

Editorial Note

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Welcome to Volume 57 of *Politikon: The IAPSS Journal of Political Science*. This issue showcases the breadth and depth of contemporary political science research, featuring articles that employ diverse methodological approaches to shed light on pressing issues in international relations, comparative politics, and political theory.

Our first article by Cecilia Lwiindi Nedziwe explores how non-state actors in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region have organized to address gender insecurities and build regional identity. Drawing on interviews and policy documents, Nedziwe argues for a socio-historical approach to understanding regional organization that recognizes the agency of non-state actors in shaping norms and policies. This article challenges state-centric accounts of regionalism and highlights the complex interplay between states and civil society in Southern Africa.

The second article by Cara McLaughlin examines how Scottish political parties frame their signature issues on social media to persuade voters in the lead-up to elections. Through a qualitative analysis of Twitter and Facebook posts, McLaughlin finds that parties strategically employ threat and victim frames to bolster their electoral prospects, with the extent and focus of these frames varying based on parties' parliamentary strength and governing status. This article contributes to framing theory by illuminating the relationship between issue ownership and rhetorical strategies in a dynamic multi-party system.

Our Conversations section features a thought-provoking film review by Vladimir Rosas-Salazar, who explores how Neill Blomkamp's science fiction film *District 9* (2009) reimagines apartheid-era segregation in South Africa through an alien refugee allegory. This insightful analysis highlights the power of cinema to engage with pressing sociopolitical issues, challenging viewers to reflect on historical injustices and their resonance in the present day.

We believe it is crucial for political science to embrace interdisciplinary interventions like Rosas-Salazar's. In an increasingly complex world, the challenges we face—from climate change to racial injustice to democratic backsliding—cannot be fully understood or

addressed through a single disciplinary lens. By opening up to insights from fields like film studies, history, sociology, and beyond, political science can develop richer, more nuanced accounts of political phenomena and point the way toward more creative and effective solutions.

Interdisciplinary dialogue can also help political science question its own assumptions and blind spots. Rosas-Salazar's analysis, for instance, pushes us to consider how popular culture shapes political imaginations and to take seriously the political work done by genres like science fiction that are often dismissed as mere entertainment. By decentering the traditional objects and methods of political science, interdisciplinary interventions can make the discipline more self-reflective, more inclusive, and more relevant to the urgent problems of our time.

At *LAPSS Politikon*, we are keen to publish more boundary-pushing work that challenges the conventional wisdom of what counts as legitimate objects of study and methods of inquiry in political science. We believe that by embracing unorthodox approaches and unexpected sources of insight, we can reinvigorate the discipline and expand its horizons. In our upcoming issues, we are actively working to feature a greater diversity of interdisciplinary scholarship, from ethnographic explorations of everyday political life to philosophical reflections on the foundations of democratic theory to creative collaborations between political scientists and artists, activists, and practitioners. By creating space for these unconventional interventions, we hope to foster a political science that is more innovative, more engaged with the world beyond the academy, and more capable of grappling with the complex, multidimensional challenges of our time.

This issue also includes two book reviews that critically engage with recent publications in political science. Samuel De Brouwer reviews *Marcel Gauchet and the Crisis of Democratic Politics* (2022), an edited volume that introduces the work of French political philosopher Marcel Gauchet to an English-speaking audience. The review highlights Gauchet's innovative theory of democracy and its potential to shed light on the contemporary challenges facing liberal democracies.

Vojtěch Pohanka reviews Sarah Engler's monograph *Centrist Anti-Establishment Parties and Their Struggle for Survival* (2023), which offers a comparative analysis of the electoral strategies and fortunes of centrist anti-establishment parties in Central and Eastern Europe. The review praises Engler's mixed-methods approach and theoretical framework while also pointing out avenues for further research.

Together, the articles, film review, and book reviews in this issue showcase the vibrant dialogue and debate within political science, as scholars critically engage with new ideas and empirical findings to push the field forward. As we continue to open up the pages of *Politikon* to bold, boundary-crossing scholarship, we hope to nurture a political science that is more creative, more responsive to real-world problems, and more equipped to imagine and build a more just and sustainable future.