

Reputational Rankings of Peer-Reviewed Law Journals: A Survey Approach

Paul M. Collins, Jr. *University of Massachusetts Amherst*

ABSTRACT This article presents the results of the first-ever survey that captures how political scientists view peer-reviewed law journals with regard to overall impact, familiarity, and article quality, as well as reading and submission preferences. In addition, it examines the extent to which the evaluation of journal quality differs depending on a researcher's methodological approach. I find that scholars generally agree on a set of top peer-reviewed law journals, although some differences do exist based on the methodological approach of the respondent. These results can be used by a wide range of scholars to formulate publication strategies and evaluate the scholarly productivity of their peers.

The reputations of professional journals play a major role in the academy. Graduate students are encouraged to publish their research in top journals in order to maximize their chances of obtaining faculty positions (Wuffle 1989). For faculty members, journal prestige influences merit reviews and promotion and tenure decisions, as well as a researcher's overall reputation in the academy (Marshall and Rothgeb 2011; Whicker, Kronenfeld, and Strickland 1993). For teachers, a journal's reputation can act as a proxy for the quality of the research published in it and thus influence whether articles from that journal are assigned in the classroom (Colgan 2016; Stoan 1984). Moreover, grant-making bodies weigh the quality of an applicant's journal publications as part of their decision-making processes (McLean et al. 2009).

This article adds to our understanding of journal quality by reporting the results of a survey that captures how political scientists view peer-reviewed law journals in terms of overall impact, familiarity, article quality, and reading and submission preferences. In addition, it examines the extent to which the evaluation of journal quality differs depending on a researcher's methodological approach. Taken as a whole, the findings reveal that scholars generally agree on a set of top peer-reviewed law journals, although some differences do exist based on the methodological approach of the respondent.

Investigating political scientists' views of peer-reviewed law journals matters for a number of reasons. First, existing rankings of law journals overwhelmingly focus on citation patterns in student-edited law reviews (e.g., Cullen and Kalberg 1995; Doyle 2004; Shapiro 2000; but see Eisenberg and Wells 2014). Though student-edited law reviews certainly contribute to our understanding of legal phenomena, the fact remains that, because they are not peer-reviewed, student-edited law reviews do not carry

the same weight outside of law schools as peer-reviewed journals (e.g., Epstein and King 2002; Friedman 1998).¹ This may be a particular concern for junior faculty members, who might be discouraged from publishing in student-edited law reviews because they are not peer-reviewed (Zorn 2006).

Second, many peer-reviewed law journals are multidisciplinary and attract manuscripts from a wide range of fields, including anthropology, economics, history, law, political science, psychology, and sociology. This means that scholars from varied disciplines fight for space in the same journals and also implies that scholars from different disciplines might view the same journals differently, indicating the need for discipline-based journal rankings. Moreover, it highlights a problem with relying on impact factors based on citation counts to capture journal quality. For example, *Law and Human Behavior* is the highest ranked peer-reviewed law journal according to its Journal Citation Reports impact factor (Eisenberg and Wells 2014). Although it frames itself as a "multidisciplinary forum" (American Psychological Association 2016), it overwhelmingly publishes research by psychologists, who then frequently cite the journal (Shapiro 2000). Thus, it is unlikely that political scientists, who seldom publish in the journal, would rank it nearly as highly as its Journal Citation Reports impact factor would suggest. As the survey results below indicate, political scientists, in fact, rank this the 49th overall peer-reviewed law journal. Thus, relying on citation count-based impact factors can be particularly troublesome in the context of multidisciplinary journals because a journal's citation count-based impact factor may be driven almost entirely by a particular discipline that favors the journal.²

Finally, I focus on peer-reviewed law journals since we lack information on how political scientists view the very large and expanding number of such journals.³ To be clear, a small handful of these journals have appeared on reputational surveys of journals administered to political scientists (e.g., Garand and Giles 2003; Giles and Garand 2007; Giles and Wright 1975). However, the vast majority of the 95 peer-reviewed law journals featured

Paul M. Collins, Jr. is professor and director of legal studies in the department of political science at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. He can be reached at pmcollins@legal.umass.edu.

on the survey reported here do not appear on previous surveys. By providing a thorough examination of how political scientists view peer-reviewed law journals, my hope is that this article will aid scholars as they formulate their publication strategies and evaluate the scholarly work of their colleagues. Thus, this paper contributes to a growing literature that examines the reputations of journals operating within particular subfields (e.g., Arena 2014; Doyle 2004; Eisenberg and Wells 2014; Maliniak, Peterson, and Tierney 2012).

By providing a thorough examination of how political scientists view peer-reviewed law journals, my hope is that this article will aid scholars as they formulate their publication strategies and evaluate the scholarly work of their colleagues.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The strategy used to gather information on the reputational rankings of peer-reviewed law journals closely follows that developed in Garand and Giles (2003), with two notable exceptions. First, this survey was conducted online (see also Garand et al. 2009; McLean et al. 2009), instead of via the mail. Second, only peer-reviewed law journals appeared on the survey, whereas Garand and Giles include a wide array of political science journals. The decision to focus only on peer-reviewed law journals was purposeful and driven by research on survey methodology; 95 journals appear on the survey, and including additional general political science journals would have effectively doubled the size of the survey as Garand and Giles included 115 political science journals on their survey. Including these additional journals would have likely decreased the response rate and increased the number of non-responses on several of the open-ended questions that appeared on the survey (e.g., Crawford, Couper, and Lamias 2001; Rogelberg and Stanton 2007).

The online survey was sent to all 480 members of the Law and Courts Section of the American Political Science Association (APSA) during the spring of 2016.⁴ The set of respondents includes faculty and graduate students from PhD-granting institutions and faculty from non-PhD-granting institutions, as well as a small number of individuals employed conducting legal research outside of academia (e.g., for the federal government and think tanks).⁵ The set of respondents includes both US and international scholars. After excluding responses from practicing lawyers without a connection to the academy from the survey results, 191 individuals returned full responses. The response rate was thus 40%, which compares favorably to the 28% overall response rate reported by Garand et al. (2009).

To determine which journals to include on the survey, a two-pronged strategy was employed. First, all peer-reviewed journals appearing in the “law” category on the Web of Science (formerly ISI) Journal Citation Reports were included (84 journals). Second, faculty from both liberal arts colleges and research-oriented universities in the Five College Consortium (Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College, and the University of Massachusetts Amherst) whose research focuses on legal issues were asked to contribute the names of peer-reviewed law journals that should be included on the list, resulting in the addition of 11 journals for a total of 95 journals. In addition, respondents were given space to rank up to 10 journals that did not appear on the list.

For the purposes of this survey, “peer-reviewed journals” are those that are evaluated by reviewers on an open, single-blind, or double-blind basis, as well as those refereed by a team of faculty editors (but not external reviewers). It does not include student-edited law reviews (e.g., McCormack 2009). It was straightforward to identify peer-reviewed journals, as they almost uniformly state on their webpages that they are “peer-reviewed” or “refereed” and explain the reviewing process.

The survey questions and design closely followed those developed by Garand and Giles (2003). Respondents were first asked to provide descriptive information about themselves, such as their country of origin, the highest degree offered at their institution, and their age, gender, and current academic rank. In addition, respondents were asked to identify the methodological approach that they most often employ and the regional focus of their research.

Following these descriptive questions, the survey queried respondents regarding their evaluations of peer-reviewed law journals in three ways. First, respondents were asked the following question (adopted from Garand and Giles 2003):

Assume that you have just completed what you consider to be a very strong paper on a legal topic in your area of expertise. Indicate the first peer reviewed law journal to which you would submit such a manuscript. Assuming the paper is rejected at your first choice, please indicate the second and third journals to which you would submit the manuscript.

Next, respondents were presented with a list of 95 peer-reviewed law journals and were asked to identify the journals with which they are familiar. Respondents were informed that they would only be asked to rate journals with which they are familiar and were further informed that they will be able to add journals that the survey omitted that they feel should be included. Following this, respondents were asked to “assess each journal in terms of the general quality of the articles it publishes using a scale of 1 to 10,” where 1 is “poor,” 5 is “adequate,” and 10 is “outstanding.” Finally, respondents were asked the following question (adopted from Garand and Giles 2003): “Which peer reviewed law journals do you read regularly or otherwise rely on for the best research in your area of expertise?” Respondents were allowed to list up to five journals.

To measure journal impact, I follow Garand and Giles (2003, 294–95) in recognizing that a journal’s impact is a function of both the extent to which scholars are familiar with a journal and the strength of the evaluations that scholars give to a journal. In other words, the strongest journals are those that a large number of scholars are familiar with *and* those that are held in high regard by scholars. Accordingly, I adopt the Garand and Giles (2003, 295) measure of journal impact, which is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Journal Impact} = \text{Journal Evaluation} + (\text{Journal Evaluation} \times \text{Journal Familiarity})$$

Journal evaluation captures the average assessment of each journal according to the quality of the articles it publishes, on a 1 to 10 scale. Journal familiarity is the proportion of respondents who indicated that they are familiar with each journal. This measure of impact has a theoretical range of 0 to 20, although the actual range in the data is 0 to 15.5. If no respondents are familiar with a journal (and thus no respondents rank that journal), it would score a 0. If every respondent indicated familiarity with a journal and also ranked that journal a 10, it would receive a 20. The journal impact measure is closely correlated with both journal familiarity ($r = 0.86$) and journal evaluation ($r = 0.69$), and gives fairly equal credit to these individual measures.⁶

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

Table 1 reports the results pertaining to journal impact, journal evaluation, and journal familiarity, with the journals listed in order of their impact rank.⁷ With two exceptions, the top ten journals are among the most widely recognized and highly evaluated peer-reviewed law journals. Consider the top three journals. *Law & Society Review* is one of the oldest peer-reviewed law journals, having published its first issues in 1966, and has published some truly seminal research, including Galanter (1974) and Felstiner, Abel, and Sarat (1981). *Law & Social Inquiry* is slightly newer, but still very well established, having first published in 1976 under the name *American Bar Foundation Research Journal*. *Journal of Law and Courts* is the new kid in town, having published its first issue in 2013. That it is less than five years old and is the second highest ranked journal clearly indicates that it quickly gained the respect of scholars, no doubt displacing older journals in the process.⁸

Four of the remaining top ten journals—*Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* (fourth), *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies* (fifth), *Journal of Legal Studies* (seventh), and *Justice System Journal* (ninth)—tend to publish research in the quantitative and/or formal traditions. The sixth highest ranked journal is the *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, which publishes authoritative and critical review articles on a range of socio-legal subjects.

The two remaining journals in the top ten are interesting for different reasons. The *European Journal of Migration and Law* publishes law and policy research primarily devoted to European migration and is the only specialty journal—in the sense that it publishes research with a particular thematic focus—in the top ten. Only two respondents indicated familiarity with this journal (with a rank of 10 in terms of its quality) so its top ten ranking should be taken with a grain of salt. *Judicature* rounds out the top ten. This journal, published by the now defunct American Judicature Society from 1917 to 2013, functioned as a generalist journal that published relatively short articles targeted at both academics and legal professionals. Since 2014, it has been published by the Duke Law Center for Judicial Studies; it appears that its current primary audience is judges as it is currently described as “The Scholarly Journal for Judges” (Duke Law Center for Judicial Studies 2016). Unlike the *European Journal of Migration and Law*, which is little known, but highly ranked by those familiar with it, *Judicature* is very well known, but not evaluated highly in terms of the articles it publishes.

The second grouping of journals (11–20) primarily contains generalist law journals that publish on a range of topics, although some more specialized journals also appear. Among the generalist journals, some publish work from a wide range of disciplines (e.g., *Law & Policy*, *Law, Culture and the Humanities*), while others are more closely associated with a particular disciplinary perspective (e.g., *Law & History Review*, *Journal of Law and Economics*). Of the specialty journals, some are international in scope, but focused on a particular topic area (e.g., *International Journal of Constitutional Law*), and others are clearly associated with a particular discipline, such as *Criminology*.

Similar to what Garand and Giles (2003) find with respect to political science journals in general, the third tier of law journals consists primarily of journals “that are either reasonably well regarded or reasonably well known, but not both.” For example, the *American Law and Economics Review* is reasonably well known, ranking fifteenth overall in terms of familiarity, but is not highly evaluated in terms of its quality (43rd overall). Conversely, the *International Review of the Red Cross* is not well known (57th overall), but is highly regarded by those familiar with it (fifth overall).

Finally, the 48% of journals below the 39th impact ranking are neither widely recognized nor highly regarded. Indeed, all of the journals fall below the mean (6.76) in terms of journal evaluation and well below the mean (0.13) in terms of familiarity, with one exception. *Jurimetrics*, published by the American Bar Association Section of Science and Technology Law, is reasonably well known (17th overall), but not highly regarded (68th overall).⁹

Evaluating Journal Quality

In an effort to take a closer look at political scientists’ evaluations of the quality of articles published in peer-reviewed law journals, table 2 reports the top 30 journals in terms of the average evaluation rating on a 1 to 10 scale. Of these 30 journals, only seven appear in the top 10 according to journal impact in table 1: *European Journal of Migration and Law*; *Law & Society Review*; *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization*; *Journal of Law and Courts*; *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*; *Law & Social Inquiry*, and *Journal of Legal Studies*. With the exception of the *European Journal of Migration and Law*, which is not well known, these are the journals that are the most highly respected and well known among political scientists.

The remaining journals on the list provide evidence of specialization among political scientists studying law. In particular, there is an assortment of journals that are not well known to most political scientists, but that are very highly ranked by those familiar with the journal, most notably *European Journal of Migration and Law*, *American Journal of International Law*, *International Review of the Red Cross*, and *Journal of Law, Medicine, and Ethics*. All of these are specialty journals that publish research regarding a particular thematic focus and are apparently very well regarded by scholars working in those thematic areas.

Evaluating Journal Familiarity

Table 3 examines how political scientists view peer-reviewed law journals by reporting the top 30 journals according to the proportion of respondents who indicated familiarity with a journal. This table reveals that there are only six peer-reviewed law journals that a majority of respondents indicate familiarity with, which is identical to what Garand and Giles (2003, 299) find with respect to political science journals. *Journal of Law and Courts* and *Law &*

Table 1
Political Scientists' Evaluations of Peer-reviewed Law Journals, 2016

Journal Name	Mean Impact Rating	Impact Ranking	Mean Evaluation Rating	Evaluation Rank	Proportion Familiar	Familiarity Rank
Law & Society Review	15.500	1	8.293	2	0.8691	2
Journal of Law and Courts	14.653	2	7.774	9	0.8848	1
Law & Social Inquiry	12.718	3	7.429	19	0.7120	4
Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization	11.364	4	8.160	4	0.3927	9
Journal of Empirical Legal Studies	10.721	5	6.941	36	0.5445	6
Annual Review of Law and Social Science	10.544	6	7.716	11	0.3665	11
Journal of Legal Studies	10.451	7	7.155	29	0.4607	7
European Journal of Migration and Law	10.105	8	10.000	1	0.0105	57
Justice System Journal	9.988	9	6.214	57	0.6073	5
Judicature	9.663	10	5.444	71	0.7749	3
Law & Policy	9.653	11	6.753	42	0.4293	8
Law & History Review	9.607	12	7.614	12	0.2618	13
Journal of Law and Economics	9.555	13	7.510	16	0.2723	12
Oxford Journal of Legal Studies	9.233	14	7.537	15	0.2251	14
Journal of Law and Society	9.158	15	6.676	44	0.3717	10
American Journal of International Law	9.145	16	8.278	3	0.1047	25
Cambridge Law Journal	8.587	17	7.737	10	0.1099	24
Criminology	8.505	18	7.591	14	0.1204	20
Law, Culture and the Humanities	8.455	19	7.407	21	0.1414	18
International Journal of Constitutional Law	8.362	20	7.360	23	0.1361	19
Law and Philosophy	8.301	21	7.409	20	0.1204	20
American Journal of Comparative Law	8.290	22	6.944	35	0.1937	15
Feminist Legal Studies	8.161	23	7.318	24	0.1152	22
International Review of the Red Cross	8.084	24	8.000	5	0.0105	57
Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics	8.042	25	8.000	5	0.0052	68
Antitrust Law Journal	8.042	25	8.000	5	0.0052	68
American Law and Economics Review	8.024	27	6.722	43	0.1937	15
Common Market Law Review	8.004	28	7.800	8	0.0262	47
European Journal of International Law	7.926	29	7.385	22	0.0733	30
Psychology, Public Policy, and Law	7.879	30	7.600	13	0.0366	43
International and Comparative Law Quarterly	7.743	31	7.250	25	0.0681	32
Social & Legal Studies	7.690	32	7.200	26	0.0681	32
Canadian Journal of Law & Society	7.654	33	7.167	28	0.0681	32
European Constitutional Law Review	7.595	34	7.182	27	0.0576	36
Regulation & Governance	7.583	35	6.800	39	0.1152	22
Issues in Law & Medicine	7.579	36	7.500	17	0.0105	57
International Journal of Law in Context	7.579	36	7.500	17	0.0105	57
Modern Law Review	7.467	38	6.857	38	0.0890	27
Criminology & Public Policy	7.461	39	7.125	30	0.0471	40
Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology	7.192	40	6.800	39	0.0576	36
International Journal of Transitional Justice	7.163	41	6.875	37	0.0419	42
Journal of African Law	7.073	42	7.000	31	0.0105	57
Competition Policy International	7.037	43	7.000	31	0.0052	68
Tijdschrift voor Rechtsgeschiedenis-Revue d Histoire du Droit-The Legal History Review	7.037	43	7.000	31	0.0052	68

(continued)

Table 1 (Continued)

Journal Name	Mean Impact Rating	Impact Ranking	Mean Evaluation Rating	Evaluation Rank	Proportion Familiar	Familiarity Rank
Food and Drug Law Journal	7.037	43	7.000	31	0.0052	68
Journal of Environmental Law	7.016	46	6.667	45	0.0524	39
Political and Legal Anthropology Review	6.980	47	6.600	47	0.0576	36
Leiden Journal of International Law	6.978	48	6.800	39	0.0262	47
Law and Human Behavior	6.784	49	6.200	58	0.0942	26
American Business Law Journal	6.771	50	6.667	45	0.0157	53
International Review of Law and Economics	6.733	51	6.273	54	0.0733	30
Oñati Socio-Legal Series	6.720	52	6.231	56	0.0785	28
European Law Review	6.664	53	6.429	49	0.0366	43
Journal of International Economic Law	6.568	54	6.500	48	0.0105	57
Hague Journal on the Rule of Law	6.568	54	6.400	50	0.0262	47
European Law Journal	6.565	56	6.333	51	0.0366	43
Journal of Legal Education	6.474	57	6.091	59	0.0628	35
Journal of International Criminal Justice	6.466	58	6.333	51	0.0209	51
Communication Law and Policy	6.433	59	6.333	51	0.0157	53
American Bankruptcy Law Journal	6.381	60	6.250	55	0.0209	51
Jurimetrics	6.376	61	5.536	68	0.1518	17
Law & Literature	6.139	62	5.692	66	0.0785	28
Asia Pacific Law Review	6.094	63	6.000	60	0.0157	53
International Journal of Law, Crime, and Justice	6.072	64	5.857	65	0.0366	43
Securities Regulation Law Journal	6.063	65	6.000	60	0.0105	57
International Journal of Law and Psychiatry	6.063	65	6.000	60	0.0105	57
Review of Central and East European Law	6.063	65	6.000	60	0.0105	57
Hong Kong Law Journal	6.063	65	6.000	60	0.0105	57
Behavioral Sciences & The Law	5.759	69	5.500	69	0.0471	40
Revista Espanola de Derecho Constitucional	5.756	70	5.667	67	0.0157	53
European Journal of Law and Economics	5.644	71	5.500	69	0.0262	47
Journal of East Asia and International Law	5.052	72	5.000	72	0.0105	57
Military Law Review	5.026	73	5.000	72	0.0052	68
Revista Chilena de Derecho	5.026	73	5.000	72	0.0052	68
World Trade Review	5.026	73	5.000	72	0.0052	68
Juvenile and Family Court Journal	5.026	73	5.000	72	0.0052	68
Chinese Journal of International Law	5.026	73	5.000	72	0.0052	68

Note: Mean Impact Rating is a journal's overall impact based on the following formula: Journal Impact = Journal Evaluation + (Journal Evaluation × Journal Familiarity). Mean Evaluation Rating (Journal Evaluation) is the average journal evaluation on a 1 to 10 scale where 1 = poor, 5 = adequate, and 10 = outstanding. Proportion Familiar (Journal Familiarity) is the proportion of respondents who are familiar with the journal.

Society Review are the most recognized journals, with more than 85% of respondents indicating familiarity with these journals. *Judicature* and *Law & Social Inquiry* come next, both of which are recognized by more than 70% of respondents. Following this, there is a drop-off, with 61% of respondents indicating familiarity with *Justice System Journal* and 55% indicating familiarity with *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies*.

The next group of journals, recognized by approximately 25% to 50% of all survey respondents, consist primarily of generalist law journals, such as *Law & Policy*, *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization*, and *Law & History Review*, although a few of these journals are associated with particular disciplinary or

methodological approaches. Less than 25% of respondents indicated familiarity with journals ranked below 13th. These journals constitute a mix of generalist journals (e.g., *Law, Culture, and the Humanities*), specialist journals (e.g., *American Journal of Comparative Law*), and journals connected to particular disciplines (e.g., *Law and Human Behavior*, which is the official journal of the American Psychology-Law Society of the American Psychological Association).

Evaluating Preferred Journal Submissions

In addition to the impact, quality, and familiarity measures, journals can also be evaluated based on respondent preferences for

Table 2
The Top 30 Ranked Peer-reviewed Law Journals in Terms of Article Quality, 2016

Evaluation Rank	Journal Name	Mean Evaluation Rating
1	European Journal of Migration and Law	10.000
2	Law & Society Review	8.293
3	American Journal of International Law	8.278
4	Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization	8.160
5	International Review of the Red Cross	8.000
7	Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics	8.000
6	Antitrust Law Journal	8.000
8	Common Market Law Review	7.800
9	Journal of Law and Courts	7.774
10	Cambridge Law Journal	7.737
11	Annual Review of Law and Social Science	7.716
12	Law & History Review	7.614
13	Psychology, Public Policy, and Law	7.600
14	Criminology	7.591
15	Oxford Journal of Legal Studies	7.537
16	Journal of Law and Economics	7.510
18	International Journal of Law in Context	7.500
17	Issues in Law & Medicine	7.500
19	Law & Social Inquiry	7.429
20	Law and Philosophy	7.409
21	Law, Culture and the Humanities	7.407
22	European Journal of International Law	7.385
23	International Journal of Constitutional Law	7.360
24	Feminist Legal Studies	7.318
25	International and Comparative Law Quarterly	7.250
26	Social & Legal Studies	7.200
27	European Constitutional Law Review	7.182
28	Canadian Journal of Law & Society	7.167
29	Journal of Legal Studies	7.155
30	Criminology & Public Policy	7.125

the submission of their own high-quality work (Garand and Giles 2003). To do this, respondents were asked to indicate and rank the top three peer-reviewed law journals to which they would send a “very strong paper on a legal topic in your area of expertise.” These results appear in table 4. The entries indicate the number of survey respondents who ranked each journal as the first, second, and third peer-reviewed law journal to which they would submit a very strong paper, and the total column contains the total number of times the journal was recognized. I have included only journals that received more than 15 overall mentions (see Garand and Giles 2003).

Two journals clearly stand out in table 4: *Law & Society Review* and *Journal of Law & Courts*. *Law & Society Review* is clearly the top journal for high-quality submissions, receiving twice as many

Table 3
The Top 30 Ranked Peer-reviewed Law Journals in Terms of Familiarity, 2016

Familiarity Rank	Journal Name	Proportion Familiar
1	Journal of Law and Courts	0.8848
2	Law & Society Review	0.8691
3	Judicature	0.7749
4	Law & Social Inquiry	0.7120
5	Justice System Journal	0.6073
6	Journal of Empirical Legal Studies	0.5445
7	Journal of Legal Studies	0.4607
8	Law & Policy	0.4293
9	Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization	0.3927
10	Journal of Law and Society	0.3717
11	Annual Review of Law and Social Science	0.3665
12	Journal of Law and Economics	0.2723
13	Law & History Review	0.2618
14	Oxford Journal of Legal Studies	0.2251
16	American Journal of Comparative Law	0.1937
15	American Law and Economics Review	0.1937
17	Jurimetrics	0.1518
18	Law, Culture and the Humanities	0.1414
19	International Journal of Constitutional Law	0.1361
21	Law and Philosophy	0.1204
20	Criminology	0.1204
22	Regulation & Governance	0.1152
23	Feminist Legal Studies	0.1152
24	Cambridge Law Journal	0.1099
25	American Journal of International Law	0.1047
26	Law and Human Behavior	0.0942
27	Modern Law Review	0.0890
29	Law & Literature	0.0785
28	Oñati Socio-Legal Series	0.0785
30	International Review of Law and Economics	0.0733

first-place selections than the runner up, *Journal of Law and Courts*, and the most total selections overall. This table also provides additional evidence for the very high esteem to which *Journal of Law and Courts* is held as it garnered the second most first-place selections and the most second-place selections. Moreover, both of these journals received more than twice as many overall selections than any other journal appearing in table 4.

Following these journals, *Law & Social Inquiry* has the third most overall mentions (41), and the second most second-place recognitions among the journals. The remaining journals have between 17 and 31 overall mentions. Three of these journals are generalist law journals that appeared on the top 10 highest ranked journals according to their impact factor in table 1: *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization*, *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies*, and *Journal of Legal Studies*. Two of these journals, *American Political Science Review* and *American Journal of Political Science*, did not

Table 4

Respondent Preferences for the Submission of High Quality Manuscripts to Peer-reviewed Law Journals

Journal Name	1st	2nd	3rd	Total
Law & Society Review	51	23	17	91
Journal of Law and Courts	25	30	33	88
Law & Social Inquiry	6	25	10	41
Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization	19	10	2	31
Journal of Empirical Legal Studies	6	7	17	30
American Political Science Review	21	5	1	27
American Journal of Political Science	11	12	0	23
Journal of Legal Studies	5	7	5	17

Note: Entries are the number of respondents who selected each journal as the first, second, or third peer-reviewed law journal to which they would submit "a very strong paper on a legal topic in [their] area of expertise."

appear on the list in table 1 as they are generalist political science journals, as opposed to law journals. This indicates that legal scholars recognize these journals as among the most prestigious in the field and corroborates the findings of Garand and Giles (2003), which ranked *American Political Science Review* and *American Journal of Political Science* the first and third overall journals, respectively, in terms of preferences for high-quality submissions (see also Martinek 2011).¹⁰

Evaluating Preferred Reading Sources

The final manner in which journals are evaluated appears in table 5. This provides information on respondents' preferences for journals based on those they read regularly or otherwise rely on for the best research in their area of expertise. Respondents were asked to name up to five journals each. The entries indicate the number of respondents who ranked each journal first through fifth, as well as the total number of mentions of each journal. I include only journals that received more than 20 overall mentions by respondents.

Table 5

Respondent Preferences for Reading Peer-reviewed Law Journals

Journal Name	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Total
Journal of Law and Courts	35	26	17	8	7	93
Law & Society Review	40	17	13	7	3	80
Law & Social Inquiry	6	19	11	3	3	42
Journal of Empirical Legal Studies	3	7	7	10	6	33
American Political Science Review	17	6	4	1	3	31
Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization	8	9	5	4	4	30
Journal of Politics	4	6	11	3	2	26
American Journal of Political Science	6	13	1	1	2	23

Note: Entries are the number of respondents who selected each journal as the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth peer-reviewed law journal that they "read regularly or otherwise rely on for the best research in [their] area of expertise."

As with table 4, two journals stand out: *Law & Society Review* and *Journal of Law and Courts*. *Law & Society Review* has the most first-place mentions, while *Journal of Law and Courts* has the most second-place mentions and the most mentions overall. Both of these journals have almost twice as many overall recognitions as *Law & Social Inquiry*, the third highest ranked journal according to overall mentions and the second highest ranked journal according to second-place mentions.

Two other peer-reviewed law journals also appear in table 5. *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies* has the fourth highest number of overall mentions and the most fourth-place mentions. *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* has the sixth highest number of overall recognitions. The three remaining journals, *American Political Science Review*, *Journal of Politics*, and *American Journal of Political Science*, are all highly regarded generalist political science journals. For example, these are the top ranked political science journals in terms of preferences for journal reading according to Garand and Giles (2003). Thus, there is a good deal of overlap in terms of how general political science journals are viewed among political scientists conducting legal research and those outside of this subfield.

Exploring Methodological Differences

To this point, peer-reviewed law journals have been evaluated according to the views of survey respondents, providing a great deal of information as to how these journals are evaluated generally. But, there is reason to believe that scholars who employ different methodological perspectives might evaluate journals differently (Garand and Giles 2003). As noted above, several of the journals that appear in the top 10 list according to impact factor tend to publish primarily quantitative research (e.g., *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies*). Thus, such journals might be less favorably viewed by those who employ qualitative methods. Conversely, some of the journals on this top 10 list, such as *Law & Social Inquiry* and *Law, Culture and the Humanities*, primarily publish qualitative research. Still others, such as *Law & Society Review* and *Journal of Law and Courts*, publish research from a variety of methodological approaches.¹¹

Table 6 provides a look at the average journal quality scores broken down by respondents who identified themselves as doing primarily quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods research.¹² This table includes the top 20 journals according to journal impact factor as reported in table 1. Recall that journal quality is on a 1–10 scale, where 1 is "poor," 5 is "adequate," and 10 is "outstanding." The mean for journal quality is 6.76 (standard deviation = 0.942). The F-test indicates whether the differences between the group means are statistically significant at $p < 0.01$.

Two notable findings emerge from this table. First, there is a good deal of consistency across the groups of scholars who associate themselves with the three methodological approaches. Indeed, there are no statistically significant differences across the three groups with respect to 14 of the 20 peer-reviewed law journals reported in table 6.¹³

Second, quantitative scholars rank all five journals in which statistically significant differences emerge lower than do qualitative and mixed-methods scholars. For example, quantitative researchers rank *Law & Society Review* about a standard deviation below qualitative and mixed-methods scholars. However, they still rank it about a standard deviation above the overall mean for journals. The biggest differences among the groups involve

Table 6

Political Scientists' Evaluations of Peer-reviewed Law Journals in Terms of Article Quality by Methodological Approach, 2016

Impact Rank	Journal Name	Total	Quantitative	Qualitative	Mixed-Methods	F-test
1	Law & Society Review	8.293	7.933	8.881	9.000	9.69*
2	Journal of Law and Courts	7.774	7.742	8.103	7.889	0.690
3	Law & Social Inquiry	7.429	6.087	8.763	8.207	29.11*
4	Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization	8.160	8.341	8.333	7.467	1.440
5	Journal of Empirical Legal Studies	6.941	6.960	7.000	7.034	0.010
7	Annual Review of Law and Social Science	7.716	7.059	8.200	7.591	1.910
6	Journal of Legal Studies	7.155	7.282	6.500	7.158	0.840
8	European Journal of Migration and Law	10.000	--	--	10.000	n.a.
9	Justice System Journal	6.214	6.204	6.318	6.593	0.480
10	Judicature	5.444	4.719	6.419	5.971	10.13*
11	Law & Policy	6.769	5.935	7.722	7.455	11.5*
12	Law & History Review	7.614	7.000	7.700	7.100	1.130
13	Journal of Law and Economics	7.510	7.304	7.667	7.818	0.480
14	Oxford Journal of Legal Studies	7.537	6.667	7.583	7.385	0.410
15	Journal of Law and Society	6.676	6.333	7.267	6.471	1.900
16	American Journal of International Law	8.278	7.333	8.286	7.800	0.490
18	Cambridge Law Journal	7.737	6.800	9.333	8.333	2.820
17	Criminology	7.591	7.250	8.000	7.750	0.440
19	Law, Culture and the Humanities	7.407	5.000	8.200	6.667	6.61*
20	International Journal of Constitutional Law	7.360	5.750	8.000	7.857	3.480

Note: * $p < 0.001$. Entries represent the average journal evaluation on a 1 to 10 scale where 1 = poor, 5 = adequate, and 10 = outstanding. *European Journal of Migration and Law* was not rated by any quantitative or qualitative scholars and thus there is no way to compare the average ratings across the groups.

Law, Culture and the Humanities and *Law & Social Inquiry*, both of which quantitative scholars rank below the overall mean. Quantitative scholars rank *Law, Culture and the Humanities* more than three standard deviations below qualitative scholars and they rank *Law & Social Inquiry* almost three standard deviations below qualitative scholars. As noted above, these journals publish primarily qualitative work, which likely accounts for the wide variation between quantitative and qualitative scholars.

CONCLUSIONS

This article provides the first systematic evaluation of how political scientists evaluate peer-reviewed law journals for the purpose of assisting scholars as they develop their publication strategies and evaluate the work of other researchers. To do this, political scientists were surveyed on their opinions regarding 95 peer-reviewed law journals. Following Garand and Giles (2003), journals were evaluated on the basis of five measures: overall impact, familiarity, article quality, submission preferences, and reading preferences. In addition to examining the overall evaluations of journals, special attention was devoted to exploring how journal evaluations might differ depending on researchers' methodological approaches.

Considering journal rankings across all of the measures employed here, two journals stand out as especially strong: *Law & Society Review* and *Journal of Law and Courts*. These are the top ranked peer-reviewed law journals in terms of overall impact,

familiarity, reading preferences, and submission preferences. In addition, they are both ranked in the top 10 according to article quality. Following these journals, *Law & Social Inquiry*, *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization*, and *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies* are also very highly ranked across measures, rounding out the top five for overall impact and appearing in the top 10 in terms of familiarity, reading preferences, and submission preferences. Thus, these appear to be the overall top five peer-reviewed law journals in 2016 according to political scientists. However, this study also reveals the existence of differences in journal rankings depending on researchers' methodological approaches. In particular, quantitative scholars ranked *Law & Society Review* and *Law & Social Inquiry* lower than did qualitative and mixed-methods scholars. This suggests that political scientists evaluate journal quality in part based on the extent to which they believe their preferred methodological approaches appear in those journals.

Taken as a whole, this article has provided a great deal of information regarding how political scientists evaluate peer-reviewed law journals. Future studies may choose to expand on these findings in a number of ways. For example, this study was based entirely on survey results. Though this is the dominant approach for evaluating journals in the discipline (Garand and Giles 2003), citations represent another way that journals can be evaluated (e.g., Giles and Garand 2007; Jacobs 2016). In addition, it will be valuable to include a small number of general political science journals on future surveys for the purpose of establishing

how peer-reviewed law journals compare to journals such as the *American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Political Science*, and *Journal of Politics* in the eyes of survey respondents. Finally, it will be useful to expand this research to include scholars outside of political science. As noted above, because most peer-reviewed law journals frame themselves as publishing work from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, it will be important to investigate how scholars from different disciplines evaluate the same set of journals.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

To view supplementary material for this article, please visit <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096517002529>

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am extremely grateful to Diana Alsabe for outstanding research assistance, Micheal Giles for providing advice and sharing survey materials, Wendy Martinek for insightful comments on an earlier version of this article, Brian Schaffner for guidance in designing the online survey employed here, and the anonymous reviewers for their helpful suggestions. I am also thankful to participants in the Five College Legal Studies Seminar and the University of Massachusetts Amherst American Politics working group for their very useful feedback. Naturally, I take full responsibility for any errors in fact and/or judgment. In the interest of disclosure, I was a member of the editorial boards of *Justice System Journal*, *Law & Society Review*, and *Political Research Quarterly* when this research was conducted. ■

NOTES

1. Nonetheless, student-edited law reviews are important publication outlets in the legal and political science worlds and some political scientists choose to publish in these journals. Publishing in student-edited law reviews allows political scientists to speak to an audience that may include judges, law clerks, law students, lawyers, and policy makers. Moreover, critiques of judicial opinions are one of the core functions of law reviews, but are much less common in peer-reviewed law journals (Cross 1997). Because of this difference in audience and scope, student edited-law reviews may allow political scientists to contribute to the development of legal doctrine or public policy in a way that peer-reviewed journals may not (e.g., Newton 2012; Woods 2014).
2. For example, I compared the affiliations of the authors of articles published in the final issue of 2016 in *Law & Society Review*, the top ranked journal according to this survey, to those of five of the leading subfield journals in political science according to Garand et al. (2009). The results indicate that four disciplines were represented in *Law & Society Review* (law, political science, social work and social welfare, and sociology), compared to three in *International Organization* (economics, international affairs/relations, and political science); two in *Comparative Politics* (industrial relations and political science) and *Legislative Studies Quarterly* (economics and political science); and one in *Political Theory* (political science) and *Public Opinion Quarterly* (political science). This suggests that peer-reviewed law journals are particularly multidisciplinary and thus might be especially susceptible to bias from specific disciplines since a wider range of disciplines publish in these journals than other subfield journals in political science.
3. For example, two highly ranked peer-reviewed law journals, *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies* and *Journal of Law and Courts*, were first published in the last 15 years.
4. Garand and Giles (2003) used a sample of members of the APSA for their survey. Because the Law and Courts Section is smaller than the association as a whole, it was possible to avoid sampling and survey the entire membership. Although not all political scientists who focus on law are members of the Law and Courts Section, these individuals nonetheless reflect of the variety of political scientists conducting law-oriented research (e.g., Martinek 2011) and the focus on this section maximizes the likelihood of respondents' familiarity with peer-reviewed law journals. That being said, the results of this survey are limited to members of the Law and Courts Section and therefore do not reflect the views of individuals who are not members of that section who conduct legally-oriented research.
5. Graduate students make up 8% of survey respondents. Excluding graduate students from the sample does not substantially influence the ranking of

journals. Similarly, excluding scholarly legal researchers working outside of the academy, who make up 1% of respondents, does not significantly affect the results.

6. An alternative measure is to multiply the journal familiarity measure with the journal evaluation measure (Garand and Giles 2003, 294). However, this measure gives substantially more weight to familiarity ($r = 0.99$) than evaluation ($r = 0.28$).
7. A total of 95 journals appeared on the survey. Of these, no respondent indicated familiarity with the following 18 journals, and thus they are not included in table 1: *European Journal of Psychology Applied to Legal Context*; *Family Court Review*; *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law, and Economics*; *International Insolvency Review*; *International Journal of Marine and Coastal Law*; *Journal of Competition Law & Economics*; *Journal of Legal Medicine*; *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*; *Journal of the Copyright Society of the USA*; *Journal of World Energy Law and Business*; *Legal and Criminological Psychology*; *Medical Law Review*; *Medicine, Science, and the Law*; *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights*; *Ocean Development & International Law*; *Psychiatry, Psychology, and Law*; *Psychology, Crime & Law*; and *Queen Mary Journal of Intellectual Property*.
8. Since this survey was sent to members of the Law and Courts Section of the APSA, who receive *Journal of Law and Courts* as part of their membership, it should not be surprising that this journal is so familiar to respondents. It is important to remember, however, that the impact ranking is calculated as a function of both familiarity with a journal and the evaluation of the quality of the articles published in a journal. *Journal of Law and Courts* ranks ninth in terms of journal evaluation, higher than all but three of the top 10 journals rated in terms of their impact reported in table 1.
9. Journals that did not appear on the survey, but were written in by survey respondents, are excluded from the tables since they are unlikely to score high on familiarity owing to their absence on the survey. The rankings of these journals are included in appendix table 1, found in the supplementary materials. Note that several of these journals are not peer-reviewed (e.g., *Yale Law Journal*), others are general political science journals (e.g., *Journal of Politics*), and others are subfield journals outside of law (e.g., *Political Theory*).
10. There are a variety of reasons why one might choose to publish in general political science journals instead of peer-reviewed law journals (or other subfield journals). First, by publishing in general political science journals, one can reach a broader audience than would be expected with subfield journals. For example, the *American Political Science Review* is sent out to all members of the APSA. Second, publications in general journals may bring added prestige to a research record, since they are recognized by a broader cross section of the discipline and thus may increase a researcher's standing in the discipline beyond a specific subfield. Third, publications in general political science journals might be required of scholars in order to obtain tenure at some institutions (Rothgeb and Burger 2009). Publishing in subfield journals also has its benefits. For example, these journals tend to be read and cited by specialists in the subfield, thus allowing a researcher to speak to an audience of subject-matter experts. Moreover, publications in subfield journals are particularly important for building a positive tenure case (Rothgeb and Burger 2009). Further, publishing in interdisciplinary law journals has the added benefit of speaking to a diverse array of scholars from outside of the discipline of political science.
11. In addition to methodological differences, I considered exploring subfield differences. However, because 80% of survey respondents indicated that the primary focus of their research was American law, there is not sufficient variation to make meaningful comparisons.
12. Following Garand and Giles (2003), respondents were given the option of selecting up to two of the following methodological approaches that best describe their research: quantitative, qualitative, normative theory, formal theory, and other. No respondents identified themselves as solely conducting formal theory research and only 7 respondents identified themselves as conducting normative theory research. Thus, there is not enough variation to make meaningful comparisons with these groups. However, they are included in the total category. For the purposes of table 6, quantitative researchers are those who identified themselves as conducting only quantitative research ($N = 68$) and qualitative researchers are those who identified themselves as conducting only qualitative research ($N = 51$). The mixed-methods category includes those who indicated that they conduct quantitative and qualitative research, as well as those who indicated they do "other" research and wrote in mixed-methods ($N = 40$).
13. Since only mixed-methods scholars ranked the *European Journal of Migration and Law*, it is impossible to conduct an F-test across the groups for this journal.

REFERENCES

- American Psychological Association. 2016. "Law and Human Behavior." <http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/lhb/>.
- Arena, Phil. 2014. "Ranking IR Journals." <http://duckofminerva.com/2014/01/ranking-ir-journals.html>.
- Colgan, Jeff D. 2016. "Where is International Relations Going? Evidence From Graduate Training." *International Studies Quarterly* 60 (3): 486–98.

- Crawford, Scott D., Mick P. Couper, and Mark J. Lamias. 2001. "Web Surveys: Perceptions of Burden." *Social Science Computer Review* 19 (2): 146–62.
- Cross, Frank B. 1997. "Political Science and the New Legal Realism: A Case of Unfortunate Interdisciplinary Ignorance." *Northwestern University Law Review* 92 (1): 251–326.
- Cullen, Colleen M., and Randall S. Kalberg. 1995. "Chicago-Kent Law Review Faculty Scholarship Survey." *Chicago-Kent Law Review* 70 (3): 1445–60.
- Doyle, John. 2004. "Ranking Legal Periodicals and Some Other Numeric Uses of the Westlaw and Lexis Periodical Databases." *Legal Reference Services Quarterly* 23 (2-3): 1–53.
- Duke Law Center for Judicial Studies. 2016. "Judicature." <https://law.duke.edu/judicature/>.
- Eisenberg, Theodore, and Martin T. Wells. 2014. "Ranking Law Journals and the Limits of Journal Citation Reports." *Economic Inquiry* 52 (4): 1301–14.
- Epstein, Lee, and Gary King. 2002. "The Rules of Inference." *University of Chicago Law Review* 69 (1): 1–33.
- Felstiner, William L. F., Richard L. Abel, and Austin Sarat. 1981. "The Emergence and Transformation of Disputes: Naming, Blaming, Claiming..." *Law & Society Review* 15 (3/4): 631–54.
- Friedman, Lawrence M. 1998. "Law Reviews and Legal Scholarship: Some Comments." *Denver University Law Review* 75 (2): 661–68.
- Galanter, Marc. 1974. "Why the 'Haves' Come Out Ahead: Speculations on the Limits of Legal Change." *Law & Society Review* 9 (1): 95–160.
- Garand, James C., and Micheal W. Giles. 2003. "Journals in the Discipline: A Report on a New Survey of American Political Scientists." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 36 (2): 293–308.
- Garand, James C., Micheal W. Giles, Andre Blais, and Iain McLean. 2009. "Political Science Journals in Comparative Perspective: Evaluating Scholarly Journals in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 42 (4): 695–717.
- Giles, Micheal W., and James C. Garand. 2007. "Ranking Political Science Journals: Reputational and Citational Approaches." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 40 (4): 741–51.
- Giles, Micheal W., and Gerald C. Wright. 1975. "Political Scientists' Evaluations of Sixty-Three Journals." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 8 (3): 254–56.
- Jacobs, Jerry A. 2016. "Journal Rankings in Sociology: Using the H Index with Google Scholar." *The American Sociologist* 47 (2): 192–224.
- Maliniak, Daniel, Susan Peterson, and Michael J. Tierney. 2012. "TRIP Around the World: Teaching, Research, and Policy Views of International Relations Faculty in 20 Countries." http://www.wm.edu/offices/itpir/_documents/trip/trip_around_the_world_2011.pdf.
- Marshall, Bryan W., and John M. Rothgeb, Jr. 2011. "So You Want Tenure? Factors Affecting Tenure Decisions in Political Science Departments." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44 (3): 571–77.
- Martinek, Wendy L. 2011. "Report of the Professional Committee of the Law and Courts Section." *Law & Courts* 21 (3): 25–33.
- McCormack, Nancy. 2009. "Peer Review and Legal Publishing: What Law Librarians Need to Know About Open, Single-Blind, and Double-Blind Reviewing." *Law Library Journal* 101 (1): 59–70.
- McLean, Iain, Andre Blais, James C. Garand, and Micheal Giles. 2009. "Comparative Journal Rankings: A Survey Report." *Political Studies Review* 7 (1): 18–38.
- Newton, Brent E. 2012. "Law Review Scholarship in the Eyes of the Twenty-First Century Supreme Court Justices: An Empirical Analysis." *Drexel Law Review* 4 (2): 399–416.
- Rogelberg, Steven G., and Jeffrey M. Stanton. 2007. "Understanding and Dealing with Organizational Survey Nonresponse." *Organizational Research Methods* 10 (2): 195–209.
- Rothgeb, John M., and Betsy Burger. 2009. "Tenure Standards in Political Science Departments: Results from a Survey of Department Chairs." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 42 (3): 513–19.
- Shapiro, Fred R. 2000. "The Most-Cited Law Reviews." *Journal of Legal Studies* 29 (1): 389–96.
- Stoan, Stephen K. 1984. "Research and Library Skills: An Analysis and Interpretation." *College & Research Libraries* 45 (2): 99–109.
- Whicker, Marcia Lynn, Jennie Jacobs Kronenfeld, and Ruth Ann Strickland. 1993. *Getting Tenure*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Woods, Patrick Arthur. 2014. "Stop Counting (Or At Least Count Better)." Presented at the Jotwell 2014 Conference, Coral Gables, Florida. <http://jotwell.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Woods-Stop-Counting.pdf>.
- Wuffle, A. 1989. "Uncle Wuffle's Advice to the Advanced Graduate Student." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 22 (4): 838–39.
- Zorn, Christopher. 2006. "Peer Review Redux." http://www.elsblog.org/the_empirical_legal_studi/2006/08/peer_review_red.html.