



PROJECT MUSE®

---

## Editors' Note

Lisa L. Martin, Thomas Risse-Kappen, Beth V. Yarbrough

International Organization, Volume 56, Number 1, Winter 2002, pp. 1-5  
(Article)

Published by The MIT Press



➔ For additional information about this article

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/14308>

---

## Editors' Note

Lisa L. Martin, Thomas Risse, and  
Beth Yarbrough

---

Beginning with this issue, Winter 2002, *IO* will be edited by a new team. Lisa Martin serves as editor-in-chief, and Thomas Risse and Beth Yarbrough serve as associate editors. Our aim as an editorial team will be to continue and to extend the traditions established by previous editors of publishing the highest quality new research in international political economy (IPE) and international relations. *IO* is at the center of the most vibrant and productive debates in these fields, and our mission is to ensure that it continues to publish exciting new theoretical perspectives and insights as well as theoretically informed empirical work that meets the highest social-scientific standards. This brief note outlines some of the procedural aspects of the journal and highlights substantive and methodological issues in which we especially encourage submissions.

### Substantive Boundaries and Topics

*IO* built its reputation by publishing pioneering work in IPE. In recent years, the journal has moved toward becoming a major forum for theoretically informed work in international relations more generally, including the field of international security. Both IPE and international relations are dynamic areas of study whose boundaries are constantly shifting. These shifts present challenges for a journal such as *IO*. The study of international relations has traditionally been divided into two major subfields, IPE and security. *IO*'s movement away from a strict focus on IPE reflects the decreasing utility of this traditional division in describing major new research in the field. Many theoretical advances—the development of theories of strategic interaction, models of institutions and organizations, research on identities and socialization—are widely applicable beyond IPE. New empirical research also increasingly falls outside the IPE/security divide, including such issues as human

rights and environmental politics as well as issues that have relevance both to IPE and to security, such as economic sanctions and the economic roots of conflict.

Even while the broader field of international relations is undergoing internal redefinition, those whose work centers on the politics of international economic relations have shifted the boundaries of their work. This more narrowly defined field of IPE has, to some extent, begun to bifurcate. Some IPE scholars locate themselves firmly within the international relations community, drawing from and contributing to debates about international relations more generally. In contrast, other IPE scholars increasingly see themselves as part of a community that could more accurately be defined as studying political economy rather than international relations. This community includes those studying comparative political economy as well as IPE, in some cases overlapping extensively with parts of American politics; this community employs models and methods that have contributed to major developments in the study of IPE in recent years.

A journal like *IO* with its roots in IPE could thus appear to face at least a minor crisis of self-definition: is it a political economy journal or an international relations journal? We instead see this challenge as exciting because it allows *IO* to publish in two of the most productive fields of political science and facilitates communication between them. *IO* will continue to publish in both general international relations and in political economy, exploring the creative tensions between the two fields as well as their areas of agreement. The subject matter appropriate for articles submitted to *IO* is therefore quite broad. For example, we encourage submission of manuscripts in the areas of comparative political economy and international security, both of which share an intellectual agenda with IPE. We also wish to continue the current pattern of publication, in which fields other than IPE are well represented in the pages of the journal. We welcome, for example, studies of the influence of domestic institutions on economic policy and how battles over the concept of national identity influence the treatment of ethnic minorities.

The editorial team is committed to “internationalizing” the journal. We aim to increase the number of submissions and reviewers from outside North America and hope that including associate editors on the editorial team will aid this agenda.

### Methods

Just as the substantive boundaries of IPE are constantly shifting, the methods used in articles published in *IO* have changed over time and will continue to develop. *IO* has moved toward publishing work that draws on sophisticated methods common in political economy and political science more generally, including game theory and statistics. Ensuring access to reviewers with the necessary expertise to thoroughly and fairly review such work is an important aspect of our and the editorial board’s work, and we are firmly committed to it. We continue the tradition of welcoming methods long standard in the study of international relations, including comparative and illustrative case studies.

In order to maintain *IO*'s position as a journal of social science and to keep it at the forefront of the field, we also welcome the submission of manuscripts that use social-scientific methodologies that are less common in American political science. Work appropriate for publication in a social-science journal makes truth claims that are subject to challenge by readers, regardless of the methods used. It is incumbent on all authors to state truth claims and the criteria they are using to evaluate them in such a manner that reviewers and readers can see the logic of the method, ask critical questions about the claims made, and potentially challenge the author's claims. This standard applies whether the methods are quantitative or qualitative in nature. Less familiar or highly technical methods may require the author to pay especially close attention to elaborating these criteria. All authors should speak to a broad international relations community and tease out the general lessons, truth claims, and methods of their research.

All articles published in *IO* are theoretically informed. However, the balance between theory and empirical work varies substantially. We wish to encourage submission of manuscripts that span the spectrum from introducing abstract new theoretical claims to applying theory in well-developed empirical settings. Maintaining a balance between broad theoretical statements and research that adopts a narrower, issue-specific focus is essential to the health of the journal. Thus, we welcome manuscripts that develop broad approaches, such as the manipulation and construction of identities, as well as work that contributes to well-developed research agendas, such as the domestic politics of trade policy or the impact of international institutions on patterns of interstate cooperation. Clearly, the extent to which authors must consider alternative hypotheses in developing their own arguments depends largely on the level of development of work on their topic. We especially invite research that applies existing theoretical frameworks to new or underexplored empirical problems, such as foreign direct investment, nongovernmental organizations, and private governance on the global level.

### Associate Editors and the Editorial Board

*IO* is working with a new editorial structure, with two associate editors on board. These associate editors provide complementary areas of expertise, both empirical and theoretical. Involving them in the editorial process will help to ensure that the range of views on the editorial board is integrated into the day-to-day decision making of the journal. Associate editors will be involved throughout the editorial process, from encouraging the submission of manuscripts and selecting reviewers, to providing feedback to authors, to advising on editorial decisions. *IO*'s editorial board has always been strong and active, and this hallmark of the journal contributes to its strength and prominence.

### Types of Articles

*IO* primarily publishes individual research articles and will continue to do so. From time to time the journal publishes review articles or other forms of intellectual exchange among scholars, and occasionally it publishes special issues. The structure established for considering the publication of special issues has proven successful, and it will remain in place. We encourage submission of proposals for special issues, and the associate editors will be active in helping potential editors of special issues to develop their proposals.

Creating some opportunity for works other than research articles seems desirable. Review articles, for example, perform a dual function: they highlight innovative theoretical and empirical work and identify ways to expand the boundaries of current research. The field of international relations, and political science more generally, flourishes by learning from and adapting approaches developed in cognate fields, such as economics, history, and sociology. A type of review article that would therefore be most welcome would identify new work in cognate fields that is relatively unknown to the international relations community but has the potential to inform its research agenda. We invite those potentially interested in contributing review articles to contact us.

To include such works we face the challenge of creating space in the journal without reducing the number of research articles published. We see the enforcement of article-length limits as one mechanism toward resolving this dilemma. We are modestly reducing the allowable number of words per article, from 16,000 to 14,000, bringing *IO* more in line with other top political science journals. We ask authors and reviewers to work with us on enforcing this limit. We anticipate that attention to keeping articles to a manageable length will bring other benefits as well, such as encouraging authors to present their arguments, logic, and evidence in as succinct, clear, and straightforward a manner as possible.

*IO* is beginning to experiment with electronic publication, in the form of "Dialogue *IO*." We will continue to try out different approaches to this new format, striving to ensure that it maintains the same intellectual standards as the print version of *IO* while taking advantage of the flexibility and interactive nature of electronic formats. Electronic publishing may be a highly appropriate format for airing debates and exchanges on publications that appear in the print journal; however, the content and nature of the material, not its quality, will determine its appropriateness for print versus electronic publishing.

### Review Process

We remain committed to expeditious and thorough peer review of manuscripts submitted to the journal, maintaining *IO*'s good record of relatively short turnaround times. Manuscripts should be prepared following the guidelines for contributors

(published in this issue) and should be sent to the *IO* offices at Harvard University. Review procedures will follow the same basic structure established under previous editors, with the inclusion of input from associate editors at all steps of the process. Authors will receive notification acknowledging submission of their manuscripts. Most manuscripts will be sent for peer review, without revealing the name(s) of the author(s) to the reviewers. Reviewers are drawn from the editorial board and from among others who can provide the necessary expertise for careful evaluation of the work. Peer reviews are carried out anonymously. Once the editorial team receives all reviews, copies will be sent to authors along with a decision about publication. Associate editors will assist in the selection of reviewers, will provide their own assessments of articles in many cases, and will often work with the editor-in-chief to provide feedback to authors.

We will be working over the next year to modify the process of mailing hard copies of articles and reviews, replacing it with electronic trafficking when possible. This will expedite the review process, which is especially important as we increasingly draw on authors and reviewers from outside North America. For the time being, authors are asked to submit an electronic version of the manuscript (on disk or via email) along with a hard copy. Authors should observe the guidelines for contributors, which we will update to reflect new procedures as they evolve.

This journal finds itself in the challenging and exciting position of promoting excellence in the broader fields of international relations and political economy. It will continue to have its roots in IPE while exploring the best new work in political economy and international relations. It publishes strong work in all aspects of international relations, from a wide range of theoretical perspectives and in new policy arenas. We look forward to receiving submissions within the framework elaborated in this note. We also look forward to hearing from readers about the journal and the editorial process.