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Editorial Note

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Volume 45 of *LAPSS Politikon* is launched during a historical turning point: the social, economic and political crisis originated by COVID-19. Political Science attests the crisis as a moment of institutional change in its broadest sense, but, unlike other phenomena, this change is not the result of actors' intentionality, but of what R. K. Merton (1968) understood as "unintentional consequences": the consequences of the spread of a virus whose origin seems likely to be the product of the interaction between humans and wildlife. In the language of Political Science, this turning point can be understood as a critical juncture (Collier & Collier 1991)—that is, the unleashing of institutional and behavioural logics that tend to differ from the preceding ones—and at the same time, as an external shock—that is, a change in preferences originated by causes alien to those that could be expected as promoters of institutional change. The observational elements of these two mechanisms of change will vary from country to country.

However, social and institutional change is only one of the dimensions that can be analysed regarding this crisis. Other issues that are likely to be of interest to Political Science in the coming years, at a lower level of abstraction, relate to the emergence of new nationalisms and cultural clashes, political opposition to globalisation, the weakening of democracy and the legitimisation of authoritarian regimes, the reconfiguration of electoral preferences, political radicalism, institutional design (in other words, the search for "solutions" to the cooperation problems caused by this crisis), as well as the spread of political and social violence, to mention just a few whose relevance tends to vary from country to country and region to region. Paying attention to these issues allows us to discern that the crisis triggered by COVID-19 has aggravated conflicts, challenges and trends that the world had been dragging for years.

There is still considerable uncertainty as to what the intensity of the consequences of the crisis triggered by COVID-19 will be. If we could identify an opportunity for Political Science—and for Social Science in general—springing from this crisis, we could find some clues in the reflection that J. Alexander (1987) carries out on the outstanding work of T. Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action*, published in 1937. For Alexander (1987), this work constituted an effort to offer an answer to the attacks promoted by both Nazism and Communism during the interwar period against liberalism, individualism and rationalism through a theoretical framework that, in its assumptions, reformulated liberalism, so that it did not disregard the "collective good", as classical liberalism did through the idea of *laissez-*

faire. The central insight of this discussion is that social crises constitute an invitation for a systematic reflection on reality and for the construction of more adequate theories to address the problems and demands of our time. In this sense, the relevance of political scientists today is evident more than ever, not only in the description-explanation of phenomena but also in the identification of viable solutions.

LAPSS Politikon is committed to demonstrating that Political Science has a lot to contribute to the analysis of the phenomena and issues in a world in turmoil. Issue 45 of *LAPSS Politikon* opens with Beyza Sarikoç Yıldırım's analysis of municipal action plans that address climate change in Turkey. This article focuses on an assessment, through content analysis, on whether municipal plans have incorporated the relation between climate change and social justice in their design and implementation, based on the fact that vulnerability and inequalities inside Turkish urban areas are effects of climate change. The article concludes that, despite the efforts implemented by Turkish municipalities to counteract climate change, mainly through mitigation and adaptation strategies, this problem is not conceived as a climate justice issue.

Next, Ilia Viatkin invites us to reflect on the variables that explain the unexpected increase in voting for the German Green party during the 2019 European Parliament elections in the German East and the West. The author's multivariate analysis based on the 2018 German General Social Survey shows that this increase is related to electoral realignments and regional differences explained by demand-side attitudes: while in the East it was caused by discontent with the Social Democratic party's performance, in the West it corresponded to the cosmopolitan leftist voters' opposition to the irruption of the radical populist right.

Peter Wedekind presents an essay which emphasises the usefulness of the principles of liberalism in order to safeguard liberal democracies, and to maintain values such as individual autonomy and self-determination. Wedekind argues that the risk of discarding the values of liberalism, a trend associated with disenchantment with liberal democracy and economic liberalism, lies in the strengthening of authoritarian tendencies and collectivist doctrines, both on the left and the right, that subjugate the will of the individual and favour social fragmentation through the invocation of notions such as race, ethnicity, nation, and identity.

In a research note, Clara Ribeiro Assumpção explores the tense relationship between intelligence services and democracy. This relationship appears more conflictive in contexts in which there has been a shift from authoritarian regimes to consolidating democracies, as

in the Brazilian case. Assumpção analyses the transformation of the institutions in charge of the Brazilian intelligence services to show that their reform, an indicator of effective democratisation, must result in a public system of intelligence services that, while effective, is subject to democratic controls and serves the purposes of a democracy; that is, the protection of citizens.

Subsequently, Serena Alonso García presents a research note in which she reflects on the 2014 Hepatitis C crisis that occurred in Spain, as a case in which the collective interest gave way to private interests. For the author, this crisis was the consequence of the influence that Gilead, a transnational corporation, had on government decisions that ended up affecting thousands of patients. This research note highlights the risk that underlies the weakening of the state as a provider of public goods and constitutional rights, as well as the relevance of adopting international frameworks (such as TRIPS) that facilitate access to health.

Last but not least, Sukhayl Niyazov reviews Harry Frankfurt's book *On Inequality*, which theorises the interdisciplinary theme of (in)equality that has been attractive in recent years. Contrary to most other scholars, Frankfurt argues that economic equality pursued by statespersons and intellectuals is not an adequately valid goal, and societies should rather aim at ensuring that citizens have enough, and be treated fairly and respectfully. Niyazov, while emphasising *On Inequality's* intellectual rigor, weighs up on its relevance as a work, highlighting its mainly philosophical nature and its gap with regard to real issues such as the eradication of poverty.

We hope these pieces stimulate junior scholars interested in all the specialities of Political Science and related disciplines to submit their own research for review.

Rafael Plancarte

Deputy Editor-in-Chief

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