

EDITORIAL

Editorial

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45(5) is the last issue of *Review of International Studies* to be published under the tenure of the current editors. We are now in the process of handing over the journal to the new editorial team, led by Martin Coward. It has been an enormous privilege to edit the journal, and as our term ends, we thought it would be helpful to offer some reflections on our editorship and on the current state of play with the journal.

The journal receives between 300 and 350 submissions per year, of which 30–35 manuscripts (excluding Special Issues or Forums) are published. We have been incredibly impressed by the high quality of much of the work we receive, which reflects the breadth of international studies, and grapples with many of the world's wicked problems. It is with genuine regret that we have not been able to publish a number of very good manuscripts. But keeping in line with the aims of the journal, in order to be considered for publication papers need to make an outstanding scholarly contribution, by pushing the boundaries of debate, whether through theoretical, conceptual, or methodological innovation, or analytical rigour. The quality of the work we have published is reflected in the journal's strengthening impact factor, and its ranking among the top twenty Politics and IR journals. We fully expect this upward trend to continue under the leadership of the new team.

As editors, we set ourselves the dual challenge of trying to encourage increased submissions and publication of manuscripts from women and from scholars from the global south. When we began our tenure, men outnumbered women in terms of both submissions and publication at a ratio of around three to one. On submissions, that ratio has shifted, with submissions from men now outnumbering women two to one. We have also gone some way to address this gender imbalance in terms of publication. Over the course of our tenure, 41 per cent of the manuscripts published have been authored or co-authored by a woman. In the last two years of our tenure, we have further improved, with 49 per cent of manuscripts published in 2018 authored or co-authored by a woman, and 50 per cent in 2019.

There is no single explanation for the improved rate of submission and publication of manuscripts by women authors. The composition of our editorial team was an important factor. Relatively few leading journals in the discipline are edited by a female lead editor, or have a majority of female co-editors. All members of the editorial team took seriously the need to encourage women authors to submit to the *Review*. We also worked hard to convey the message that the journal welcomes scholarship from women authors, and is a friendly place for all authors. The composition of our editorial advisory board also sent important signals, and many members of the board strongly encouraged quality submissions from women scholars. As editors we also read and determinedly considered the burgeoning literature on gender bias in citation practices, and were clear to authors and reviewers in our mindfulness of the matter. We hope that through our work the journal now has a solid reputation for its passionate consideration of the gender gap, and we look forward to see it go from strength to strength on this front.

Progress on publishing work from authors around the world remains stubbornly slow. The *Review* continues to receive submissions from all over the world and it has been a privilege to work with scholars from a range of countries to publish their excellent work. Yet the reality is that the majority of submissions and publications come from scholars in the UK, Europe, North America, and Australasia. We engaged in a number of initiatives to accelerate the pace

of change to greater or lesser success: if we have learned anything from our tenure, it is that there is no quick fix for the lack of representation of a more globally diverse population. We are mindful of the structural impediments that require collective thinking and action in collaboration with a wide range of publishers, editors, and professional associations. We have reported our findings on this to the BISA Board of Trustees, who have agreed to commission a piece of research to equip the incoming editorial teams of both BISA journals with a stronger evidence base to further advance this agenda, and we are committed to supporting them in any way we can.

We are enormously thankful to the many people who have supported us as editors of the *Review*. BISA and CUP have been incredibly committed, investing time, resources, and sound advice on a range of issues in a fast-changing publishing landscape. We have been well supported by a very committed editorial advisory board, many members of which have put in huge amounts of time and effort to undertake reviews, oversee the award of the annual best article prize, and who have played a vital role in seeing the various Special Issues to completion. They have also been wonderful champions of the journal all over the world.

We conclude by reiterating what an enormous privilege it has been to edit the *Review* over the last four years. Reading the latest research, engaging with insightful analyses of testing times, and working with authors and reviewers to produce the highest quality work has not only been hugely rewarding as academics, but, at times, also a lot of fun. We are also delighted to leave the journal in such good hands. Thank you again to BISA, CUP, and our editorial board, and to you, the readers, for your interest, commitment, and support.