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Editorial Note

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Almost exactly twenty years ago, the first issue of *IAPSS Politikon* saw the light of the day. It was introduced by an Editorial note with the following words: Politikon, first of many issues. Politikon, first of many years. Politikon, first step of a long, long way that will become a tradition in short time. Politikon, the first edition of the first international political science students' journal' (Sanguinetti 2001, 2). Twenty years later, with dozens of collaborators and hundreds of manuscript authors and reviewers, and shortly before the publication of the journal's fiftieth issue, this prediction has been validated by history. The journal's journey has certainly not been straightforward, and, as any project that grows over time, it has undergone several transformations towards professionalisation of the editorial and peer review process and, more recently, towards embracing the model of a 'junior journal' instead of a 'student journal' that is not restricted to publishing the works of students and junior scholars and, indeed, pursues quality standards comparable to senior journals in the discipline. Furthermore, while LAPSS Politikon remains unique in its model of organisation (not based at a particular university with global editorial board membership),² students and junior scholars have become increasingly involved in the academic publishing process, as evidenced by new journals managed by student editorial boards.

LAPSS Politikon has maintained its unique focus on welcoming submissions from students and scholars of all levels and subject them to an equal assessment process. The academic 'rank' of the scholar has no impact on the peer review process, to which all sections of the journal (except the Editorial Notes) are subjected (with book reviews receiving at least an editorial review, research notes and review essays at least one, and articles at least two external reviews). In the twelve-month period ranging from June 2020 to May 2021, 69 manuscripts were evaluated by the Editorial Board, out of which 43 (62 %) were desk-rejected. While this represents an increase compared to the 2019-2020 period, all desk-rejected manuscripts receive a substantive feedback that in most cases enables the authors to submit a new version of the manuscript, should they decide to do so. An encouraging trend may be observed in relation to the manuscripts that are subject to external peer review (some of which proceed to this stage when being submitted anew after an earlier desk-rejection): of

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¹ An American Political Science Association webpage continues to list *IAPSS Politikon* among 'graduate and undergraduate student journals.' As it is clear from the journal's current profile, this is no longer an accurate categorisation for *IAPSS Politikon*, if it ever was.

² This model is shared with *Encuentro Latinoamericano*, the IAPSS journal focused on Latin American politics, that specializes in multilingual publishing (English, Spanish, Portuguese).

the 26 such manuscripts, eleven were accepted and only eight rejected (the remaining ones were withdrawn by the authors). This means that manuscripts proceeding to external peer review are of standards strong enough to have high prospects for publication, should the authors decide (and be in circumstances allowing) to perform a revision.³ Combined with the journal's format-free submission process, which requires the authors to reformat the manuscript into the journal's house style only when they are submitting a revised version after external review, this means that undesirable instances of authors investing extensive effort into revising their manuscript and then getting rejected after a later round of peer review are rare. In fact, most manuscripts rejected at this stage were due to the authors failing to demonstrate that they have engaged and given due consideration to reviewers' comments; frequently, such authors submitted very brief and superficial review responses. Although a few instances when, despite the authors' clear motivation and the advice from the Editorial Board, a manuscript did not meet the quality standards required for publication have regrettably occurred, they are rare and the extensive interaction with the Editorial Board still holds high prospects for the authors to benefit from the experience in the long term. The present trends illustrate the success of IAPSS Politikon to combine the key priorities of academic excellence with authors' empowerment through a responsive feedback system (if sometimes prolonged, due to the high number of mansucripts being processed).⁴

The *LAPSS Politikon* Best Article Award, now in its third year, is one of the initiatives aimed at fostering academic excellence in the content submitted to and published in the journal, as well as at recognising the talent and qualities in the contributions of the journal. All original articles published in a given year are eligible and are read by an Award Committee composed of senior and junior scholars. To further increase the visibility of the Award and to acknowledge the significance of senior scholars' mentoring in the professional growth and development of junior scholars, the Award is given each year in the honor of a senior scholar. In 2021, the Honorary Chair of the Award Committee was Professor Maria Herminia Tavares de Almeida (University of São Paulo and Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning

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³ A guarantee of publication already after the first round of external peer review (with or without minor revisions) is very rare in *LAPSS Politikon*, due to the combination of the external reviewers rarely recommending it and the Editorial Board wishing to encourage the authors to improve their manuscripts, even if their initial version is already of high quality. Illustratively, articles that received the *LAPSS Politikon* Best Article Award were often among those undergoing multiple rounds of revision as a result of external peer reviews and editorial reviews.

⁴ More work remains to be done on achieving a similarly empowering effect towards reviewers for the journal, many of them being also junior scholars. However, two steps have already been taken in this direction: Firstly, the possibility for reviewers to receive anonymized reviews of the other reviewers for the given manuscript, after the completion of a particular review process, was introduced. Thus, reviewers may compare their review with those of fellow scholars. Secondly, the Best Reviewer Prize aims to recognize some of the most dedicated and thorough reviewers for the journal.

(CEBRAP)) for her academic contribution to the fields of public opinion, political culture and political institutions, but also to the significant support provided to students and junior scholars through the institutional positions she has held at various academic institutions.

The Committee was furthermore composed of Senior Members Professor Christopher Isike (University of Pretoria; Vice President, International Political Science Association and Editor-in-Chief of *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies*) and Dr Theresa Reidy (University College Cork; Editor of *International Political Science Review*), and of Junior Member Mr Andrew Devine (Tulane University, Editor of *IAPSS Politikon*). The Committee presents the results of their assessment as follows.

"While last year's articles demonstrated high quality, there is one article in particular that stood out to the committee: 'Rising Ottoman Nostalgia in Turkish Popular Culture: An Analysis of Turkey's Europeanization Process and Ottoman-Themed Soap Operas' by Ceren Çetinkaya (Vol. 46). The committee agreed that Çetinkaya's article deserved this year's Politikon Best Article Award for its innovative and novel approach to understanding national identity and discourse in Turkey. Drawing on Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony, Çetinkaya's article adds a new perspective to understand shifting political discourse through the unique lens of soap operas. An honorable mention goes to 'Spatial Realignment of German Voters and Germany's Regional Cleavage: The Case of the Green Party in the 2019 Elections' by Ilia Viatkin (Vol. 45). This quantitative piece used data from the German General Social Survey to provide explanations for shifts in voter support for the Green Party based on an East-West cleavage. The article demonstrated methodological rigor to unpack the recently emerging puzzle of voter shifts."

The Editorial Board congratulates the authors of the recognised manuscripts and extends its gratitude to the work of the committee members which gave due consideration to each of the twelve eligible manuscripts published in Volume 44 to 47.

The contributions in this volume, as usual, span several regions and political contexts and are based in several subfields of Political Science, with disciplinary contributions prevailing over interdisciplinary ones. The issue opens with a novel argument for improvements in political representation via an analysis of media speeches on gender parity in Canada. Carol-Ann Rouillard and Mireille Lalancette contribute also to studies on the effects of mediatization on political preferences and decision making, offering a research design that may be used in future studies on different jurisdictions.

The article by Esther Ng K. H. prompts readers to think about the challenging question of possibilities of change in International Relations. It argues that a better

understanding of state decisions to retain its existing practices rather than adopt new ones can be gained via ontological security. This constructivist account builds on the significance of the states' 'sense of Self' in determining their decisions and invites further studies that would empirically examine the explanatory potential of this theoretical framework.

The European Union's subsidiarity principle priotitises decision making by national parliaments over the European Parliament if diversification and localisation are beneficial to the outcomes of the process. The principles are the subject Oxana Pimenova's article that asks whether it can be conducive to consensus-building in the EU multi-level polity. Her answer is derived from a variant of deliberation theory and an examination of documents that arose from the interaction between the EU institutions and national parliaments during the subsidiarity control mechanism. Her article argues that, if recognising the validity of deliberation theory, the subsidiarity principle indeed provides an opportunity for enhanced dialogue and understanding, however, there is room for improvement in its implementation.

The research note by Fernando Ursine Braga Silva offers and provides preliminary empirical support for a new explanation for the split of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), with the aim to contribute to the discussions of the development of the Japanese party system more generally. The core of his claim emphasies that a combination of factors, including several opposition realignments and the structure of the electoral system, placed the DPJ into an unfavourable position. In turn, based on the status quo at least, the split favours the hegemony of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party.

Last but not least, Paul Fricker presents an up-to-date picture of the cooperative as well as conflictual patterns of interaction between China and the US in Djibouti. The US base on this territory, the author argues, is key to US counterterrorism operations in the region, but has been impeded by Chinese actions following their interests in the region. In the background of the tensions are broader considerations of the development of the Belt and Road Initiative as well as relationships with third countries such as India. Mapping a range of sources, Fricker notes that global counterterrorism efforts might suffer the consequences of this new normal.

There are many avenues left for the journal's development. Today, *LAPSS Politikon* has become a hub for students and junior scholars not only within the IAPSS community, that contributes to the public debate on junior scholarly publishing via its webinar series and research initiatives. The journal embraces inclusiveness, at all levels and forms of involvement, though more internal research is needed to gain an even more thorough picture

on the journal's representativeness and capacity to be welcoming towards underprivileged or disadvantaged members of the student and junior scholarly community.

The editorial team remains the driving force behind the journal's sustainability and progress, and its members contribute substantially not only to the editorial process, but also to the journal's strategic development, promotion and dissemination. As of June 2021, the journal's Editorial Board has six members, and is supported by ten Editorial Assistants. Compared to the previous issue, there are three changes in their composition. Dr. Ana Figueroa has concluded her engagement as Senior Editor and remains an external collaborator for the journal, working on the historically first analysis of *LAPSS Politikon's* contributions to the academic careers of its authors and collaborators. Dr. Figueroa deserves special recognition for her contributions over the past five years, that have been essential for the timely and quality completion of the assessment of over thirty manuscripts as well as for advancing the journal's profile on several fronts. We also thank Caroline Dufour, former Editorial Assistant, for her support and wish them both success in further endeavours.

As of August 2021, two more changes will come into effect, alongside the relocation of IAPSS as an organisation from the Netherlands to Canada. Firstly, Dana Rice will also conclude her engagement in the Editorial Board. As with Ana Figueroa, she has contributed substantially to the regular editorial process of the journal, having been in charge of fifteen manuscripts and developing several other porfolios, including the journal's webinar project and sponsorship prospectus. Secondly, but no less importantly, the Editorial Board will be led by the incoming Co-Editors-in-Chief, Dr. Rafael Plancarte Escobar and Jesslene Lee. As long-term Deputy Editor-in-Chief and Editorial Board member respectively, they will continue the strategic development and management of the journal in its 21st year of existence, starting with the 50th anniversary issue to be published later this year.

On a personal note, I would like to thank all current and former members of the editorial team, the *LAPSS Politikon* International Advisory Committee, the IAPSS Executive Committee and the IAPSS Boards as well as to authors and reviewers who contributed to the journal over the past five years of my involvement, as Head of the Academic Department and as Editor-in-Chief. Space constraints do not allow to name them all. It was a privilege to collaborate with such a knowledgeable international and interdisciplinary community of junior scholars and academics, who will be shaping social science of tomorrow and beyond.

The Editorial Board

Max Steuer, Editor-in-Chief

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