

## Instructions for Authors

### Aims & Scope

*The Annual Review for the Sciences of the Democracies* is an expert periodical in the service of The Society for the Sciences of the Democracies. The Society is composed of those who have written one or more short essays for the ECPR's series on "The Science of Democracy". Membership in the Society may not otherwise be gained unless the ECPR series should close. In that event, a published review of the book, *The Sciences of the Democracies* (presently under review with Athabasca University Press) is the requirement to join the Society. This can be gained through publishing your review in expert periodicals, public-facing periodicals (e.g. LA or NY Review of Books), book or ideas-related blog sites, or through substantive review via book review platforms such as Goodreads or Amazon. There is no monetary cost to join the Society although there is an Article Processing Charge (APC) associated with the Journal.

“Service” is here defined as welcoming and soliciting journal contributions that stem from one or more contributions made to the ECPR short essay series or the book mentioned above *or* that are **otherwise aligned with the epistemic direction** of the Society. In other words, a submission to the Journal should be relevant, in an explicit/obvious sense, to the bodies of work mentioned above (e.g. the ECPR short essay series and/or book).

The Journal is robustly transdisciplinary. It embraces epistemic/methodological pluralism and it encourages multi-authored submissions. Whilst the Journal does have a style, authors are not obligated to format submissions accordingly. Should the submission succeed with the Journal, authors will then be invited to format accordingly. Lastly, the Journal encourages the pre-registration of studies so that authors can feel confident in, for example, publishing negative results. If an author, or team of authors, would like to discuss an idea—to, for example, gauge its suitability for the Journal—this is encouraged as well (please direct your query to the editor of your choice).

[Submit your article here.](#)

**The journal invites the following article types (word limits do not include references):**

**1) *Research articles of ~7,500 words.***

A research article is here defined as a fully developed essay that makes a clear and original contribution to knowledge about “democracy” which is understood as a concept with both many definitions and synonyms in the English language and in other languages as well. Any essay that makes an original contribution about any sort/type/form/model/theory/etc. of “democracy” is welcome as are any essays that make an original contribution about the nature of data on/of/from/by/for “democracy” be that from a practice, research, teaching, outreach, or other perspectives. Any disciplinary approach is welcome as *The Review of Democracies* is transdisciplinary (e.g. historians, anthropologists, theoretical physicists, philosophers, archaeologists, ethnographers, social workers, social theorists and sociologists, qualitative and

quantitative researchers, political scientists, political theorists, economists, etc., are all welcome to contribute articles). Further, any methodology is welcome as the Editors recognize that certain questions or problems require specific, and changing, methods to address them.

**2) *Research notes of ~6,000 words (in select cases this could be increased to ~7,500 words)***

A Research Note is here defined as a detailed and comprehensive description of any sort/type/form/model/theory/etc. of “democracy”. For example, a Research Note on “Silver Democracy” would entail a comprehensive description of the term including its normative theory/ies and practical application/s. Author/s would be invited to include a selection of key readings, PDFed, utilized for the production of the Research Note for publication as an Appendix to their Note (this would be credited with its own DOI).

Thinking, in particular, of Hilary Gopnik’s contribution to the ECPR short essay series on the ‘Science of Democracy’, where non-textual sources are highlighted, should an author wish to publish a Research Note on, say, ancient public baths, the same principle regarding raw data applies. We would invite key images, videos, etc., to be provided for publication as an Appendix to the Note.

**3) *Review articles of ~5,000 words (in select cases this could be increased to ~7,500 words)***

A review article is here defined as an argument that is developed from reading a minimum of three books on/about/from/for/by “democracy”. Experimental, transdisciplinary, readings are especially encouraged but should be cleared with at least one of the editors prior to commencement just so that we are all on the same page about the experiment and so that the author/s are not wasting their time. The Journal welcomes books that cross time periods and languages. The selection of books is not restricted to those recently published.

A review article must make an original contribution to the literature. Although an accurate summary of the books under review constitutes an important part of a review essay, the primary focus and contribution should be the reviewer’s collective evaluation and analysis of these works. There should therefore be a clear, original message beyond the books’ content – one that advances scholarly inquiry within the area of research under consideration. Review articles will be peer-reviewed (double-blind) as with Research Articles and Research Notes.

**4) *Interviews of ~5,000 words (in select cases, such as for multilogues, this could be increased to ~7,500 words)***

Interviews are here defined as in-depth conversations on any aspect relating to “democracy”. They can be one-on-one conversations (dialogues) or multilogues involving three or more discussants. Interviews must be prefaced by an abstract that distils the core contribution of the interview. The abstract must make it clear to the reader what the key aspect of the discussion is. For example, the abstract could establish the key idea/s under discussion and what has resulted from discussing them.

Whilst there is no specific format that an Interview in this Journal should take, it is good practice for authors intending an interview for the Journal to clear it with at least one editor in advance. The idea is to foster a collaborative environment in which the editor would support the authors in formatting.

If an author, or set of authors, would like to produce a more technical discussion on any aspect relating to “democracy”, please see Critical Exchanges below.

Interviews are subject to external open peer review as is common with book proposals or grant submissions. Reviewers are asked to comment on the execution of the interview and to make suggestions to all discussants on how the dialogue could, in their esteem, be improved.

**5) *Practitioners’ Notes of ~5,000 words (in select cases, such as for a large or complex practice, this could be increased to ~7,500 words)***

A Practitioner’s Note is here defined as a detailed explanation of a practitioner’s work that is conducted in the field or *outside* of “conventional academia”.

For example, there are many businesses in the world that either involve “democracy” in their name or they are, in some form, working on behalf of “democracy”. A Note here would be a detailed description of what the practitioner’s relationship to “democracy” is and why that should be of significance to a broad readership.

The Practitioner’s Note can be co-authored between the researcher and their collaborator/s (the practitioner/s in question, which can be a firm as opposed to an individual or group of peoples). Notes can be delivered in non-conventional styles such as reports, auto-ethnographies, critical reflections, story/narrative, and so forth. Authors should feel welcome to pre-organize their Practitioner’s Note with an editor—especially in the case of non-conventional styling.

Practitioner’s Notes are subject to external open peer review as is common with book proposals or grant submissions. Reviewers are asked to comment on the execution of the Note and to make suggestions to all discussants on how the Note could, in their esteem, be improved.

**6) *Book symposia of ~9,500 words***

A Book Symposium is here defined as a group of scholars making an in-depth, and collaborative, discussion about a book. For example, 5-6 critical essays of no more than 1200 words each would be published along with a response by the book’s author/s of no more than 2400 words. The Journal does have a bias toward books published recently in this category of Journal contribution as the work would still be fresh in the author/s mind. The one exception to this is if the symposium’s purpose is to revisit a book with its author/s to see how its arguments have or could be built upon.

Book symposia are subject to external open peer review as is common with book proposals or grant submissions. Reviewers are asked to comment on the execution of the Symposium and to make suggestions to all discussants on how the Symposium could, in their esteem, be improved.

**7) Critical Exchanges of ~9,500 words (in special circumstances, such as in the case of a pressing and complex debate, this could be extended to ~12,000 words)**

A Critical Exchange is here defined as an in-depth discussion on any aspect relating to “democracy” by typically 4-7 authors. The format for such a contribution is as follows:

1. An introductory article of not more than 2500 words that establishes the frame of discussion;
2. Then 3-6, 1500-word maximum (larger word apportionment if fewer), articles that address what the introductory article has framed.

Please clear Critical Exchanges with at least one editor beforehand so everyone is on the same page about this project. When emailing your editor of choice please provide a one (1) page executive summary of the discussion and a list of authors who have already agreed to participate.

**8) Letters of ~3000 words**

The Letter (academic comment) is here defined as a critical response to one of the Journal’s prior publications. Whilst these Letters are given a DOI, they are not published within the Journal’s volume but rather in its associated “blog” or, as we prefer to say, “short essay” arm. This is done to facilitate discussion between the author/s putting forward their critique and the author/s whose work has been critiqued which is best facilitated in an online forum.

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The Editors reserve the right to publish any other article type as may benefit the Journal and be in accordance with the Publisher’s interests. All word limits should be considered maximums, this **does not** include the works cited). As regards the Journal’s style, authors should not be concerned with formatting until after the author’s contribution has been accepted for publication. In the event a submission does not succeed with the Journal, the editor/s relevant will offer suggestions to the author/s as to where else their contribution may succeed (e.g. by suggesting a different journal).

**TWO – Editorial Approach**

It is the responsibility of each editor to produce/steward a maximum of 1-2 contributions per year for the Journal.

One editor will serve as the journal manager for a period of *12 months*. This is a service role and, for fairness, should be treated rotationally. The editors should strive to keep each other informed about how they would like to serve the Journal. This could involve the creation of new role types.

Two or more editors will serve as knowledge mobilization officers for a period of *12 months*. As with the journal manager, these are service roles and should be treated rotationally.

The Editors' approach to producing or stewarding a contribution to the Journal comes in, at minimum, two stages. The first stage is an Editor's careful reading of the, for example, Research Article they have been assigned to, or solicited, for the Journal. The point of this reading is to first ensure that the article is contributing an argument that meets the Journal's Aims and Scope. If the article fits, the Editor is then judging to see if the article is of sufficient quality to be advanced to the second stage of peer-review which we will get to shortly. If the article is deemed by the Editor to be of insufficient quality for peer review it is the Editor's responsibility to provide the author(s) with advice about how the article could be improved. Editors are encouraged to confer with one or more other Editors about quality if there is uncertainty. This stage of preparing an article for peer review can be prolonged and may constitute a developmental stage of the article known colloquially as "editorial tennis" (note the back-and-forth and iterative nature of this colloquialism). For reasons of workload management, it is the Editor who holds the right to end the developmental process if they feel that the author(s) are not collaborating, or for whatever reason are unable to collaborate, within the spirit of the process.

Continuing with the example of the article, if an Editor deems that it is ready for peer review, the Editor is responsible for soliciting at least two double-blind peer review reports from experts relevant to the article at hand. In especially technical articles it may be necessary to solicit reviews from experts who will be asked to comment on specific aspects of the article. Editors should direct reviewers to the Ethical Duty of Reviewers when soliciting peer reviews.

When soliciting, stewarding, or otherwise producing any sort of contribution for the Journal, the Editor should do so with the understanding that the contribution's publication (should it eventuate) is not the end but the *beginning* of the Editor's normative responsibility to that article. For example, the Editor could try to demonstrate how the contribution may be cited in future, by whom, etc. The Editor could also try to understand how the contribution will be communicated over social media and how the knowledge it puts forward may be otherwise mobilized. As a crude measure, the Editor could try to demonstrate an alt-metric of, for example, 10 points per article by its 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary. Whilst the author(s) of the article are welcome to contribute to this process the responsibility, and therefore accountability, should be understood to rest with the Editor.

That said, these are voluntary positions and Editors can only give what they can to the process. This is, in part, why Editors are asked to steward/solicit/produce no more than two contributions to the Journal per year. It should be understood that these are experimental editorial roles and they are to be taken as normative wishes, or attempts, rather than hard or strict imperatives. Hopefully, supporting contributions to the Journal post-publication can develop, over time, into a culture among Journal editors.

### **THREE – Ethical Duty of Reviewers & Ethical Obligations of the Reviewer**

#### ***Ethical Duty***

*The Review of Democracies* is designed to be a Journal that is strongly led by its Editors. Peer reviewers fulfil the function of offering an external review of and advice on, for example, an

article to which editors have provided constructive feedback. As given above, editors should not be sending an article out for review unless they are already confident that the article is of sufficient quality to be read by other experts. Therefore, what we are asking of peer-reviewers is a professional review—that conforms to the Journal’s code of ethics—offering a constructive review of the article, including advice on how the article could be further improved or, if the reviewer does not yet find the article to be of sufficient quality for publication, to clearly and constructively state why this is the case.

Any peer-reviewer who returns what the Editors deem to be an unethical review (e.g. racist/sexist/anti-trans/etc., impolite, attacking, unhelpful, or otherwise useless to author/s and Editors alike) will have their review rejected and will not be invited to read again. They will also be removed from the Advisory Board and The Society itself should they compose one or more of those bodies. Therefore, the professional letter we are seeking should be courteous, carefully detailed, and overall helpful to the mission of an article’s continued improvement. Peer reviewers should demonstrate self-awareness that they may be wrong in their opinions and should be aware that other peer reviewers are submitting reports as well.

### ***Ethical Obligation***

#### **Professional Responsibility**

The reviewer who has benefited from the service of their profession and this Journal shall be asked to participate in the peer review process. The reviewer should only review articles in their areas of expertise.

#### **Confidentiality**

The reviewer shall be mindful of the confidentiality between themselves and the authors.

#### **Conflicts of Interest**

The reviewer shall declare any conflicts of interest and remember that a conflict of interest requires the reviewer to conduct a fair and competent review and avoid any secondary motivations such as fame, reputation, or monetary reward.

#### **Timeliness**

The reviewer shall complete their review within the time frame suggested and agreed upon in the original agreement and make a good-faith effort.

#### **Objectivity and Neutrality**

The reviewer shall remain objective and neutral in their reviews. The reviewer shall make every attempt to provide helpful and constructive feedback, not malicious, useless, or pointless.

## **FOUR – Advisory Board**

The Advisory Board consists of the entire list of the Society for the Sciences of the Democracies. This would include the list from the ECPR Research Network, all who have published in the ECPR’s short essay series, and all contributors to *The Sciences of the Democracies* book (presently under external peer-review with Athabasca University Press). The idea here is to be as

inclusive as possible. Whoever prefers not to be listed can opt-out by email to the Journal manager.