Politics and the Life Sciences (2025), 44: 1, 1–4
doi:10.1017/pls.2025.4

INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Issue and Review of Volume 43

Gregg R. Murray

Department of Social Sciences, Augusta University, Augusta, GA, USA
Email: gmurray@augusta.edu

The *Politics and the Life Sciences* (*PLS*) editorial team is pleased to present Issue 1 of Volume 44 of *PLS*. This issue offers a wide range of articles covering topics such as biological weapons, belief psychology and mechanisms, bioethics, biomedical research, and the dynamics of misinformation. Two articles focus on the Biological Weapons Convention, with Shearer et al. (2025) discussing confidence building in the convention and Sundelson et al. (2025) examining attempts to undermine it. In a study funded in part by an Association for Politics and the Life Sciences research grant, Pisl et al. (2025) explore the link between acute stress and belief in conspiracy theories. Balas and co-authors (2025) address the challenges facing biomedical research productivity, with implications for research quality and reproducibility. Von Mohr et al. (2025) investigate the role of dogmatism in the association between trust and political leader selection. Two more articles investigate biological mechanisms and political attitudes with Jungkunz and Marx (2025) discussing moderators of genetic predispositions towards political interest and Bruce et al. (2025) assessing how brain activations linked to political partisanship can vary based on food purchases. The issue also includes an argument by Gurcan (2025) regarding ethical considerations surrounding the use of genetics in reproductive choices. Finally, the letter from Simeone et al. (2025) applies principles of evolutionary biology to analyze the spread of misinformation.

Thank you to all the contributors and reviewers for their efforts on both issues in 2024. We extend our deepest gratitude to all contributors who entrusted us with their hard work. We also thank the reviewers who devoted substantial time and energy to providing guidance on manuscripts. These colleagues not only advised the editorial team but also provided constructive comments to authors. Their expertise and encouragement were invaluable in enhancing the insightfulness and significance of the research submitted to *PLS*. The editorial team sincerely thanks the 50 scholars appearing in Table 1, who provided peer reviews in 2024:

As Table 1 shows, a notable number of *PLS* Editorial Board members provided reviews of manuscripts in 2024. We are privileged to have an Editorial Board that contributes so significantly to the journal. Thank you, Editorial Board. We especially extend our thanks to the following colleagues whose terms on the Editorial Board concluded in 2024: Robert Gilbert, Kobi Leins, and Janna Merrick. We deeply appreciate their support and advice, which will be sorely missed. Conversely, we are pleased to welcome six new members to the Editorial Board, each beginning a three-year term: Craig Albert from Augusta University, specializing in biosecurity; Bert Bakker from the University of Amsterdam, specializing in political psychology; Mitch Brown from the University of Arkansas, specializing in evolutionary psychology; Adam Feltz from the University of Oklahoma, specializing in applied ethics; Gijs Schumacher from the University of Amsterdam, specializing in political psychology; and Cat Worsnop from the University of Maryland-College Park, specializing in global health. We look forward to collaborating with these distinguished scholars. For more information on the Editorial Board, please visit the journal's Cambridge Core website at https://cambridge.org/pls under Journal Information.

In 2024, *PLS* completed its 43rd year of publication. Scholars submitted original manuscripts from 19 countries across five regions: Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, and South America. Thirty-six percent were from corresponding authors at U.S. institutions, while 34 percent were from European

© The Author(s), 2025. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Association for Politics and the Life Sciences.

https://doi.org/10.1017/pls.2025.4 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Table 1. 2024 reviewers

Kevin Arceneaux*	Benjamin Gregg*	Matthew Motta
Melissa Baker	Lance Hunter	Hannah Nam
Andrew Balas*	Lauri Hyers	Adam Panish
Robert Blank*	Monique Johnson	Niklas Potrafke
William Brandon*	Seyoung Jung	Marjorie Prokosch
Erik Bucy*	Zachary Kallenborn	Jonah Ralston
Barry Burden	Kristyn Karl	Isabella Rebasso
Joshua Byun	Mary Kelaita	David Redlawsk*
Abigail Cassario	Casey Klofstad*	Gijs Schumacher
Paul Djupe	Margaret Kosal*	Jaime Settle*
Fatih Erol	Aleksander Ksiazkiewicz	Patricia Shaw
Rubie Eubanks	Lasse Laustsen	Kevin Smith*
Colin Farrelly	Kobi Leins*	Patrick Stewart*
Adam Feltz	Aaron Levine*	Kathleen Vogel*
Amanda Friesen	Levente Littvay	Matthew Walsh
Frank Gonzalez	Krissy Lunz Trujillo	Aaron Weinschenk*
Claire Gothreau	Samantha Mosier	

*PLS Editorial Board Member

Table 2. Downloads and CiteScore results

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Downloads (Cambridge, JSTOR, ProQuest)	–	–	61,468	63,295	86,648	106,888	101,562	98,949	107,152
CiteScore	0.8	0.8	1.0	0.7	1.1	1.7	2.1	2.5	3.4*
Category Rank Percentile									
Sociology & Political Science	46	47	53	45	53	64	67	68	–
Social Sciences	30	37	43	37	48	64	68	71	–
Public Admininstration	31	30	36	26	34	49	52	51	–

SOURCE CiteScore: https://www.scopus.com/sourceid/23442;* most recent data—data not available yet

institutions. The editorial team reduced the average time to the first decision on manuscripts to 39 days, a decrease of about six days from 2023. The journal accepted 29 percent of all submissions, but acceptance rates varied by the type of manuscript. Notably, the acceptance rates for Research Articles and Research Notes were lower. Among the accepted Research Articles and Research Notes, 80 percent were published as Open Access at no additional cost to the authors, and 60 percent received an open science badge, recognizing open science practices for open data, open materials, and/or pre-registration.

Table 2 indicates a sustained increase in the visibility and impact of *PLS* in 2024. The cumulative downloads from Cambridge Core, JSTOR, and ProQuest surpassed 107,000 for the year, continuing a trend of approximately 100,000 downloads annually since 2021. This represents a significant rise from approximately 60,000 downloads recorded in both 2018 and 2019. Notably, these numbers exclude downloads from EBSCO and BioOne, suggesting that the actual total may be substantially higher.

https://doi.org/10.1017/pls.2025.4 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Table 3. Ten most cited articles since 2020

Rank	Authors	Title	Cites
1	Albert et al. (2021)	"Human security as biosecurity: Reconceptualizing national security threats in the time of COVID–19″	80
2	Chen et al. (2022)	"Twitter as research data: Tools, costs, skill sets, and lessons learned"	60
3	Ploger et al. (2021)	"The psychophysiological correlates of cognitive dissonance"	27
4	Masch et al. (2021)	"Can a beautiful smile win the vote?: The role of candidates' physical attractiveness and facial expressions in elections"	27
5	Bakker et al. (2020)	"Yikes! Are we disgusted by politicians?"	27
6	Vanaman & Chapman (2020)	"Disgust and disgust-driven moral concerns predict support for restrictions on transgender bathroom access"	26
7	Zmigrod (2021)	"A neurocognitive model of ideological thinking"	25
8	Kosal & Putney (2023)	"Neurotechnology and international security: Predicting commercial and military adoption of brain-computer interfaces (BCIs) in the United States and China"	24
9	Li & Qian (2022)	"Polarization of public trust in scientists between 1978 and 2018: Insights from a cross-decade comparison using interpretable machine learning"	24
10	McDermott (2022)	"Breaking free: How preregistration hurts scholars and science"	23

Source: Google Scholar

Table 2 also presents the journal's CiteScore, a citation-based metric derived from Scopus data, which continued to rise in 2024, reaching 3.4. This rise underscores the journal's growing academic influence but also reflects its enhanced standing within its peer groups, as evidenced by increasing category ranks.

Table 3 reports the 10 most cited articles published in *PLS* since 2020, according to Google Scholar. Once again, it is fair to say that "PLS articles are noticed and cited."

I want to especially thank Associate Editor Mike Grillo, Associate Editor for Letters Asheley Lundrum, and Associate Editor for Methods and Replication Rubie Eubanks. The contributions of Mike, Asheley, and Rubie are vital to the journal. Their expertise and diligent efforts ensure the high quality and integrity of our publication process and, ultimately, the journal's success. I deeply appreciate their dedication and hard work. Thank you, Mike, Asheley, and Rubie.

Lastly, the success of *PLS* is made possible by the generous support and goodwill of multiple partners. Beyond our contributors, reviewers, and Editorial Board, we wish to express our gratitude to Cambridge University Press, our publisher, and the Association for Politics and the Life Sciences, our scholarly home. Their support of *PLS* and the broader scientific community is unwavering and appreciated.

AI Disclosure. The author conceptualized this manuscript and prepared an initial draft using Microsoft Word, refined the manuscript with the aid of AI and AI-assisted technologies (i.e., ChatGPT, notebooklm.com, and Grammarly), then further edited the manuscript to reflect the author's intended message. The author acknowledges and assumes responsibility for all errors and omissions.

References

Albert, C., Baez, A., & Rutland, J. (2021). Human security as biosecurity: Reconceptualizing national security threats in the time of COVID-19. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, **40**(1), 83–105.

Balas, E. A., De Leo, G., & Shaw, K. B. (2025). Strategic policy options to improve quality and productivity of biomedical research. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, **44**(1), 108–119.

Bakker, B. N., Schumacher, G., & Homan, M. D. (2020). Yikes! Are we disgusted by politicians?. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, **39**(2), 135–153.

Bruce, A., Crespi, J., Hayes, D., Lagoudakis, A., Lusk, J., Schreiber, D., Wu, Q. (2025). Differential brain activations between Democrats and Republicans when considering food purchases, **44**(1), 60–76.

https://doi.org/10.1017/pls.2025.4 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Chen, K., Duan, Z., & Yang, S. (2022). Twitter as research data: Tools, costs, skill sets, and lessons learned. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, **41**(1), 114–130.

Gurcan, O. (2025). Moral equality and reprogenetic autonomy in the genomic era. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, **41**(1), 1–19.

Jungkunz, S., & Marx, P. (2025). *Parental income moderates the influence of genetic dispositions on political interest in adolescents*, **41**(1).

Kosal, M., & Putney, J. (2023). Neurotechnology and international security: Predicting commercial and military adoption of brain-computer interfaces (BCIs) in the United States and China. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, **42**(1), 81–103.

Li, N., & Qian, Y. (2022). Polarization of public trust in scientists between 1978 and 2018: Insights from a cross-decade comparison using interpretable machine learning. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, **41**(1), 45–54.

Masch, L., Gassner, A., & Rosar, U. (2021). Can a beautiful smile win the vote?: The role of candidates' physical attractiveness and facial expressions in elections. *Politics and the life sciences*, **40**(2), 213–223.

McDermott, R. (2022). Breaking free: How preregistration hurts scholars and science. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, **41**(1), 55–59.

Pisl, V., Nefes, T., Simsa, B., Kestlerova, D., Kubíček, P., Linka, V., … & Vevera, J. (2025). The effect of acute stress response on conspiracy theory beliefs. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, **41**(1), 1–11.

Ploger, G. W., Dunaway, J., Fournier, P., & Soroka, S. (2021). The psychophysiological correlates of cognitive dissonance. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, **40**(2), 202–212.

Shearer, M., Potter, C., Vahey, R., Munves, N., & Gronvall, G. (2025). BWC confidence-building measures: Increasing BWC assurance through transparency & information sharing. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, **44**(1), 5–27.

Simeone, M., Roschke, K., & Walker, S. (2025). Evolutionary biology as a frontier for research on misinformation. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, **44**(1), 139–141.

Sundelson, A., Kwik Gronvall, G., Ackerman, G., Limaye, R., Watson, C., & Sell, T. (2025). *Diplomacy disrupted: A mixed-methods analysis of Russian disinformation at the ninth review conference of the biological and toxin weapons convention*, **44**(1), 28–48.

Vanaman, M. E., & Chapman, H. A. (2020). Disgust and disgust-driven moral concerns predict support for restrictions on transgender bathroom access. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, **39**(2), 200–214.

von Mohr, M., Hackenburg, K., Tanzer, M., Fotopoulou, A., Campbell, C., & Tsakiris, M. (2025). A leader I can (not) trust: Understanding the path from epistemic trust to political leader choices via dogmatism. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, **44**(1), 88–107.

Zmigrod, L. (2021). A neurocognitive model of ideological thinking. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, **40**(2), 224–238.

Cite this article: Murray, G. R. (2025). Introduction to the Issue and Review of Volume 43. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, **44**, 1–4. https://doi.org/10.1017/pls.2025.4

https://doi.org/10.1017/pls.2025.4 Published online by Cambridge University Press