# Note from the Editors: Post-Publication Critiques

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This issue of *Perspectives on Politics* presents five special sections featuring a range of perspectives and methodologies advancing critical knowledge and understanding of pressing topics in political science. Leading the issue, "War and Noncombatants" turns a spotlight on civilians, humanitarian organizations, activists, displaced persons, and even animals, considering the politics through which armed conflict shapes their experiences and how they, in turn, shape the contours of armed conflict. "Countering Inequality" explores the roles of institutions and individual political behavior in reducing different types of inequality based on race, ethnicity, and territorial representation. "Ideology" considers cases as diverse as Iranian insurgents and antitrust reform to investigate how ideas spread, change, and affect politics, as well as how we can know that they do. "How Size and Boundaries Matter for Politics" illustrates the value of spatial approaches to politics at the international, subnational, and local levels in order to track how scope, scale, and borders affect a range of outcomes of interest. Finally, "Sharpening Scholarly Appraisals" offers a selection of reflections on a core question of research methods: how analysts approach and evaluate both the data that we use in research and the quality of research itself. Together, these special sections cut across subfields to take on big questions about political actors, interactions, institutions, ideas, and geography, as well as our evaluation of knowledge on these and other topics.

## *Perspectives'* Policy on Post-Publication Critiques

We now shift from the contents of this issue to an important component of journal policy development that we are eager to share with readers of *Perspectives* and with the discipline at large. Authors advance knowledge through many forms of scholarship, including books and articles that engage and debate prior research. Sometimes, however, progress requires formal scrutiny of a specific article after publication. Journals have a responsibility to correct the scholarly record when errors are discovered in work that they have published and to take appropriate measures when ethical concerns are identified in the research underlying published articles. One way such concerns are expressed is through formal post-publication critiques submitted to the journal for editorial consideration and possible publication (hereafter PPCs).

*Perspectives on Politics* welcomes PPCs that generate constructive, scholarly discussion about work in its pages. We give utmost consideration to all concerns raised in PPCs and will correct the record when warranted. Publication, however, is reserved for PPCs that make a significant, independent contribution to a scholarly debate. In the remainder of this Editorial Note, we summarize the goals and principles of our PPC policy and outline what authors—both those submitting PPCs and those whose work is the subject of critique—can expect from this process.

## Goals and Principles

*Perspectives* seeks to publish scholarship of the highest quality and to promote constructive discussion that advances knowledge in the discipline. PPCs are one way the journal supports that mission: they can deepen substantive and methodological debates, clarify points of disagreement, and—when warranted—help strengthen the integrity of the published record by bringing to light potential errors or ethical concerns.

In addition to these aims, fairness to all parties is essential, both to authors whose work is being critiqued and to authors who raise well-founded concerns. This requires professional and respectful engagement, a meaningful opportunity for the authors of the original work to respond, and appropriate recognition of PPC authors' contributions.

We developed our PPC policy with these goals and principles in mind, and in accordance with guidance from the Committee on Publication Ethics (https://publicationethics.org). In what follows, we outline the scope of PPCs that *Perspectives* will consider, the criteria by which our editorial team evaluates them, and the process we follow.

## Scope and Expectations

PPCs may address concerns about the reliability of a work published in *Perspectives* regarding its research design or

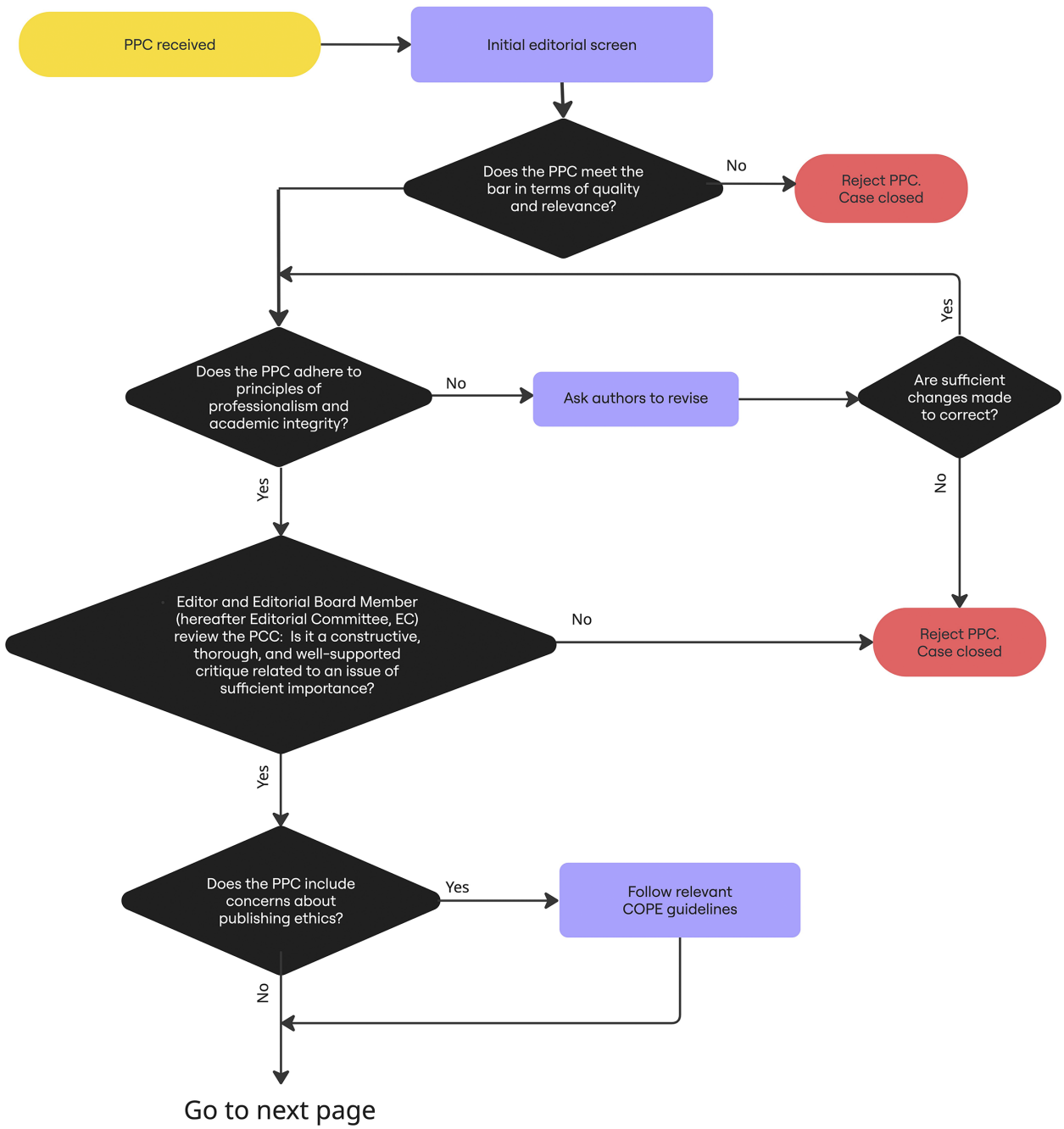
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analyses, research ethics, or other considerations about the validity of published research (PPCs may also raise concerns about the publication process. Following the Committee on Publication Ethics' (COPE) guidelines, issues related to publishing ethics must be addressed in specific ways, depending on the nature of the issue. Hence, we do not discuss such cases here (see COPE Council, 2021. COPE Flowcharts and infographics — Handling of post-publication critiques — English. Committee on Publication Ethics (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0), https://doi.org/10.24318/o1VgCAih, publicationethics.org). To be considered for publication, PPCs must clearly articulate the concerns they raise, provide evidentiary support for all claims, and compellingly explain the implications of further dialogue for the field.

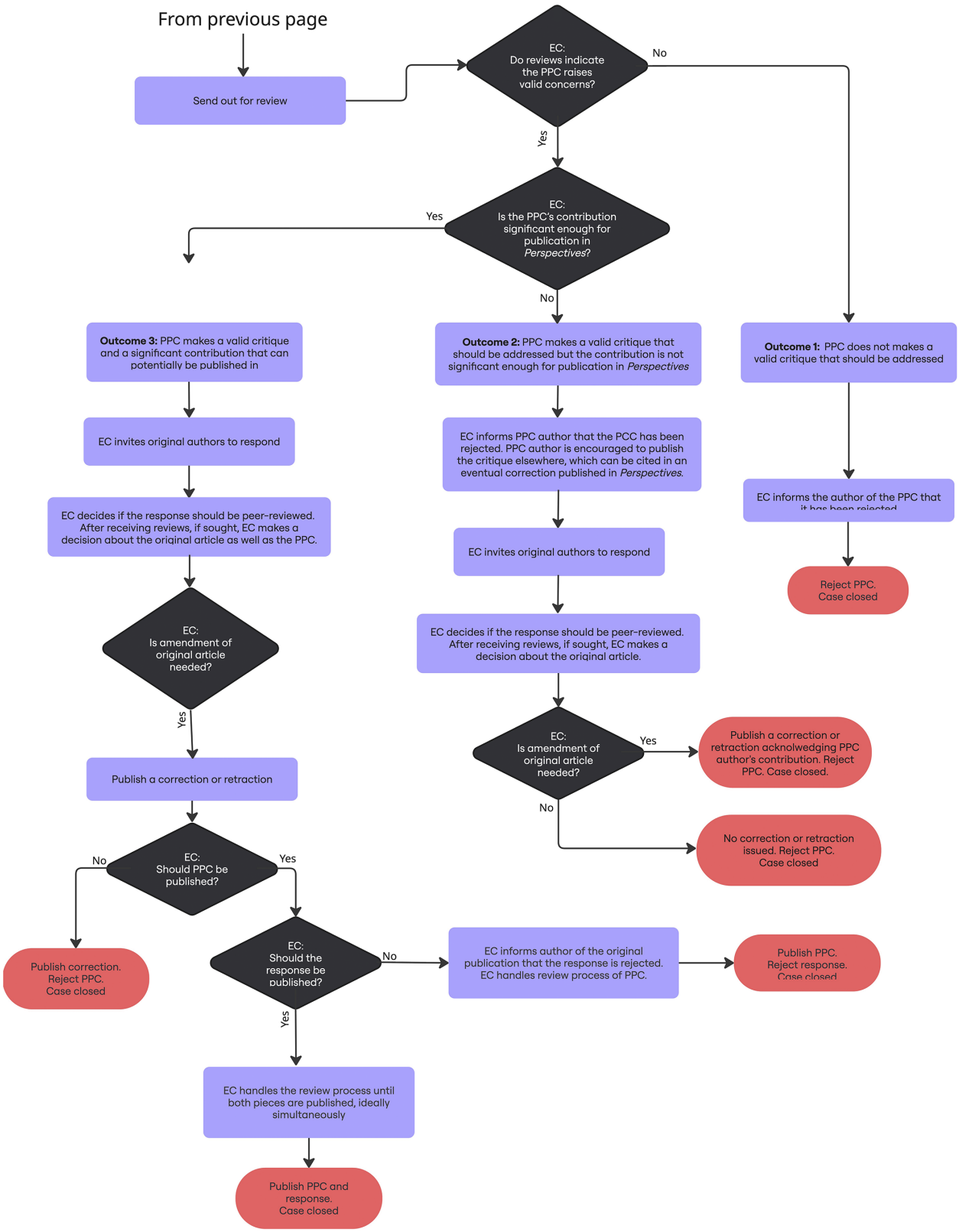
**Image 1**






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**Image 2**






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Submissions should adhere to standards of professional and respectful engagement with the work under critique.

Importantly, *Perspectives* publishes PPCs only when they present a valid critique *and* also make a significant, independent contribution to debates in our discipline. While not all critiques of published articles are thus suitable to become publications in their own right, we strongly encourage readers to alert us to errors or other concerns that they encounter in work we have published, whether or not those concerns warrant publication as a PPC. The editorial team reviews all such concerns and, when appropriate, may pursue a correction or retraction. For a PPC submission, by contrast, authors must not simply identify an error, but also explain its broader implications for scholarship.

In keeping with our commitment to fairness, we believe that authors of valid PPCs should receive appropriate recognition for their contributions. Accordingly, when a correction or retraction results from a valid PPC, the published notice will formally acknowledge the contribution of the PPC authors, even if the PPC was not accepted for publication. When a PPC is valid but not of sufficient significance to publish, we will notify the PPC author and encourage them to post the critique as a working paper or seek publication in a venue specializing in post-publication commentary (such as *Replication Research* at https://www.uni-muenster.de/Ejournals/index.php/replicationresearch/index). In such cases, we will encourage the PPC author to pursue such options before the appearance of the correction to or retraction of the original article so that the posted critique can be cited in the notice of that correction or retraction.

## Process

PPCs undergo an editorial review designed to ensure rigor, fairness, and, when needed, timely correction of the scholarly record. The flowchart accompanying our policy, which we include below, illustrates typical steps, though particular cases may vary.

First, the editorial team screens submissions for relevance, quality, and professional tone. Based on that review, we may request revisions to remove inappropriate or unsubstantiated material. If a PPC clears this initial screen, an editorial committee that includes an editorial board member assesses whether the paper raises a valid critique and whether it warrants further consideration. Suitable submissions may be sent out for external peer review. After receiving and assessing reviewer reports, the committee reaches one of three decisions: (1) reject the PPC because it neither raises a concern that warrants correction (or retraction) nor meets the journal's threshold for publication; (2) deem it valid but decline to publish it (e.g., because the concern is too narrow or the PPC does not make an independent scholarly contribution), in which case we share it with the authors of the original article and request a response; or (3) proceed toward possible publication, in which case we also share the PPC with the authors of the original article and invite a response. When the third decision is reached, the response may be reviewed and revised, and the journal may publish the PPC with a response, publish the PPC without a response, or decide not to publish either the PPC or the response. When both the PPC and the response are deemed to merit publication, we aim to publish them together.

Concerns raised through PPCs may also lead the journal to consider corrections or retractions. Serious integrity issues are handled in consultation with the *Perspectives* Editorial Board Ethics Committee.

## Conclusion

As a community of scholars, we share a common goal: to advance knowledge. Engaging seriously with one another's work can help us achieve this goal. When concerns arise, they warrant careful investigation and—when confirmed—correction of the record. We also share the need for respectful engagement with our research. We ask authors, reviewers, and readers to pursue this work with rigor and kindness. PPCs are one way in which *Perspectives on Politics* supports that shared responsibility.



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# Statement of Mission and Procedures

*Perspectives on Politics* seeks to provide a space for broad and synthetic discussion within the political science profession and between the profession and the broader scholarly and reading publics. Such discussion necessarily draws on and contributes to the scholarship published in the more specialized journals that dominate our discipline. At the same time, *Perspectives* seeks to promote a complementary form of broad public discussion and synergistic understanding within the profession that is essential to advancing scholarship and promoting academic community.

*Perspectives* seeks to nurture a **political science public sphere**, publicizing important scholarly topics, ideas, and innovations, linking scholarly authors and readers, and promoting broad reflexive discussion among political scientists about the work that we do and why this work matters.

*Perspectives* publishes work in a number of formats that mirror the ways that political scientists actually write:

Research articles: As a top-tier journal of political science, Perspectives accepts scholarly research article submissions and publishes the very best submissions that make it through our double-anonymous system of peer review and revision. The only thing that differentiates *Perspectives* research articles from other peer-reviewed articles at top journals is that we focus our attention only on work that in some way bridges subfield and methodological divides, and tries to address a broad readership of political scientists about matters of consequence. This typically means that the excellent articles we publish have been extensively revised in sustained dialogue with the editors to address not simply questions of scholarship but questions of intellectual breadth and readability.

Reflections: Contemplative, provocative, or programmatic essays that address important political science questions and controversies in interesting ways. Authors might offer short, sharp commentaries on political phenomena or policy issues; engage with scholarly arguments to highlight disagreements; put forth new perspectives, concepts, methods, research agendas, or descriptive analyses; or provide insightful discussion on important topics within politics and political science. Although the expectations differ from original research articles, reflections submissions are subjected to the same anonymous review process as original research articles and reflections that include empirical analysis are expected to explain their data and methods. In some cases, our editorial team may suggest that original research article submissions be revised into reflections.

Scholarly symposia, critical book dialogues, book review essays, and conventional book reviews are developed and commissioned by the Book Review Editors, based on authorial queries and ideas, editorial board suggestions, and staff conversations.

*Everything* published in *Perspectives* is carefully vetted and edited. Given our distinctive mission, we work hard to use our range of formats to organize interesting conversations about important issues and events, and to call attention to certain broad themes beyond our profession's normal subfield categories.

For further details on writing formats and submission guidelines, see our website at https://apsanet.org/publications/journals/perspectives-on-politics/.

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