

# International Studies Review

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## Annual Editorial Report 2013–14

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## Executive Summary

The 2013–2014 year was the National University of Singapore ISR editorial team's second year in office. Janice Bially Mattern served as Editor-in-Chief. The full team includes Associate Editors Ja Ian Chong, Kelly Kadera, and Laura Sjoberg; Book Review Editor Karen Winzoski; Managing Editor Peter Finn; and Editorial Assistant Benjamin Seet.

This report covers the 12-month period from October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2014. Our previous reporting period, the first in our editorial term, covered only 10 months. Comparisons across the two periods are made by extending 10-month trends to 12 months.

The following information summarizes the nature of our activities for the past 12 months:

- Our mean response time (from submission to decision) on peer review-eligible manuscripts was 53 calendar days.
- Our team oversaw the peer review process of 205 manuscripts. This represents a 21% increase over the last reporting period.

- We accepted 12% of the manuscripts that were eligible for peer review and upon which some decision was rendered during this reporting period. This represents a 1% increase over the last reporting period.
- Women authored or co-authored 31% of manuscripts submitted; and 50% of the manuscripts accepted.
- We received 289 books for review. Of these we commissioned reviews on 126.

## Manuscript Flow

During the 12 month reporting period we managed the review process for 205 manuscripts, including 198 Analytical Essays, 4 Forums and 3 Review Essays.<sup>1</sup> Of the 205 total, 25 (12%) manuscripts were still in process by the close of the reporting period and had not previously been subject to any decision. Of the 180 manuscripts upon which at least one decision had been rendered, 53 (29%) were rejected without review, 75 (42%) were

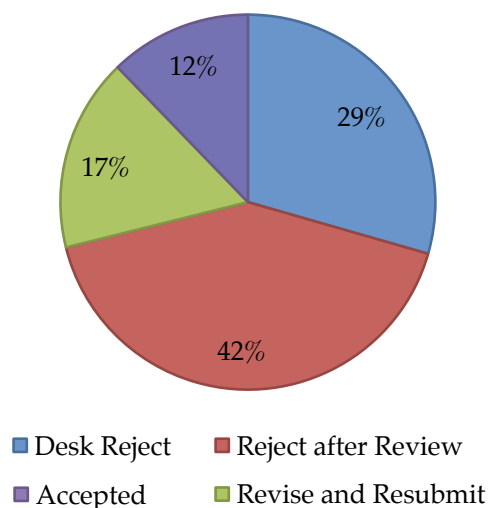
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<sup>1</sup>Although forums contain multiple short manuscripts by multiple authors each forum is counted as a single submission.

rejected after review, 30 (17%) were invited for revision and resubmission; and 22 (12%) were accepted for publication. When manuscripts that were rejected without review are excluded the accept rate rises to 17%. (See Table 1 and Figure 1, below.) Of the 16 revised and resubmitted manuscripts that were resolved during this reporting period, 11 or 69% were ultimately accepted. During this period we also received 289<sup>2</sup> books for review and have commissioned reviews on 126 of them.

| Decision            | Number | Percent |
|---------------------|--------|---------|
| Desk Reject         | 53     | 29      |
| Reject after Review | 75     | 42      |
| Revise and Resubmit | 30     | 17      |
| Accepted            | 22     | 12      |
| Total               | 180    | 100     |

**Table 1: Manuscript Decisions**



**Figure 1: Manuscripts by Decision**

| Submission Type      | Authors | Percent |
|----------------------|---------|---------|
| Analytical Essay     | 253     | 77      |
| Forum                | 26      | 8       |
| Review Essay authors | 3       | 1       |
| Book Reviews         | 47      | 14      |
| Total                | 329     | 100     |

**Table 2: Contributing Authors by Submission Type**

The total number of manuscripts processed during this reporting period (205) represents a 21% increase over the

<sup>2</sup>Publishers increasingly also engage us by sending catalogues. We have excluded from this figure the books that we consider via catalogue (estimated at 150). As this sort of solicitation is becoming increasingly common, we are now collecting more formal data for the next annual report.

total number of manuscripts processed during the previous adjusted reporting period (169). Our desk rejects declined from 33% to 29%. When the overall trend in the discipline of increasing desk reject rates is considered in combination with the significant increase in the number of manuscripts submitted to ISR, this 4% decrease is an accomplishment. We attribute this to the team’s social media and recruiting initiatives (discussed below). These efforts were geared toward broadly communicating a clear message about the journal’s publishing mission.

Last year we reported a 10% rate of acceptance, or 16% of those sent out for review. These figures cannot be directly compared to the numbers reported here as our calculations were adjusted this year to correct for contingencies, of which we were previously unaware, in the way ScholarOne collects data. Recalculating the data from this period with the formula used for the previous year’s report yields an adjusted and comparable accept rate of 11%, or 14% of those sent out for review. This indicates continuity in the accept rate across reporting periods.

The 129 book reviews we have commissioned this year compares favorably to the 113 commissioned in the previous adjusted reporting period. This increase is likely the effect of having a dedicated book review editor (an arrangement that we implemented only toward the end of the last reporting period), in combination with a more regular flow of books into our office as publishers adjusted their records following the transition of editorial teams.

## Turn-around Time

Our mean turn-around time was 53 calendar days for peer review-eligible manuscripts (as compared to 57 days in the previous reporting period). Peer review-eligible manuscripts include Analytical Essays, Forums, and Review Essays. When desk reject decisions are excluded, the mean increases to 68 calendar days, the same as reported last year. The editorial team aims to keep the turn-around time for manuscripts that are sent out for review as low as possible in the coming year. However, an analysis of our workflow indicates that it may be difficult to lower the time-to-decision any further as little or no time is lost once all the reviewer reports are complete. The most significant factor impacting turn-around time is the willingness of invited reviewers to accept invitations, their promptness in doing so, and their ability to meet review deadlines. The ISR team

will continue to work on mitigating these factors while prioritizing the integrity of the review process and the quality of our decisions and decision letters. (See Table 3, below.) We are especially mindful, however, that given ISRs increasing number of submissions decreasing or even maintaining turnaround time may be unrealistic.

| Submission Type                      | Mean | Median |
|--------------------------------------|------|--------|
| Peer-Review eligible (Desk Rejected) | 10   | 10     |
| Peer-Review eligible (Reviewed)      | 68   | 67     |
| Book Reviews                         | 18   | 12     |
| Average                              | 32   | 30     |

**Table 3:** Turn-around Time (calendar days to decision)

## Author Participation, Gender and Geography<sup>3</sup>

Women accounted for 100 (30%) of the 329 authors that submitted to ISR in this reporting period. This represents a 1% decrease from the previous period.<sup>4</sup> (See tables 4, 5, and 6.)

| Gender  | Count | Percent |
|---------|-------|---------|
| Male    | 224   | 68      |
| Female  | 100   | 30      |
| Unknown | 5     | 2       |
| Total   | 329   | 100     |

**Table 4:** Author Gender

| Gender                           | Number | Percent |
|----------------------------------|--------|---------|
| Peer Reviewed                    |        |         |
| Male                             | 189    | 67      |
| Female                           | 88     | 31      |
| Unknown                          | 5      | 2       |
| Single and Multiple Book Reviews |        |         |
| Male                             | 35     | 74      |
| Female                           | 12     | 26      |

**Table 5:** Author Gender by Manuscript Type

Overall, women authors accounted for 26% of book reviews<sup>5</sup> and 31% of submitted analytical essays. Last year women accounted for 33% of book reviews and

<sup>3</sup>This data is now being directly collected at time of submission through a demographic survey.

<sup>4</sup>Unlike last year, our data for this period includes 'unknown' as a category that accounts for 2% of submitting authors.

<sup>5</sup>This figure is based on 47, which is the number of book reviews that were processed through ScholarOne (and so for which we have gender data). While 129 book reviews were commissioned these manuscripts only enter ScholarOne once the commissioned author has completed the review.

30% of analytical essays last year. During this period (October 2013-September 2014), women accounted for 50% of Forums as compared to none during the previous reporting period. None of the 3 Review Essays processed during this reporting period were submitted by women authors.

| Outcome     | Male | Female | Unknown | Total |
|-------------|------|--------|---------|-------|
| Accept      | 12   | 10     | 0       | 22    |
| R & R       | 28   | 2      | 0       | 30    |
| Reject      | 50   | 23     | 2       | 75    |
| Desk Reject | 35   | 16     | 2       | 53    |
| Total       | 125  | 51     | 4       | 180   |

**Table 6:** Submission Outcome by Gender

| Country        | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------|-----------|---------|
| United States  | 24        | 51      |
| United Kingdom | 7         | 15      |
| Canada         | 6         | 13      |
| Denmark        | 3         | 6       |
| Australia      | 1         | 2       |
| Austria        | 1         | 2       |
| Lebanon        | 1         | 2       |
| Netherlands    | 1         | 2       |
| Singapore      | 3         | 6       |
| Total          | 47        | 100     |

**Table 7:** Book Reviewer Participation by Country

Women accounted for 45% of corresponding authors on accepted manuscripts (as compared to 21% in the previous year); 12% of manuscripts rejected after review (compared to 15% last year); and 9% of those rejected without review (as compared to 28% last year). At the close of the reporting period only two manuscripts with a woman listed as corresponding author had the most recent decision of revise and resubmit (See Table 6).

Geographically, authors of both peer-reviewed manuscripts and book reviews are concentrated in the USA (46% and 51% respectively). (Cf. tables 7 and 8.) The figure for peer-reviewed manuscripts is consistent with the previous reporting period. With book reviews, US-based authors have decreased 19% from the 70% figure reported last year. Authors based in the UK accounted for approximately 13% of analytic essay contributions (up from 6%) while Germany-based authors declined from 12.4% to 6%. Other notable changes in authorship of analytic essays included a decline in Canada-based authors (from 7 to 4%); an across the board increase in submissions from authors based in Asia; and a jump from 0 to 4 submissions from Turkey-based authors. For book reviews (all formats) authors continue to be based primarily in the US, UK, and Canada.

| Country                   | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------|
| United States             | 129       | 46      |
| United Kingdom            | 36        | 13      |
| Germany                   | 18        | 6       |
| Canada                    | 12        | 4       |
| Netherlands               | 7         | 2       |
| Sweden                    | 6         | 2       |
| France                    | 6         | 2       |
| Australia                 | 6         | 2       |
| Turkey                    | 4         | 1       |
| Israel                    | 4         | 1       |
| Japan                     | 4         | 1       |
| Sweden                    | 3         | 1       |
| Italy                     | 3         | 1       |
| Austria                   | 3         | 1       |
| Korea, Republic of        | 3         | 1       |
| Finland                   | 3         | 1       |
| China                     | 3         | 1       |
| Belgium                   | 3         | 1       |
| Hong Kong                 | 3         | 1       |
| Norway                    | 2         | 1       |
| Iran, Islamic Republic of | 2         | 1       |
| Russian Federation        | 2         | 1       |
| Qatar                     | 2         | 1       |
| Pakistan                  | 2         | 1       |
| US Minor Outlying Islands | 1         | 0       |
| Switzerland               | 1         | 0       |
| Spain                     | 1         | 0       |
| South Africa              | 1         | 0       |
| Singapore                 | 1         | 0       |
| Romania                   | 1         | 0       |
| Portugal                  | 1         | 0       |
| Mexico                    | 1         | 0       |
| Macao                     | 1         | 0       |
| Kuwait                    | 1         | 0       |
| Hungary                   | 1         | 0       |
| Estonia                   | 1         | 0       |
| Denmark                   | 1         | 0       |
| Brazil                    | 1         | 0       |
| Taiwan                    | 1         | 0       |
| Argentina                 | 1         | 0       |
| Total                     | 282       | 100     |

**Table 8:** Authorship by Country (Peer-reviewed Manuscripts)

## Reviewer Participation, Gender and Geography

Women accounted for 281 (30%) of the 933 reviewers invited during this reporting period. (See Table 9 and Table 10.) Of the 933 reviewers contacted, 42% accepted and 58% declined. Women are slightly more likely to decline than men. The figure of 58% includes reviewers who were automatically declined by the ScholarOne system because they did not respond within seven days. (See Table 9.) As with authors, reviewers tended to be geographically concentrated in the USA, though a considerable number of reviewers were also drawn from the UK, Canada, Australia, Germany, and increasingly, Sin-

gapore. This is consistent with figures from last year.

| Category | Number | Percent |
|----------|--------|---------|
| Agreed   | 442    | 43      |
| Declined | 597    | 57      |
| Total    | 1039   | 100     |

**Table 9:** Reviewers Contacted

| Gender | Number | Percent |
|--------|--------|---------|
| Male   | 652    | 70      |
| Female | 281    | 30      |
| Total  | 933    | 100     |

**Table 10:** Reviewer Gender

| Gender   | Number | Percent |
|----------|--------|---------|
| Agreed   |        |         |
| Male     | 308    | 70      |
| Female   | 134    | 30      |
| Declined |        |         |
| Male     | 411    | 69      |
| Female   | 186    | 31      |

**Table 11:** Reviewer Participation by Gender

## Points of Interest

- The Editorial Team has successfully launched a new peer-reviewed format, called Review Essays. At the close of the reporting period, 11 Review Essays had been commissioned. Of these, three were already undergoing review, one of which was accepted for publication shortly after the reporting period closed. The intention behind this format is to increase the visibility and scholarly contributions made through book reviews and to make these items more citable.
- The editorial team has increased the journal's web presence, including revamping the NUS ISR website, contacting prior editorial teams to have older versions of the ISR website taken down, and maintaining active Facebook and Twitter accounts. We have also, in an effort to draw attention to a number of recent publications on related topics, published a 'virtual issue' on Wiley's webpage, entitled "Empirical Analyses of Conflict: Reflections and Recommendations."
- Given the high cost to most publishers of shipping books to Singapore, the first year of our term was marked by an apparent decline in the number of books we received relative to the average reported by the previous team. In order to remedy this we

undertook agreements with willing publishers to furnish the ISR editorial team with electronic versions of books to consider for review. This arrangement has proven efficient and in some cases—for instance, with Polity press—has increased our awareness of relevant books that presses would not have otherwise chosen to send. However, few publishers have opted to engage with us this way on a systematic basis. Of the 289 books we received this year, only 28 have been in electronic form. Books that we examine electronically and choose to review are shipped directly by the publisher to the authors we have commissioned. As this is a cost-efficient arrangement for all parties we hope to encourage more publishers to submit their books electronically.

| Country            | Number | Percent | Accepted | Declined |
|--------------------|--------|---------|----------|----------|
| United States      | 460    | 49      | 292      | 246      |
| United Kingdom     | 178    | 19      | 86       | 92       |
| Canada             | 68     | 7       | 29       | 39       |
| Australia          | 57     | 6       | 29       | 28       |
| Germany            | 28     | 3       | 13       | 15       |
| Singapore          | 22     | 2       | 16       | 6        |
| Denmark            | 18     | 2       | 10       | 8        |
| Switzerland        | 12     | 1       | 8        | 4        |
| Netherlands        | 9      | 1       | 8        | 1        |
| Sweden             | 8      | 1       | 4        | 4        |
| Turkey             | 7      | 1       | 5        | 2        |
| Israel             | 6      | 1       | 4        | 2        |
| China              | 6      | 1       | 3        | 3        |
| Finland            | 5      | 1       | 3        | 2        |
| Norway             | 4      | 0       | 1        | 3        |
| Japan              | 4      | 0       | 3        | 1        |
| Italy              | 3      | 0       | 2        | 1        |
| Ireland            | 3      | 0       | 2        | 1        |
| France             | 3      | 0       | 0        | 3        |
| Taiwan             | 2      | 0       | 1        | 1        |
| Spain              | 2      | 0       | 0        | 2        |
| New Zealand        | 2      | 0       | 1        | 1        |
| Lebanon            | 2      | 0       | 1        | 1        |
| India              | 2      | 0       | 1        | 1        |
| Hungary            | 2      | 0       | 2        | 0        |
| Hong Kong          | 2      | 0       | 2        | 0        |
| Colombia           | 2      | 0       | 2        | 0        |
| Brazil             | 2      | 0       | 2        | 0        |
| Mexico             | 1      | 0       | 1        | 0        |
| Malaysia           | 1      | 0       | 1        | 0        |
| Korea, Republic of | 1      | 0       | 1        | 0        |
| Gabon              | 1      | 0       | 1        | 0        |
| Estonia            | 1      | 0       | 0        | 1        |
| Czech Rep.         | 1      | 0       | 1        | 0        |
| Argentina          | 1      | 0       | 1        | 0        |
| (Unknown)          | 7      | 1       | 7        | 5        |
| Total              | 933    | 100     | 543      | 473      |

**Table 12:** *Reviewer Geography*

# Appendix

## NUS Advisory Board

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