, we see no reason to expect that methodological expertise affects the likelihood that a reviewer will complete our questionnaire.

Table 15: Reviewer Competencies by Manuscript Methods

	Manuscript Methods						
	Formal	Qual	Qual+ Formal	Stats	Stats + Formal	Stats + Qual	Stats + Qual + Formal
Qual	0	19	1	1	0	2	0
	0.0%	47.5%	14.3%	1.0%	0.0%	7.4%	0
Stats	0	1	0	15	0	2	0
	0.0%	2.5%	0.0%	14.4%	0.0%	7.4%	0
Stats + Formal	1	1	3	8	2	1	0
	25.0%	2.5%	42.9%	7.7%	33.3%	3.7%	0
Stats + Qual	2	18	0	47	1	17	0
	50.0%	45.0%	0.0%	45.2%	16.7%	63.0%	0
Stats + Qual + Formal	1	1	3	33	3	5	0
	25.0%	2.5%	42.9%	31.7%	50.0%	18.5%	0
Subtotal	4	40	7	104	6	27	0
Missing info for at least one reviewer	5	327	5	332	18	92	6
	55.6%	89.1%	41.7%	76.2%	75.0%	77.3%	100.0%
Total	9	367	12	436	24	119	6

6. ISQ Online

The ISQ Online website went "live" on 21 March 2014 as a "soft launch" or "public beta." The site was assembled by Mike Ryckman, who worked at ISA headquarters prior to the 2015 transition to Connecticut. He worked closely with the American University web editorial team of Patrick Thaddeus Jackson and Joseph Young. Key

features of the new site include (1) online-exclusive content in the form of "Symposia" discussing published *ISQ* articles, (2) "link roundup" posts—composed by our graduate student managing web editors—that collect relevant international studies content from around the web, (3) an "Editor's Blog" where the *ISQ* editor communicates with the broad journal readership, and (4) individual posts for each published article with direct links to their full-length versions. Added to these features are an easily-accessible list of articles in the current issue, an archive feature allowing users to find older *ISQ* articles, a revamped replication archive, and the system for submitting manuscripts for review.

In August 2014, we completed the process of reviewing proposals and entered into a contact with Friendly Design Company, a web-design firm located in Washington D.C. They created a new appearance for the *ISQ* website. They also implemented some of the search and comment features we desired. That new website is now live.

In 2014-2015, we ran five symposia or extended debates—additional rounds of discussion begun in the pages of *ISQ*—all focused on direct engagement with specific articles:

- *Balancing in the Balance*—centered on Jørgen Møller's "Why Europe Avoided Hegemony: A Historical Perspective on the Balance of Power" (Vol. 58, No. 4).
- *What Do We Mean by FDI?*—centered on Andrew Kerner's "What We Talk About When We Talk About Foreign Direct Investment" (Vol. 58, No. 4).
- *Reducing Uncertainty in Small-n Analysis: A Conversation*—an extended debate on Katya Drozdova's and Kurt Taylor Gaubatz Kerner's "What We Talk About When We Talk About Foreign Direct Investment" (Vol. 58, No. 3).
- *An Extended Debate on the Utility of the Democratic Peace Thesis*—centered on Michael Poznansky's "Stasis or Decay? Reconciling Covert War and the Democratic Peace" (Vol. 59, No. 4).

ISQ Online ran another symposium in November of 2015. We have five additional symposia in process and two in early development. Looking forward, we aim to publish at least ten each year. To meet that goal, we have added additional online editors and have developed a clear workflow from initial development to publication. We hope that more authors and readers will contact us about putting together symposia.

So far, no one has submitted unsolicited proposals for symposia or engagement with *ISQ* and *ISQ* Online content. We encourage readers to do so. The American University team remains hard at work editing and developing new symposia, as well as filling in gaps in replication files. At the risk of repetition, those interested in either aspect should contact them directly.

7. External Metrics

As we noted last year: "when journals meet or exceed expectations, their editors trumpet their standing in Journal Citation Reports (JCR). When they fall short, editors downplay them. Before discussing metrics, we want to stress that we strongly oppose any effort to game *ISQ*'s rankings or otherwise adopt editorial policy for the purpose of improving *ISQ*'s position. *ISQ* should strive to best fulfill its mandate as a broad international studies publication as laid out by the ISA, regardless of whether or not doing so improves its position in specific metrics of journal quality, impact, and significance. *ISQ*'s impact factor lags behind expectations and its reputation-based rankings."

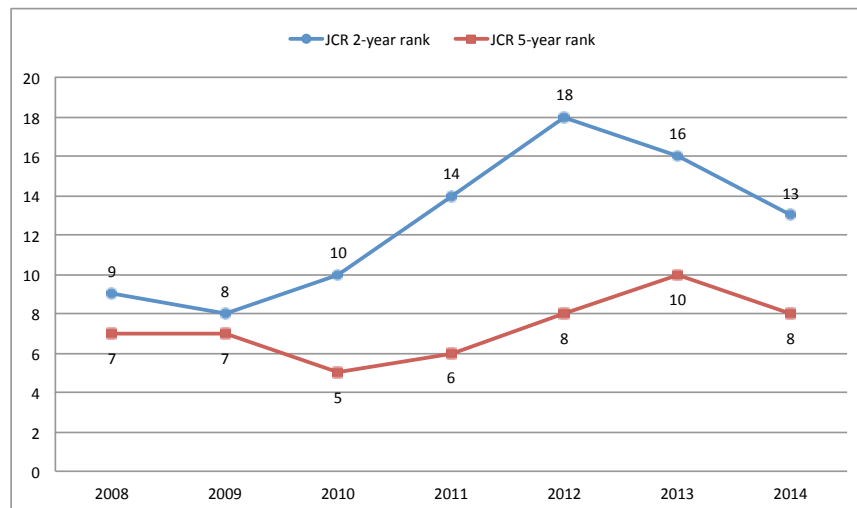
In the 2011 TRIP survey (PDF), *ISQ* ranked second—behind *International Organization*—for the question of what journal publishes articles with the greatest influence in the field. In the latest survey, it ranks fourth after *International Organization*, *Foreign Affairs*, and *International Security*.

According to [Google Scholar Metrics](#), *ISQ* ranks sixth for h5-index and ties for fifth for h5-median (as of November 5, 2014) for English-language "Diplomacy and International Relations" journals.⁶

⁶Google: "h5-index is the h-index for articles published in the last 5 complete years. It is the largest number h such that h articles published in 2009-2013 have at least h citations each" and "h5-median for a publication is the median number of citations for the articles that make up its h5-index." Note that the former metric clearly favors journals that publish a greater number of articles—such as *ISQ*.

In the 2014 Journal Citation Report, *ISQ* earned a two-year impact factor of 1.705 and a five-year impact factor of 2.189. This placed it at 13th and 8th, respectively, in the category of "International Relations" on 70 citable items in 2013 and 62 in 2012 (132 total), and 291 for the five-year impact factor.⁷

Figure 13: Journal Citation Report Rankings



8. Editorial Matters

The Georgetown team underwent personnel changes during the year. On 1 January 2015, both Kathleen McNamara and Alexander Montgomery stepped down from their positions as Senior Editors in light of other administrative commitments. Songying Fang joined the team as an Associate Editor in January 2015. Dani Nedal replaced Elizabeth Mercurio as one of our two managing editors. We list the current editorial membership in Appendix A.

Along with the other ISA journals, *ISQ* transitioned from Wiley to Oxford University Press over the late summer. One downside of the transition has been a gap in the appearance of "advance access" online PDFs of accepted articles. These should go live at the Oxford University Press website in 2016.

9. Issues and Challenges

9.1 Backlog

We inherited a significant backlog, but one much diminished by the efforts of the prior editorial team. These included adjusting the font size of the journal and moving to two columns per page. These adjustments helped to reduce the prior backlog and to handle an increased number of submissions while maintaining a relatively stable acceptance rate of around 10%. Because we make a limited effort to group articles thematically, we published one article handled entirely by our team in May of 2015 and one in June of 2015. The September 2015 issue included six (out of 15) articles that fit that description. The December 2015 issue includes 14 (out of 16). As far as we can tell, no articles from 2016 on will have originated before our tenure.

We estimate the current backlog in a number of different ways. The two main variables are what we consider "in the pipeline" for publication and how many articles we expect to publish per issue.

The most liberal interpretation of the first variable includes all conditionally-accepted manuscripts, as we expect a near 100% conversion rate to acceptance. If we publish 14 articles per issue—for a total of 56 articles per volume—then our backlog as of 2 December stands at 3.86 issues. If we restrict this number to accepted manuscripts, then

⁷The prior report included a table that incorrectly listed citable items based on year of publication, not the year that determines the impact factor.

the current backlog stands at 3.57 issues for the same target. We consider this backlog acceptable, especially in light of our continued use of "advance access" for formatted articles prior to their appearance in the print edition. Moreover, our backlog should continue to shrink for at least another year.

The target of 14 articles per issue leaves us with unused space—due to the changes in journal format implemented to handle the earlier backlog. Thus, we recently increased the word limit for initial submissions of research article from 11,000 to 12,000, and we continue to provide additional words for articles that strike us as requiring them.

We should note, however, that if the submission pool continues to grow and acceptance rates remain constant, we may hit an inflection point with respect to the backlog by the end of 2015-2016. Our current policy preference is to allow for longer articles, but we have no intention of altering our standards to increase or decrease the number of manuscripts accepted. We continue to monitor these numbers and will make necessary adjustments. For now, we enjoy a buffer in that we retain enough space to publish more articles per issue than we currently target.

9.2 Data Collection

As we reported last year, our ability to collect large-N data on the peer-review process remains dependent on users' willingness to provide demographic information. We recognize that some users consider the questions onerous, intrusive, or both. Some users may not even be aware of their existence. We supply "decline to answer" options for all questions, and reaffirm our commitment to keeping answers confidential. We also want to highlight that this information plays no role in the editorial process. We hope more users will enter their data, so that it will be available both for internal assessments and, in anonymous form, for those interested in studying the peer-review process for international studies journals.

9.3 The Citation Gap

Recent findings of a "citation gap" for female scholars remain a matter of debate and concern. Conventional wisdom also holds that such a gap extends to other demographic categories. Our approach focuses on using the editorial process—and prompting reviewers—to highlight appropriate scholarship that deserves acknowledgment in *ISQ* articles. Nonetheless, we are concerned that we have let other editorial tasks crowd out this objective, and that our procedures have proven inadequate. We therefore asked the members of our editorial board to volunteer to form a "task force" on this issue, but could not secure enough participants to move forward. We will try again.

9.4 Encouraging Broader Intellectual Engagement

The Georgetown-anchored team made a commitment to encouraging cross-talk among different research communities. We remain concerned that our efforts have fallen short, for reasons similar to those that undermine our efforts to address "citation gap" concerns.

9.5 Diversity of Submissions

The data presented still paint a bleak picture for both the number of submissions and the fate of submissions originating outside of the "Global North." Only 70 submissions over the last two years (out of 1017, less than 7%) came from non-OECD countries. We therefore asked the members of our editorial board to volunteer to form a "task force" on this issue, but could not secure enough participants to move forward. We will try again.

9.6 Desk Rejections

The Georgetown-anchored team's conscious decision to increase the rate of desk rejections continues as a subject of controversy. Despite a decrease in 2014-2015 (from 46% to 40%), we still issue around seven percent more editorial rejections than *ISQ* did in 2012-2013. We continue to discuss ways to fine-tune desk rejections, but we believe that the additional editorial screen saves the time and effort of both authors and referees. In this context, we worry about both "false positives" and about the fact that our process—which allows a single dissent to block a proposed desk rejection—ensures that some work goes out for review that is of inferior quality to some of the manuscripts that we desk reject.

9.7 Theory Notes

In 2014, *ISQ* introduced a new category of articles, called "Theory Notes." The journal received 10 submissions in this category in 2013-2014 and another 10 in 2014-2015. None of these submissions have yet advanced to publication. But the prospects for the category have improved since the last report, with three manuscripts currently having received revise-and-resubmit decisions.

10. Acknowledgements

The complete 2014-2015 masthead for *ISQ* appears in Appendix A. We want to particularly acknowledge our current Managing Editors, Dani Nedal and Irena Sargsyan. In addition to thanking all those listed in Appendix A—and specifically the editorial board—we want to extend our special thanks to Mike Ryckman for his help with the online components of the journal, the rest of the ISA staff, the ISA publications committee, Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford University Press, and all those who submit to and review for *ISQ*. Georgetown University's Department of Government, Mortara Center for International Studies, and the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service provide generous financial and in-kind support for the journal. American University provides essential financial and in-kind support for *ISQ* Online. Dani Nedal and Madison Schramm assisted with the production of this report.

11. Appendix A: *ISQ* Masthead, 2014-2015

ISQ Current Editorial Team

Senior Editors

Daniel H. Nexon, Georgetown University (Lead Editor)
Giacomo Chiozza, Vanderbilt University
Catherine Langlois, Georgetown University
Abraham L. Newman, Georgetown University
Leonard Seabrooke, Copenhagen Business School and University of Warwick

Associate Editors

Terry Chapman, University of Texas, Austin
Michael C. Horowitz, University of Pennsylvania
Amanda Murdie, University of Missouri
Iver B. Neumann, London School of Economics
Bahar Rumelili, Koç University
Ole Jacob Sending, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs
George E. Shambaugh, Georgetown University
David Andrew Singer, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Ann Towns, Göteborg University
Songying Fang, Rice University

Managing Editors

Dani K. Nedal, Georgetown University
Irena L. Sargsyan, Georgetown University

Web Editors

Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, American University
Joseph Young, American University

Web Editorial Assistants

deRaimes Combes, American University
Efe Sevin, American University

Web Advisory Board

Charli Carpenter, University of Massachusetts-Amherst
Daniel Drezner, Tufts University
Robert Farley, University of Kentucky
Paul Kirby, University of Sussex
Marc Lynch, George Washington University
Meera Sabaratnam, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

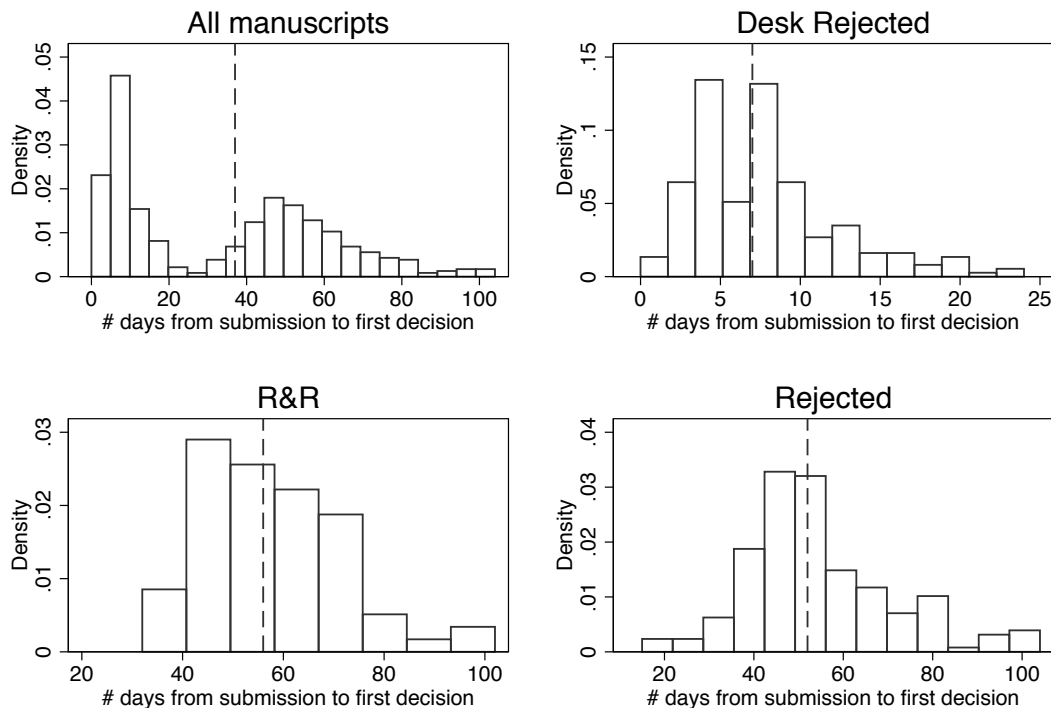
Editorial Board

Amitav Acharya, American University
Anna Agathangelou, York University
Janice Bially Mattern, National University of Singapore
Pinar Bilgin, Bilkent University
Tanja Borzel, Freie Universitat Berlin
Sarah M. Brooks, Ohio State University
Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, University of Chicago
Marc L. Busch, Georgetown University
Ajin Choi, Yonsei GSIS
Michael Colaresi, Michigan State University
Christian Davenport, University of Michigan
Richard Deeg, Temple University
Thomas Diez, University of Tubingen
A. Cooper Drury, University of Missouri
David M. Edelstein, Georgetown University
Charlotte Epstein, University of Sydney
Henry Farrell, George Washington University
M. Taylor Fravel, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Virginia Page Fortna, Columbia University
Annette Freyberg-Inan, University of Amsterdam
Ismene Gizelis, University of Essex
Stacie E. Goddard, Wellesley College
Emilie Hafner-Burton, University of California, San Diego
Natasha Hamilton-Hart, University of Auckland Business School
Lene Hansen, University of Copenhagen
Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, Northwestern University
Jef Huysmans, The Open University
Jacques Hymans, University of Southern California
Naeem Inayatullah, Ithaca College
Leslie Johns, University of California, Los Angeles
Kelly Kadera, Iowa University
Diana Kapiszewski, Georgetown University
David Kang, University of Southern California
Laleh Khalili, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
D. Marc Kilgour, Wilfrid Laurier University
Anna Leander, Copenhagen Business School
Brett Ashley Leeds, Rice University
Susanne Lutz, Freie Universitat Berlin
Cecelia Lynch, University of California, Irvine
Michaela Mattes, University of California, Berkeley
Manus Midlarsky, Rutgers University
Layna Mosley, University of North Carolina
Helen Nesadurai, Monash University
João Pontes Nogueira, PUC-Rio, Brazil
Irfan Nooruddin, Ohio State University
T.V. Paul, McGill University
Aseem Prakash, University of Washington

Dan Reiter, Emory University
 Nita Rudra, Georgetown University
 Thomas Sattler, London School of Economics
 Gerald Schneider, University of Konstanz
 Susan K. Sell, George Washington University
 Robbie Shilliam, Queen Mary, University of London
 Branislav L. Slantchev, University of California, San Diego
 Shiping Tang, Fudan University
 William R. Thompson, Indiana University
 Arlene Tickner, Universidad de Los Andes
 Jacqui True, Monash University
 Brandon Valeriano, University of Glasgow
 Latha Varadarajan, San Diego State University
 Thomas Volgy, University of Arizona
 Harvey Starr, University of South Carolina
 Jana von Stein, Victoria Wellington University
 James Raymond Vreeland, Georgetown University
 Stefanie Walter, University of Zurich
 Catherine E. Weaver, University of Texas at Austin
 Annick T.R. Wibben, University of San Francisco
 William C. Wohlforth, Dartmouth College
 Cornelia Woll, Sciences Po
 Amy Yuen, Middlebury College

12. Appendix B: Updated Information for Turnaround Time, 2013-2014

Figure 14: Turnaround Time by First Decision, 2013-2014



Dashed line: median