Inaugural Editorial: Politics and Governance

Amelia Hadfield [1] and Andrej J. Zwitter [2]

[1] Institute for European Studies, Vrije Universiteit Brussels, Pleinlaan 5, 1050 Brussels, Belgium;
E-Mail: amelia.hadfield@vub.ac.be
[2] Faculty of Law,University of Groningen, Oude Kijk in 't Jatstraat 26, 9712 EK Groningen, The Netherlands;
E-Mail: a.zwitter@rug.nl

How to Cite this Article

Acknowledgement

About the Journal

Politics and Governance is an innovative new offering to the world of online publishing in the Political Sciences. An internationally peer-reviewed open access journal, *Politics and Governance* publishes significant, cutting-edge and multidisciplinary research drawn from all areas of Political Science.

www.cogitatiopress.com/politicsandgovernance

Editors-in-Chief

Professor Andrej J. Zwitter, Faculty of Law, University of Groningen, The Netherlands
Professor Amelia Hadfield, Department of Psychology, Politics and Sociology, Canterbury Christ Church University, UK

Managing Editor

Mr. António Vieira, Politics and Governance, Cogitatio Press, Portugal

Politics and
Governance

Inaugural Editorial: *Politics and Governance*

Amelia Hadfield [1,*] and Andrej J. Zwitter [2,*]

[1] Institute for European Studies, Vrije Universiteit Brussels, Pleinlaan 5, 1050 Brussels, Belgium;
E-Mail: amelia.hadfield@vub.ac.be
[2] Faculty of Law, University of Groningen, Oude Kijk in 't Jatstraat 26, 9712 EK Groningen, The Netherlands;
E-Maill: a.zwitter@rug.nl

* Corresponding authors

1. Introduction

We are proud to welcome our readers, contributors and reviewers to this inaugural issue of *Politics and Governance*, published by Librello Publishing House—a peer reviewed, open-source journal dedicated to the study of politics in the national, regional and global realm, and the modes and methods of governance in all its manifestations. We are thrilled to be so ably supported by an editorial board that is not only strongly international, but inherently multi-disciplinary in its academic orientations, and welcome them, and the new readership and future authors, to this new open-source journal. As outlined below, while the envisaged scope of *Politics and Governance* is reassuringly broad, and our vision for its development ambitious, the dedication of the Editorial Board and Editors-in-Chief to rigor and to quality will be steadfast.

Politics and political thought is now a mature field of study. The dynamics and indeed study of governance, however, is more recent, and betokens a shift in the power, policy, and polity of government that emerged in the late twentieth century, and is increasingly the international pattern of the twenty-first century. The difference between the two is as fascinating as the measure by which one constitutes the other, the degrees of conflation, reinforcement, tension between traditional modes of politics, as well as the challenge to those modes by emerging structures of governance. Whether investigated as dual forces, or

examined separately, the journal interprets both the concept and practice of politics and governance broadly, and as such, will seek contributions on that basis.

2. Open-Source Publishing

The idea of publishing an open-source journal comes at a time when international policy makers increasingly value the principle that high-quality research can and must be as freely available as possible, and thus accessible to the widest academic audience. Indeed, under the aegis of transparency, a key feature of international governance has been the increasingly open-source, publicly available outputs of local, national and international actors. An open-source mandate therefore has an innately social component by fostering methods that attempt to lessen varieties of knowledge inequality and inaccessibility perpetuated in some sense through costly subscriptions to journals (particularly in hard form) that can limit the accessibility of research to students, academics and critically informed members of civil society from developed and developing regions of the world. *Politics and Governance* therefore takes a somewhat idealist perspective in its goal of bringing high-quality, cutting-edge research on key aspects of politics and governance more effectively to scholars of all stripes as well as to professionals and policy makers, in a way that reduces the innate tendency for 'ivory towerism' and replaces it with a dynamic journal that cultivates

librello

intelligent research on fast-moving topics, presented in a suitably contemporary platform.

In order to achieve these admittedly ambitious goals, *Politics and Governance* has a variety of editorial touchstones by which it assesses contributions.

3. Editorial Touchstones

• Open School: the journal is not a vehicle for any one school of thought, but operates rather an 'online agora' for a range of disciplinary approaches, methodological structures and interpretations ([1], p. 1).

• Conceptual/practical interface: articles that present empirical findings that effectively test theoretic propositions of politics and/or governance in a methodologically sound manner appropriate to the material are particularly welcome.

• Inter-disciplinary: articles that draw intelligently and appropriately from one or more academic disciplines in order to complement the investigation at hand, and in doing so, redefine problems or enrich our understandings. Such articles reflect not only the key ethos of the journal, but also uncover the multi-layer genealogy by which the forces of politics and governance are constructed.

• Comparative: contributions that tackle the uneasy nexus within and between politics and governance, both as topics of academic investigation and as contemporary practices of power, are especially welcome.

4. Journal Structure and Content

Envisaged as a four-issue/year journal, *Politics and Governance* will draw heavily upon a wide range of reviewers (beginning with the members of its Editorial Board), and will contain in its standard issues the following sections:

• 8,000–12,000 word (single-blind) peer-reviewed scholarly articles, with a maximum of eight articles per issue.

• From 2014: a Politics and Governance Working Forum: two to three peer-assessed features, 2000-3000 words in length, and written as a 'reflective pieces' by current policy-makers on developing themes, the practical implementation, and changing nature of politics and/or governance.

• From 2014: a Book Review Section reviewing 2–3 texts, monographs and even scholarly articles that have been published in the last 18 months.

From mid-2014, we envisage an annual Special Issue highlighting a prominent theme drawn from within the wide canon of politics and/or governance, on the basis of a consensus reached amongst the members of the Editorial Board.

5. Inaugural Issue

The contributions to this inaugural issue represent in practice the Editorial Touchstones outlined above.

With a focus on 'Politics' as opposed to Governance, the range of contributions range from ethical investigations concerning human rights, to research on national politics and decision-making, to a review of methodological strategies with a view to solving empirical research deadlocks.

The editorial team behind *Politics and Governance* places a premium on pieces that fuse together as many of the Editorial Touchstones as possible. Pieces that constitute an inherently international, inter-disciplinary, methodically rigorous approach that critically, intelligently and clearly investigate the conceptual development and/or practical unfurling of key aspects of politics and governance are therefore, to misquote Shakespeare, forms of scholastic consummation for which the editorial board devoutly wishes.

The following section constitutes a brief exercise in which the two co-editors, Andrej and Amelia, reflect respectively upon aspects of contemporary politics and governance.

6. Politics and Governance as Fields of Investigation

As mentioned above, we see politics and governance as dual forces both conceptually and in practice. Both fields share a lot of common ground and degrees of conflation, they might reinforce each other, or cause tensions between traditional modes of politics and modern modes and structures of governance.

Politics has long expanded upon its heritage of focusing on electoral studies and high-level decision-making and has become a field of study that nowadays also incorporates psychological, sociological and philosophical investigations. It has further developed to integrate the fields of economics and law as integral part of political life. Our conception of politics as a field of study encompasses grass-roots politics just as much as international relations and global commerce and communication. States have to some extent lost their ontological primacy as research subjects and need to be viewed in a field of stresses and strains imposed by non-governmental actors and internationally operating organizations. Politics, therefore, sometimes due to the sheer complexity of intervening variables, faces difficulties viewing the world from a purely behaviouralist perspective, and it cannot close its eyes anymore from clashes of normative preconceptions.

The journal's pillar of 'politics' aims to explore political science in its wider sense. Political and moral philosophy ask questions that put current systems under scrutiny and demand for improvements to normative presuppositions often taken for granted. Social, cognitive, and political psychology have made advances that require us to rethink the functioning of individual and collective decision-making. Legal and economic research highlight the fields of tension that states find themselves in when facing normative

regimes on different levels. All this and more indicates the need for multi-disciplinary and where possible inter-disciplinary approaches concerning both the content of study, such as the interaction between economy, law and politics, as well as the methods used to investigate emerging phenomena.

Among other issues, the normative/empirical divide will be of particular interest to the politics pillar. The normative/empirical divide is not merely the distinction between is and ought, it can encompass the distinction between ideal theory and non-ideal theory [2] just as much as it can relate to the normative content of politics in empirical reality [3]. The former describes the theorist's paradigmatic shift between ideal-world normative prescriptions and non-ideal world modifications requiring a prudent assessment of the empirical and its normative power. The latter asks for the investigation of the normative content of the empirical as well as of the normative power of it.

Another issue could be the increasing interdisciplinary focus of politics, which allows theoretical perspectives such as the social mechanisms approach of sociology or the works of Kahneman and Tversky on cognition and decision-making questioning whether traditional rational economic models should remain a standard of investigation in the political realm [4]. Politics thereby stops being its own separate field in the social sciences, but becomes the subject of study of interdisciplinary scholars embracing the open school, where under the condition of scientific rigor and the laws of science theoretical and methodological cross-fertilization is not only accepted, but in fact encouraged.

The pertinent questions that emerge in the realm of politics are challenging, salient and deserving of further study: what do these findings mean for the practice of political conduct; how can policy makers learn from research that reveals a complexity that reshapes the political realm as we speak? As stated before, *Politics and Governance* is interested in the theoretical and philosophical developments that shape political science in its current state, but it also strongly encourages contributors to think beyond their sphere of comfort about the practical implications of their work.

While widely interpreted, politics—as a topic of scholarly investigation—will generally denote the process by which formal state institutions ensure public order internally, and undertake collective representation and action externally. Scholars are familiar with the accompanying dynamics of government, and indeed, hunger for new and surprising post-Westphalian dimensions, from cross-border integration to collective security, from state intervention to full-fledged development policy. Some of these transitions, however, indicate not merely new forms of state behaviour, but a wholly new category of political power. Wholly new in institutional form, altered in policy content, and while operating with recognizable attributes of state-based politics, strikingly changed in the 'location' of its own self, its own polity.

Is governance merely Politics 2.0? Is it the latest in a rather predictable series of shifting patterns arising from world states torn between vying globalist and localist forces? Possibly. But more likely, the signifier itself has changed. To be sure, traditional styles of governing remain, and in some cases, have become reactively entrenched. Sovereignty is in no danger of serious attenuation, nor is the nation-state in danger of obsolescence. And yet, in virtually every major policy area, across the majority of developed regions, the state as a unit, and sovereignty as its key attribute, are irrevocably changed. Each has been subjected to the requirements of having to incorporate a range of 'externalities', whether through top-down forces of membership with major institutional organizations, or via bottom-up requirements of enhanced cross-border connectivity. Having altered themselves in this process, states, and their dominant attributes, have thus reordered the 'condition of ordered rule' ([5], p. 652).

Governance is therefore a wholly new political condition, arising from altered structures, which in turn has produced an emphatic, and possibly permanent change upon both the forces of national power and the societies upon which that power is brought to bear.

The outcome is deeply paradoxical. On the one hand, the practices of governance appear unnervingly innovative, with relentless integration apparently transforming the entire composition of states, their national economies, and even the means and ends of standard public policy-making. From this perspective, governance represents a series of new mechanisms that are categorically different from traditional national government structures, and which operate with little or no "recourse to the authority and sanctions of government" ([6], p. 18). Instead, how governance operates is stimulated through a critical multiplicity of interactions with others, near and far, across every imaginable policy area, and which perforce requires viable, but uncommon structures resting on efficient, but new (and frequently untried) processes. In this respect, governance forces a very real change in the conditions for ordered internal rule and external action. Consequently, the outputs of governance are intrinsically different from the traditional political arena associated with 'government'.

Equally however, governance—drawing as it does from an undeniably resistant sovereign wellspring—produces outcomes that while categorically different, do still "parallel those of the traditional institutions of government" and in this sense, are disconcertingly similar to the outputs of government, in which any apparent change is, as argued by Stoker, "rather a matter of a difference in process" ([6], p. 17).

There are a number of major variants that have emerged, and upon which the journal ought to focus:

- **Political Governance**: forensic analyses of

major exemplars of governance, ranging from NATO, the UN and the EU, should be considered. Given recent upheavals, the EU for example, could spark contributions that question why modes of 'Eurogovernance' have not yet produced a confederal European state, but rather "encouraged Europeans to embrace, or to entangle, the rest of the world in their amorphous constructions" ([7], p. 130). However, other policy-driven and regional examples of governance should also be explored. Equally, 'in-state' trends of devolution, local government, the blurring of public and private sectors, all constitute interesting examples of the changed conditions of ordered rule. Ultimately, as examined by James Rosenau, such investigations force us to ask strikingly essentialist questions, the most salient of which is whether we can "presume the presence of governance without government" and still reasonably explain how new systems can and must cope with the enduring systemic realities in which any governing unit "has to cope with external challenges, to prevent conflicts among its members…to procure resources…and to frame goals and politics designed to achieve them" ([8], p. 3).

• **Economic Governance**: the post-2008 world has highlighted a series of do's and don'ts for world leaders, suggesting either that markets should be untouched and untrammeled, or moderately managed, or heavily regulated. Interestingly, the spectrum of economic government has conflated terms that formerly were held in opposition: integration, regulation, globalization. An interesting point of departure for future contributions may be examinations of the erstwhile oppositions between Chicago School and Harvard School methodologies of global vs. semi-global outputs, and the political and policy-making implications thereof [9].

• **Legal Governance**: underwriting some, though not all, major institutional examples of governance, is a formidable legal framework that has been steadily constructed alongside, or frequently, in opposition to national law, and at times in uneasy relation to international law (EU Law being the strongest example here). In what ways has international, regional, and national law making been the recipient of, and vehicle for, changed conditions of ordered rule? Is law a measure of governance, or a mode by which to keep it at bay? Normative issues that drive the modes of regime-construction are equally pertinent here: the rules, regulations, norms and values that codify the original vade mecum of an organization and endow it with not merely a recognizable form, but legitimate content, and justifiable outputs.

• **Socio-cultural Governance**: societal compositions and inter-minglings produce both the strongest and most surprising areas of trans-national overlap;

and also highlight the immeasurably immovable areas of national, and local allegiance. If governance represents less, or at the least, transformed government, what impact if any, does it have upon national communities, forms of cultural identity, and societal vehicles like education, communication, or commercialism? Explorations into the socio-cultural dimension of governance suggest both pragmatic practices in which culture is afforded merely a new framework by which to constitute itself, and far more transformative outcomes in which the discourse of governance itself (and its chosen modes), reflects new value-based points of reference.

• **Epistemic Governance**: this term could in the first instance reflect the growth of knowledge communities that are moving to outflank political structures and transcend traditional modes of policy-making. Equally however, epistemic governance could represent 'state of the art investigation' journal submissions, reviewing and clarifying salient aspects of the conceptually eclectic roots of governance.

7. Comfortable Words

As outlined above, *Politics and Governance* aims to provide freely accessible, cutting edge and original research to a wide variety of interested scholars, students, researchers, policy makers and interested individuals. Our goals should therefore line up well with our recommendations to potential contributors. In order to facilitate accessibility, clear writing on intelligently discerned topics are most welcome.

Originality is the hallmark of every decent piece of writing, but it can be exemplified in numerous ways. First, **salience**: demonstrating why and how key issues matter, and to which audiences, as well as providing partial responses to those pesky perennial totems about the management of power ([10], p. 1). Second, **meta-narratives** allowing readers to gain a clearer sense of the connectivity between a multiplicity of governing factors, or indeed an emerging trend in the study of such factors. Last, **utility**, in terms of enhancing the ability of scholars and policy-makers alike to reach greater clarity in terms of the processes and consequences of key aspects of politics and governance.

These categories are indicative, rather than exhaustive. However, particular articles are subsequently placed into the overall structure of *Politics and Governance*, they will all, like the journal itself, provide an exciting lineup of cutting-edge commentary on an emerging dualism of contemporary political life: the enduring forces by which politics are determined and displayed, and the transforming, even transcending of these same forces by structures and dynamics of governance.

References

1. Zuckert M. Greetings from the Editor. American Political Thought. 2012;1(1):1–2.

2. Rawls J. A Theory of Justice. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press; 1999.

3. Morgenthau HJ. The Twilight of International Morality. Ethics. 1948;58(2):79–99.

4. Levy JS. Daniel Kahneman: Judgment, Decision, and Rationality. Political Science and Politics. 2002;35(2):271–273.

5. Rhodes R. The New Governance: Governing without Government. Political Studies. 1996;44(4):652–667.

6. Stoker G. Governance as Theory: Five Proposi-tions. International Social Science Journal. 1998;50(155):17–28.

7. Rabkin JA. Law without Nations? Why Constitutional Government Requires Sovereign States. Princeton, USA: Princeton University Press; 2005.

8. Rosenau J. Governance, Order and Change in World Politics. In: Rosenau J, Czempiel E-O, editors. Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press; 1992, pp. 1–30.

9. Ghemawat P. World 3.0: Global Prosperity and How to Achieve It. Boston, USA: Harvard Business Review Press; 2011.

10. Hochschild JL. Introduction and Observations. Perspectives on Politics. 2003;1(1):1–4.