



INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the issue and volume 42 in review

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The editorial team is pleased to release the first issue of volume 43. It embodies a special issue on national security and infectious disease based on a call for papers issued in late 2022 entitled “COVID-19, International Relations, and Security Studies: Has the Pandemic Altered the Study and Practice of International Security.” The collection of articles includes theoretical arguments from Kosal (2024) and McDermott (2024) on the impacts of disease on international security. It also includes articles from Stevens et al. (2024) and Topping et al. (2024) regarding the role authoritarianism plays in response to crises of disease. As well, Walker and Cramer (2024) examine the link between disease and conflict, particularly examining civil unrest in Africa. Guest editor Craig Albert (2024) provides an insightful synthesis of the articles in his introduction to the special issue. The editors thank Professor Albert for his expert and professional development of this special issue. The remaining pages of the issue include an article by Gregg (2024) regarding authoritarian communities and bioethics as well as research by Nam and Sawyer (2024) on how genetic narratives relate to racism.

In review of the journal in 2023, PLS marked its forty-second year of publication. It received original submissions from 21 countries across a wide range of regions, including Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, Oceania, and South America. Thirty-seven percent of original submissions came from corresponding authors at US institutions and 14 percent from corresponding authors at European institutions. The editorial team rendered the first decision on manuscripts in a bit less than 45 days on average, a rate that has been consistent since 2021. Acceptance rates varied by manuscript type, but approximately one in four Research Articles and Research Notes that received decisions in 2023 were accepted. Of the accepted Research Articles and Research Notes, about 70 percent were published Open Access at no cost to the authors, and about 50 percent earned an Open Science badge for open data and/or open materials.

The editorial team could not have evaluated manuscripts and issued decisions without its reviewers. These scholars generously shared their expertise and time to advise the editors and to provide constructive comments to authors on behalf of the authors and their research and, more broadly, the scientific endeavor. The editorial team thanks these 64 colleagues who provided peer reviews in 2023:

Lene Aaroe*	Marie Feldmeier	Aleksander Ksiazkiewicz	Stephen Schneider
Wendt Alexander	Adam Feltz	Gigi Gronvall*	Darren Schreiber
John Alford	Amanda Friesen	Asheley Landrum	Jaime Settle*
Kevin Arceneaux*	Michelle Funk	Kobi Leins*	Kevin Smith*
Melissa Bemiller	Bryan Gervais	Aaron Levine*	Wiktor Soral
Kavita Berger*	Frank Gonzalez	Nan Li	Dan Stevens
Erik Bucy*	Benjamin Gregg	Krissy Lunz Trujillo	Patrick Stewart*
Nicola Bulled	Mike Gruszczynski	Rose McDermott*	Mahdi Tarabehi
Joshua Byun	Michael Gusmano	Caitlin Monahan	Mark van Vugt*

Abigail Cassario	Yuna Han	Samantha Mosier	Matthew Walsh
Marisa Conte	Steven Heine	Hannah Nam	Monique Ward
Sara Davies	John Heslen	Rubie Peters	Aaron Weinschenk*
Chris Dawes*	Lance Hunter	David Redlawsk*	Elizabeth Wishnick
Julian Dobson	Seyoung Jung	Alfredo Rodríguez-Fuertes	Qi Wu
Zening Duan	Casey Klofstad*	Zuhud Rozaki	Yufan Yang
Brian Earp	Margaret Kosal*	Benjamin Ruisch	Xia Zheng

*PLS Editorial Board Member

As indicated in the table of reviewers, many members of the PLS Editorial Board reviewed manuscripts in 2023. PLS is fortunate to have an Editorial Board that actively contributes to the journal in many ways. The editorial team extends its gratitude to the following colleagues, whose Editorial Board terms concluded in 2023: Brian Boutwell, Ingrid Haas, Kevin Hunt, Sverker Jagers, Glenn McGee, Thomas Murray, Thomas Preston, and Julie Seaman. Their support and advice are appreciated and will be greatly missed. In turn, we welcome three new Editorial Board members with three-year terms: John Alford of Rice University, with expertise in biopolitics; Benjamin Gregg of the University of Texas at Austin, with expertise in bioethics; and Lasse Laustsen of Aarhus University, with expertise in biopolitics. The editorial team looks forward to working with these excellent scholars. Interested readers can find the full list of PLS Editorial Board members at the journal's Cambridge Core website at cambridge.org/pls in the Journal Information pages.

Attention to the journal continued to grow in 2023. Article downloads from Cambridge Core, JSTOR, and ProQuest reached approximately 100,000 in each of 2021, 2022, and 2023, up from about 61,000 in 2018 and 63,000 in 2019. It is worth noting that does not include downloads from EBSCO or BioOne, which suggests total downloads are much larger. [Table 1](#) shows the journal's CiteScore, a citation-based performance metric calculated from Scopus data, has increased resulting in an improvement in its ranking among peer journals. Clearly, PLS articles are noticed and cited.

PLS is the result of extensive support and goodwill from many sources. In addition to our previously recognized reviewers, the editorial team thanks the scholars who trust us to evaluate and disseminate their research. Further, we thank Cambridge University Press, the journal's publisher, and the Association for Politics and the Life Sciences, the journal's scholarly home, for their steadfast support of PLS and the scientific endeavor.

Table 1. CiteScore results

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023*
CiteScore	0.8	0.8	1.0	0.7	1.1	1.7	2.1	2.3
Category Rank Percentile								
<i>Sociology & Political Science</i>	46	47	53	45	53	64	67	–
<i>Social Sciences</i>	30	37	43	37	48	64	68	–
<i>Public Administration</i>	31	30	36	26	34	49	52	–

*most recent data

-- data not available yet

References

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- Walker, C. P., & Cramer, E. R.** (2024). Contagion to unrest: Investigating the link between disease and civil unrest in Africa. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, **43**(1), pp. 24–33.