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EDITORS' NOTE

Law & Society REVIEW

From the Editors

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We are humbled and excited to be co-editors of *Law & Society Review* (*LSR*) for the next 3 years. We thank outgoing editor Rebecca Sandefur for all her hard work and for steering the journal in a positive direction, particularly during such a tumultuous period globally. We also thank the previous editorial board and editorial advisory board members. Finally, we welcome the new members of the editorial advisory board and thank them for their service.

This editors' note will introduce us, explain our vision, describe our policies and procedures for operating the journal, and offer advice and perspectives on best practices for a successful experience submitting to *LSR*. The goal of our note is to open a conversation that we hope will continue during our tenure as the journal's co-editors.

OUR EDITORIAL TEAM AND OUR VISION

We each see ourselves as law and society scholars with a firm grasp of classic law and society scholarship as well as a strong sense of how the field is evolving as it matures, expands, and brings in new people and new areas of interest. Together, our areas of expertise represent a range of traditional areas of law and society excellence as well as areas for potential expansion for the field. Our multiple disciplinary identities also reflect some of the largest disciplines within law and society, including political science, sociology, law, history, and criminology. Notably, our areas of expertise span the civil–criminal justice and the domestic–international realms that characterize law and society today. Moreover, as theoretically motivated and empirically inclined scholars, our methodological expertise covers both qualitative and quantitative approaches (as well as mixed methods). Thus, we feel we have both the breadth and depth of knowledge to absorb the range of submissions that *LSR* receives.

We take seriously *LSR*'s role as the flagship journal of the Law and Society Association (LSA). This recognition means we expect *LSR* to publish high-quality articles of interest and utility to LSA members. We also see *LSR* as one of the primary venues in which LSA members may aspire to publish. To this end, we see our duties as helping to curate the best articles and provide advice on how to be published in *LSR*. In this way, we carry on the traditions set by past editors and editorial teams.

While we wish to continue these important traditions, we also seek to grow the journal, as editors before us have done. Thus, our goal does not stop at publishing articles written and read by law and society scholars. Like previous editors, we are also interested in growing the journal's visibility, impact factor, and practical reach and in growing the field of law and society as represented in *LSR*.

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This means bringing in new people and new topics, including those that we have historically excluded, overlooked, or otherwise underrepresented. We are especially interested in including scholars who study disability; public health; the environment and sustainability; Indigenous peoples and colonialism; business areas like finance, consumer law and insurance law; physical senses; emotions; place; and social media and other technologies. We welcome those scholars who use exciting new or growing methodologies from machine learning to participatory action research. We encourage submissions from law and society scholars in the Global South and other underrepresented international communities. More generally, we are interested in discussing and identifying ways to bring more people into law and society as a field.

We understand that law and society as a field of knowledge and activity is (always) in flux; consequently, what law and society means changes as new areas join classic concerns and new voices are welcomed into the community. Our goal is that the journal reflects and helps to lead the field's expansion, while retaining the many characteristics that made *LSR* great in the first place. In sum, we agree with law and society scholar Sida Liu (Savelsberg et al., 2016, p. 1024) that "the mission of a premier journal in an academic field is not only to publish research that presents new data on old questions or long-standing debates, but also to publish innovative work that sets theoretical agendas and has the potential of shaping future directions of the field, with or without the complement of empirical data." Our new and continued policies reflect this commitment.

As editors, we see our role as facilitators or shepherds. We are interested in facilitating conversations about where the field is going and what considerations we all should keep in mind as the field grows and expands. We seek to blend our vision for the journal with the needs and expectations of LSA's membership. We do not seek to single handedly impose our own vision of what the field should look like, but to work together with the field and LSA leadership to shepherd through a collective vision.

Along these lines, we are also interested in opportunities to work more closely with cognate journals like *Law and Social Inquiry*; *Studies in Law, Politics, and Society*; *Law and Policy*; *Law and History Review*; *Political and Legal Anthropology Review*; *Law, Culture, and Humanities*; *Punishment and Society*; and law and society journals from other countries and regions, including the *Asian Law and Society Journal*, *Canadian Journal of Law and Society*, *Journal of Law and Society*, *Social and Legal Studies*, and others.

NEW POLICIES AND PRACTICES WE'VE CONTINUED, REVITALIZED, ITERATED, INTRODUCED, OR PLAN TO INTRODUCE

Expanding what types of articles we publish

Recently, there has been debate in the field about whether *LSR* should continue to require that articles are both empirically and theoretically savvy by both employing strong empirical methods and making theoretical contributions (e.g., Savelsberg et al., 2016). We feel strongly that, reflecting LSA's "big tent" character, we should welcome a greater diversity of high-quality articles that speak to a broad law and society audience. To this end, we no longer require articles to contain empirical portions. Although we anticipate the journal continuing to prioritize theoretically informed empirical research, we are also interested in receiving well-written, well-organized purely theoretical pieces (such as those that engage in secondary analysis of the extant literature) that make strong contributions to law and society scholarship.

Special issues

We are not accepting unsolicited proposals for special issues. Instead, we are issuing two calls for proposals for special issues; one has already gone out in March 2023 and one more will go out in

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October 2023. In addition, we have invited guest editors to organize special issues on topics we feel are especially important and would like to see covered. We have recently issued the call for papers in our first such invited special issue on Empirical Critical Race Theory, edited by Osagie Obasogie and Mario Barnes. Notably, all special issues will include an open call for papers to ensure the broadest opportunity for involvement.

The reject and resubmit

We have revitalized the use of the reject and resubmit as an option for newly submitted manuscripts. We use this option when a manuscript is promising, but not quite ready for peer review. Papers that receive a reject and resubmit are topically a good fit for the journal, but lack some essential component, such as the framing of the manuscript (most common), the formatting of the manuscript (e.g., if it still looks like a law review rather than a social science paper), or the writing needs more work. These are papers that, as written, are likely to be rejected upon peer review, but that, we believe, could receive an invitation to revise and resubmit if authors fix certain aspects of the manuscript before peer review. In general, we do not send a manuscript out for review unless we believe it has a reasonable chance of receiving an invitation to revise and resubmit (i.e., we will not send a manuscript out that we believe has little or no chance of receiving such an outcome). In doing so, we wish to respect our reviewers' and authors' time by only sending out manuscripts that are ready for review.

We intend the reject and resubmit designation as an opportunity, a kind of second chance for authors to put their best foot forward, ultimately, saving them time and energy, increasing their chances of a successful peer review, and leading to a more productive experience with the entire submission process. These papers still may be rejected under the first round of peer review, but we hope that the resulting feedback will be beneficial for these papers. In some cases, of course, an author receiving our reject and resubmit decision may decide the recommended changes are not worthwhile and choose to submit to another journal, which we understand may be preferable.

Office hours

We now offer drop-in "office hours" during which anyone can speak to an editor and ask questions about the process, general advice, or specific guidance on a project. We have already begun holding these sessions and we plan to continue to offer 1-h office hours three times a semester (one session per editor) as well as during LSA's annual meetings. Our goal is to demystify the submission and review process and ultimately help authors submit manuscripts that have a better chance of passing peer review so that we ultimately have more and more high-quality articles available to publish in *LSR*.

Training sessions

We are committed to an educational approach to running the journal. For example, we are committed to explaining what "law and society" is (at least the version(s) we have seen in *LSR* and LSA) to non–law and society scholars so that we can ensure scholars on the margins (geographically or otherwise) who are interested in publishing in *LSR* have the strongest chance of doing so. We are also committed to explaining the publication process to scholars who are unfamiliar with it and to recommend best practices. For example, below, we encourage pre-circulation of papers before submission and offer suggestions on how to best frame a paper for a law and society audience so their papers have the best chance possible upon review.

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We will also hold panels on publishing and the field either at LSA's annual meetings or virtually during the year for LSA members, and other Zoom-based informational or training sessions. We hope to conduct outreach and offer our training to academic communities across the world to inform and educate scholars on best practices for a successful submission process with *LSR*. We plan to run training sessions and give seminars on the publication process to ensure potential authors, whether as members of LSA or beyond, have the best chance possible upon submitting their manuscripts. We welcome invitations to speak to units, centers, departments, and schools where we can reach large audiences, especially groups who have not traditionally published in *LSR* but whose work could/should be published in *LSR*. We also plan to work closely with the LSA's Publications Committee to brainstorm other events and to solicit feedback from LSA members on how else we can support their research, writing, and publication education and training.

ADVICE TO AUTHORS

How it works

When a new manuscript is received, it is first reviewed by our editorial assistants who anonymize the manuscript and perform initial quality checks, including length, plagiarism review, and other assessments. They then pass the manuscript on to an editor for an initial review. The editor determines if the article is topically a good fit, framed adequately, structured properly, and sufficiently proofread. If the manuscript is a good fit for the journal, but fails in some other respect, it receives a rejection with the invitation to resubmit upon fixing the specified issue. If the manuscript passes the initial inspection, it is ready for peer review. The editor and editorial assistant work together to identify possible peer reviewers and the editorial assistants send out the invitations to review the manuscript. Scholars who agree are typically given 4 weeks to read, comment on the manuscript, and offer their recommendation (typically "reject" or "revise and resubmit").

After reviews come in, all three editors read and then discuss each submission at length. During this process, the editors make their own decisions independent of the reviewers; next, we each update our decision based on the reviewers' comments and recommendations; then, we discuss, weighing our own combined assessments and the reviewers' assessments, and we make a final decision. Authors should keep in mind that a reviewer's comments shared with the author do not always match their formal recommendations or their confidential comments to the editors. (Reviewers are offered space for both kinds of comments, but we can only share what they have permitted us to share.) Additionally, the editors rely on reviewers for different kinds of feedback, including subject matter expertise and methodological expertise. At the end of the day, the editors themselves must determine whether the fit and quality of each manuscript matches the standards of the journal. Ultimately, we typically accept around 5%–10% of submitted manuscripts. (Note that acceptances typically follow an additional round of peer review following an invitation to revise and resubmit; few if any manuscripts are accepted upon first review.)

Conduct an internal peer review (circulate) before submission

Otherwise promising articles are often rejected because they simply have too much to overcome for a single round of revision. The way to avoid this outcome is: before submitting your article to *LSR*, pre-circulate your paper to a group of trusted colleagues, friends, and advisors for feedback. In general, papers that have already been vetted by other scholars are more likely to successfully pass peer review as this pre-circulation process often catches fixable problems; addressing such problems before the paper goes out for formal peer review can lead to a more successful outcome.

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Graduate students can ask their advisors, other professors, fellow grad students, or alumni from their program to read their paper and provide advice. Junior faculty can reach out to their new colleagues, former classmates from grad school, and other faculty they meet at conferences (especially LSA). LSA's collaborative research networks can also help facilitate connections with other law and society scholars. Feedback will be most useful from other law and society scholars; as we'll describe below, ensuring that your paper speaks to a broad law and society audience is essential to success, so having at least one law and society scholar assess the manuscript's framing and fit is a good practice. Finally, while feedback from various colleagues can vary, we recommend getting at least three to five sets of comments before submission. These scholars who provide feedback should be thanked in the manuscript's acknowledgments and mentioned in the cover letter sent with the manuscript upon submission.

You can only submit your paper to *LSR* once, so make your shot count!

Cover the basics

Manuscripts submitted to *LSR* should follow the expected format and structure of an *LSR* article. Articles appearing in *LSR* typically begin with an introduction that connects their particular topic or focus to the broader field of sociolegal studies. Introductions are typically followed by a literature review section that situates the research question in a broader sociolegal literature, motivates the study, and clearly articulates how the paper makes an important contribution to that literature. The literature review is typically followed by a data and methods section that details the data used to answer the paper's question, why those data are appropriate, how specific cases or observations were selected, and how the data were systematically analyzed. The level of information provided about the data and methods is rich enough so that any reader knows precisely what the author did and why. The data and methods section is then followed by a results section that describes the findings. Finally, the manuscript closes with a discussion section (or a discussion section and conclusion), which connects the results of the study to the broader literature(s), including at least one literature that will be familiar and interesting to most law and society scholars.

Understand how *LSR* is different from other journals

One of the most common reasons why papers are rejected from *LSR* is the author has not made clear why they sent their paper to *LSR* as opposed to, for example, a law review, the *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies*, *Criminology*, *Punishment and Society*, *American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Sociology* or *American Sociological Review*, or some other journal that does not specialize in the overarching field of law and society. *LSR* as a journal, and many of its reviewers, have a long history of rejecting articles that do not look or feel like a law and society piece. Topic alone does not make a paper a law and society paper. As editors, we take "fit" very seriously: our goal is for every article in every issue to be of interest to a broad readership of law and society scholars, not just a given subfield. This means how the paper is written, especially how it is framed, matters.

When submitting a manuscript to *LSR*, it is important to ask yourself: "Why am I sending this manuscript here?" Is it because it was rejected from [name your discipline's flagship journal] and *LSR* was next on your list? If so, make sure you have reframed the article for this new audience. If your paper has an introduction written for a generalist journal of sociologists, political scientists, criminologists, or anthropologists (for example), we will not send it out to *LSR* reviewers. If you are sending your manuscript to *LSR* because you do not want to wait for the next law review cycle, make sure that you are not actually sending in a law review article, but a social science article, formatted correctly, and written for a general law and society audience, rather than simply law professors and

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legal practitioners. If your answer is, instead, because you want other law and society scholars to read (and perhaps cite) your work, make sure that goal has shaped how you have written your paper.

Think of your submission as an opportunity to introduce the law and society community to your particular topic, theory, or analysis, and to generate excitement about innovative ways of looking at legal phenomena from your subfield in ways that speak to the broader law and society community. So be sure that you have framed your paper such that you can get over any subfield differences: any law and society scholar should have a reasonable chance of wanting to read your piece, even if the topic itself is not part of their expertise.

Frame for a broad sociolegal readership

As our previous discussion indicates, all manuscripts should be framed to be of strong interest to a broad community of law and society scholars. This means asking research questions that will appeal to law and society scholars and couching the topic or study in debates that are well known to law and society scholars, engaging the law and society literature, and often bridging beyond individual subfields. For example, a study of the police should also engage theories, debates, or concepts that are well-known and of interest to law and society scholars who are not embedded in studies of criminology or criminal justice, such as business law scholars, cultural anthropologists, or disputing scholars. Such framing should be clear in the Introduction, the Theoretical Framework or Literature Review, and the Discussion and Conclusion.

A very simple check authors can run on whether their article is appropriate for a given journal is whether they cite works from that journal or similar journals, indicating that the author is engaging work "in the literature" relevant to that journal. In the case of *LSR*, this means citing classical articles or articles from the evolving law and society "canon" (Seron & Silbey, 2004; Seron et al., 2013) as well as other, more recent articles published in law and society journals like *LSR*; *Law and Social Inquiry*; *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*; *Studies in Law, Politics, and Society*; *Law and Policy*; *Political and Legal Anthropology Review*; *Law and History Review*; *Punishment and Society*; and so forth. It should be clear from how the manuscript is framed why it was submitted to *LSR* and not, say, to a general disciplinary or topical subfield journal.

Another check scholars can run is to ensure they have avoided narrowness of focus. Just because a study examines an interesting legal phenomenon does not mean the study is framed for a broad sociolegal audience. While focused on a topic of interest to sociolegal scholars, the manuscript should not be narrowly focused on, for example, a single law, reform, court case, or kind of legal phenomenon and stop there. Rather, that law, reform, court case, or legal phenomenon should be connected to broader concepts, theories, or debates in the literature. Authors should explicate how the particular legal phenomenon is relevant to the broader field of law and society.

We wish to reiterate that while successful papers must engage existing law and society scholarship, authors should not feel constrained if they wish to explore new theories and new topics. We of course welcome articles on topics not previously discussed in *LSR*, so long as scholars use the law and society literature (alone or in combination with other literatures) to analyze and make sense of such phenomena. Indeed, one of the strengths of interdisciplinary research is the ability to bring two or three literatures into conversation with one another.

Law and society scholars have a long history of blending literatures to make innovative theoretical and empirical insights. The late law and society scholar Laurie Edelman combined organizational sociology with legal scholarship, pointing out limitations in both fields' approaches to understanding organizations' compliance with employment law and regulations. Drawing on existing law and society scholarship and making her own insights, she moved all three fields forward with her work, demonstrating how organizations respond to legal mandates and then, ultimately, shape those mandates (Edelman, 1990, 1992; Edelman et al., 1999).

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It is the framing, not the topic, method, or country

Finally, we wish to remind our readers and potential authors that we do not prioritize qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods research, nor do we prioritize research from any given country or region. Therefore, authors should not feel constrained by what are the most common methods used in published articles, as long as their methodological choices are appropriate to their research question, well justified, and competently executed. Likewise, authors studying social and legal phenomena in countries outside of the United States should not hesitate to submit their manuscripts to *LSR*. Indeed, given our broad and increasingly international audience, all authors (including those studying the United States) should provide sufficient background on the local context(s) they are studying, justify the propriety of their case for their research question, and explain the implications of their study for a global audience.

SUMMARY

To summarize our guiding principles:

- We are committed to growing the field of law and society as represented in *LSR*, while retaining the many characteristics that made law and society great in the first place. We welcome new people and new topics, including those that we have historically excluded, overlooked, or otherwise underrepresented.
- We are also committed to the field's classic concerns and interests so the journal remains of interest to its long-standing readership even while the field embraces new topics and areas of concern.
- We are committed to working with LSA leadership and soliciting various forms of input from the field of law and society scholars so we can work together to shepherd through a collective vision for the journal.
- We are committed to an educational approach to running the journal to help law and society scholars achieve the highest likelihood of success.
- We are committed to continuing to grow *LSR*'s footprint and visibility in the larger world. This also means we are interested in considering alternative types of articles and working more closely with cognate journals.

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and comparative law. Her research examines the mobilization and the contestation of disability rights and disability justice by global and local networks. To that end she has followed the implementation of disability human rights guarantees in a variety of countries in the areas of inclusive education and equal employment rights. Professor Heyer's scholarship spans the areas of disability studies, universal design, eugenics, and contemporary discourse on prenatal testing, selective abortion, and death and dying politics.

Ashley Rubin is an associate professor of Sociology at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. She holds a PhD in Jurisprudence and Social Policy from UC Berkeley. Rubin's research examines the dynamics of penal change throughout US history. In particular, she uses organizational theory, law and society, punishment and society, and prison sociology to understand prisoner behavior, administrative behavior in penal organizations, and penal trends more broadly. In addition to her books The Deviant Prison (Cambridge University Press, 2021) and Rocking Qualitative Social Science (Stanford University Press, 2021), she is writing a book on the history of American prisons.

Shauhin Talesh is Professor of Law at UC Irvine. Professor Talesh also holds appointments at UC Irvine in Sociology and Criminology, Law & Society and directs the Law and Graduate Studies Program. Professor Talesh is an interdisciplinary scholar whose work spans law, sociology, and political science. His research interests include the empirical study of law and business organizations, dispute resolution, consumer protection, insurance, and the relationship between law and social inequality. Talesh's research on organizational responses to law and compliance and its impact on law and social change draws from organizational sociology, economic sociology, sociology of law, sociology of risk, political science studies of American Politics, American Political Development, regulation and governance, and law and courts.

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