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Publishing in Politics: A Guide for New Researchers

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1. Introduction¹

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Publishing, always important, is becoming ever more so in Politics. There are increasing professional pressures to publish both early and often. This short guide is intended to provide both general advice and some specific recommendations about how to do so. It is important to bear in mind that publishing is a very personal activity and is done for different reasons and to realize different objectives. This guide, therefore, does not seek to be prescriptive. Rather it aims to provide useful information on why and how to publish, so that you can make informed decisions. It is intended primarily for PhD students and early career academics, although its advice should be relevant to all academics in the discipline of Politics. In addition, given the Political Studies Association's (PSA) base in the United Kingdom, the focus in the specifics is oriented to British academia, although the more general thrust has wider application.

The rest of this chapter discusses the benefits of publishing and considers the main different forms of publication. The second chapter focuses on publishing research articles in journals, while the third considers review articles. The fourth chapter explores publishing monographs, with a focus on converting a PhD thesis into a book.

Why publish?

The periodic Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) in the UK has increased pressures to publish because it uses publications as a strong measure of research strength, the basis for allocating much government funding to universities. Departments are therefore keen to recruit people who publish. Although allowances are made for 'new entrants' to the profession, Politics departments are more comfortable hiring people with clear track records of publication, because having already successfully published work is seen as the best indicator that someone will continue to publish in the future. The future of the RAE after 2008 is unclear, but whether it continues or is replaced by some other form of assessment, publications are likely to remain a key indicator of research strength. Thus publishing will remain a pressing preoccupation for PhD students and early career academics wishing to enter the UK job market.

In the US it has long been the case that academics must 'publish or perish'. The bottom line is that, whatever the academic culture, it is better to publish than not.

Beyond these non-trivial considerations, there are a number of important benefits to publishing. Perhaps most important is that it is the best way to disseminate your research findings and engage in academic debates. It is only by publishing that people beyond your peers, students and supervisor(s) will learn of your research, ideas and insights. Publishing is one of the most important ways you can contribute to the discipline.

Moreover, the very process of publishing, although sometimes frustrating and painful, is also a valuable learning experience. It forces you to explain your ideas to others who, unlike your supervisor, are not intimately aware of what you are trying to achieve. In addition, you can also get feedback through referees' reports. These may not always be helpful, but those that are constructive can help you to strengthen your argument. Even those that are not can at least flag potential problems with, or criticisms of, your work that you can seek to insulate yourself against.

All this implies that students need to be seeking to publish even while working on their theses. But given that the typical British PhD student is enrolled for only three to four years, it is difficult to balance the pressure to publish with the need to finish your thesis in good time, as a completed thesis is necessary to be competitive on the academic job market. As the preceding discussion suggests, however, completing the thesis and publishing can be complementary, and students can try to spin out thesis chapters into journal articles or book chapters as they go along. This will both provide additional feedback as the thesis project develops and mean that the student will enter the job market with one or two publications in the bag—or at least in the pipeline. In order to maximize the benefits of publishing and to minimize the distraction from the thesis, however, you should seek to publish only pieces that can be relatively easily adapted from your thesis.

In what form to publish?

There are many different forms of publication – monographs, research articles in journals, book reviews and review articles, book chapters and various forms of electronic publication. All have their benefits and drawbacks. There is a tendency for some forms of publication to be more highly valued than others. Although what should really matter is the quality of the material published, the reality is that others (including university appointing committees) often take the form in which something is published as a proxy for its quality. This proxy is based largely on how rigorous the screening (peer review) process is assumed to be. Moreover, there is a significant degree of variation in the assumed quality of specific outlets within these different forms of publication.

In Politics the monograph (an authored rather than edited, research-based book) remains the benchmark publication². This status reflects the effort involved, the demands of sustaining a substantiated argument, and the fact that monographs are usually subject to refereeing. How rigorous a publisher's refereeing policy is perceived to be is the key to how highly regarded the publisher is. Given the importance of the monograph, it is important to try and publish your PhD thesis as a monograph. Chapter 4 by Heidi Bagtazo provides guidance on how to do this.

Second in the perceived hierarchy is the refereed journal article. Again, the key is the perception that peer review – or 'refereeing' – makes publishing in journals more difficult than in other outlets. In addition, journal articles are more likely to be widely read. This has much to do with the time constraints of academic life. Journals, especially those of learned associations, land on academics' desks and their tables of contents appear in email in-boxes. In addition, articles are readily turned up by search engines. This greater visibility is a huge advantage over book chapters (see below), which might be buried in a volume that is not generally of interest to your target audience. Journal articles (from the writer's as well as the reader's point of view) also have the advantage of being much shorter than books. Consequently, many authors publish the condensed argument of their books in journal articles. Both the quality signaling effects and the profile effects are greater the more prestigious the journal. Chapter 2 gives some nuts and bolts guidance on publishing journal articles.

Book chapters are similar to journal articles in terms of length. They differ, however, in that they tend to be solicited and tend to not be subject to such stringent peer review. As a consequence, there is a tendency to not rate book chapters as highly as journal articles. Again, this reflects the shortcut of using the type of outlet as an indicator of quality, rather than an actual assessment of the specific piece of work. Some book chapters are excellent and, particularly with diligent and engaged editors, may be put through a more rigorous screening process than many journal articles. The perception, however, remains and you need to be aware of it. In addition, as noted above, there is also a tendency for book chapters to fly beneath the radar of your target audience. There are, however, some edited volumes that are 'must-reads' in a field or subfield. Such volumes may be edited by or bring together the leading scholars in the area and/or be published as part of an established and respected series. Chapters in such volumes receive much more attention than articles in obscure (or even not so obscure) journals. Moreover, some edited volumes grow out of workshops in which there are intense, substantive discussions among the contributors. Such exchanges, and connections, are extremely valuable in their own right and contribute to the quality of the overall volume. Because book chapters tend to be solicited, we have not included a separate chapter on how to publish them.

An excellent way to begin to publish is through review articles, discussed by Martin Smith in Chapter 3. Writing book reviews (or the shorter book notes) does not carry great cachet in Politics, but it is a way to gain experience of the mechanics of the publication process. Moreover, you get a free copy of the book that you review. But because of the very lowly status of book reviews, you need to be careful how many you do. Only do reviews for books (especially the expensive ones) that you want to read for your own work. Review essays, in which the author reviews several books and surveys the state of the field are, however, a different proposition. Such reviews are widely read and are often extensively cited. Because of their more reflective nature, they also provide more scope for the author to make a substantive contribution. Review essays are not, however, generally considered a 'research output' and so tend not to carry as much cachet as conventional journal articles, but the very best ones can be extremely insightful and make a significant intellectual contribution³.

With the increasing shift toward electronic subscriptions to journals (and e-books), the spread of e-journals and developments such as Blackwell's OnlineEarly, whether a work is published virtually or printed on paper matters less and less. What matters is the perceived rigorousness of the refereeing process. In this the traditional, print journals and book publishers tend to have the edge, and are likely to do so for some time. In addition, with the development of early electronic publication of accepted articles, electronic sources lose their speed advantage over the more traditional forms of publication.

Co-authoring

In addition to the issue of in which form to publish, another key consideration, particularly for new researchers, is whether or not to co-author. Co-authoring can be extremely rewarding. It can provide valuable training in how to write and get published (including how to respond emotionally and literally to referees). It can be extremely intellectually rewarding as you and your co-author debate points and develop the argument. It can be very efficient, with each author contributing complementary elements to produce a whole that is more than the sum of its parts. And it can be a relatively easy way for a new researcher to get published.

Caution, however, is required. As a new researcher, you may be approached by a senior colleague or your supervisor with a co-authoring opportunity. And it may be that this person, who gets asked to write many things, does not have the time to write it him or herself and is looking for somebody to do the heavy lifting. This may be worth it in order to get published, but think carefully about what is in it for you.

The further the project takes you from your core research, the more wary you should be. By the same token, you do not want to blur intellectual credit for your own research⁴. You also need to be aware of the need to establish your own intellectual identity. Co-authoring does not necessarily pose a problem for this, but if all you publish is co-authored, others (including appointing committees) will not be sure what your contribution has been⁵.

When co-authoring you need to be willing to stand up to your co-author if you are unhappy about the direction the piece is taking or the quality of what is written. Problems with the direction of the piece are best avoided by agreeing in advance the line of argument.

In addition, it is also important to establish a clear division of labour and timetable for delivery. You should also have a frank discussion about the order in which your names will appear. And you need to be able to rely on your co-author. Consequently, it tends to be easier to co-author with people that you know well and respect. Remember, however, that, particularly when writing with somebody more senior than yourself, the piece in question may matter much more to you than to him or her.

Conclusion

There are no black and white answers to the questions of what and how to publish in Politics. There are, however, some perceptions and prejudices you need to be aware of, but the most important thing is for you to think strategically about how different choices benefit you. The rest of this guide is devoted to providing concrete advice about how to go about publishing in Politics.

Notes

¹I am grateful to Jane Duckett and Paul Graham, my co-editors, and to Christopher Berry, Daniel Hammond, Ana Langer, Murray Leith, Anke Schmidt-Felzmann, Craig Smith, Stephen White and Kerri-Anne Woods for their comments on earlier drafts of this chapter.

²See, for example, the BISA/PSA response to the DfES consultation on Reform of Higher Education Research Assessment and Funding, available at www.psa.ac.uk/publications/2006%20RAE%20consultation.pdf.

³See for example the guidance issued by the Politics and International Studies Panel for the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise. UAO 39 Politics and International Studies Panel Working Methods, available at: www.rae.ac.uk/panels/main/j/politics

⁴This can be managed within the text by, for example, inserting a reference to your thesis (even if still in progress) or other work.

⁵Depending on the surnames involved this might be addressed by the author name order. If this is not clear and your co-author is one of your referees for a job, ask him or her to spell out your contribution (assuming this would be to your advantage).

2. Publishing Research Articles

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As discussed in the Introduction, publishing in journals has several advantages. Because of the refereeing process, journal articles are considered to have been vetted for quality. In addition, journal articles tend to be more widely read than book chapters and are easier to digest than books. This Chapter seeks to give advice on how to publish your work in journal article format – how to decide to which journal to submit, how to go about writing and submitting an article, and what to expect during the process. This advice is based on my experiences as an editor, author and referee.

Choosing a journal

A journal's quality halo and profile (how widely read it is) are greater the more prestigious it is, but prestige can be difficult to assess. To a significant extent prestige reflects how selective a journal is, the ratio of articles published to those submitted. There is no clear hierarchy of journals in Politics², although some are undoubtedly considered more prestigious than others (we won't name names here, but the flagship journals of learned societies usually have good reputations)³. Consequently, you should seek advice from your supervisor and peers on which journals are well-regarded in your sub-field.

Also, when trying to decide where to submit, a good place to start is with the journals you yourself read. You must consider what they publish to be of reasonable quality and you can be fairly sure that what you are writing is substantively appropriate and is likely to be read by others working in your area.

An additional consideration is whether to submit to a general politics journal or to a more specialist journal. This decision should be influenced by the audience with which you wish to engage and the type of argument that you are trying to make. An article in a general politics journal will generally need to engage with broader debates in the discipline and may need to provide more background information. An article in a more specialist journal will focus on a narrower set of debates and can take more background information for granted. These considerations apply less to articles in political

theory, which do not generally need to be recast to appear in general politics journals. Publishing in more general politics journals may be beneficial when applying for jobs in politics departments, both because the members of the appointing committee are more likely to be familiar with the journal (and perhaps even the article) and because it helps to demonstrate your ability to relate your work to more general debates. At the same time, publishing in more specialist journals helps to establish your reputation as an expert in a particular area. It is, therefore, probably sensible to seek to publish in a variety of journals, perhaps submitting an article based on the introduction of the thesis to a general politics journal and a case study (should you have one) to an appropriate specialist journal.

When considering where to submit, you should pay careful attention to the range of topics the journal publishes. When dealing with more specialist journals, it is important to make sure that your subject matter fits within the remit of the journal—they usually have a description of the remit on their website or on the inside cover of the journal itself. One leading area studies journal, for example, rejects about 20 percent of submissions out of hand because they do not fit within its focus. In addition to subject matter, some journals favour a particular approach to studying politics, such as formal modelling or neo-Marxian analysis. If your piece does not fit the subject matter or approach, save yourself time and submit somewhere else. If you are unsure, you may wish to send an abstract to the editor(s) for advice.

You should not necessarily restrict yourself to politics journals. A number of important international relations articles, for examples, are published in international law journals, while many political theory articles appear in philosophy journals. With the job market in mind, however, it is probably better, at least initially, to submit to only the best known non-politics journals.

A final consideration when deciding where to submit is timing. If you are not in a hurry to have an article accepted, you might try submitting it to a more prestigious, and therefore more selective, journal. If the article is rejected, you can submit it somewhere else. If you are in a hurry, however, you may want to target a journal that you think would be quite likely to accept it. A further consideration is how long the period between acceptance and publication is. Some journals have quite long

‘queues’ – a year or more between acceptance and publication. To an extent the closing of the RAE period on 31 December 2007, by which time publications need to be in print in order to be included for assessment, reduces the significance of queues, at least as far as appointing committees are concerned; an accepted article is an indicator of your intent and ability and is bankable for the next RAE (should there be one). In terms of building a reputation and engaging in wider debates, however, a lengthy queue can be extremely frustrating. Some publishers, including Blackwell, have introduced procedures by which accepted articles can be published electronically after copyediting but prior to appearing in print, which can significantly mitigate the problem of queues. Some journals publish the date on which the final version of the article was accepted, which gives you some idea of the length of the queue. If you are very concerned about how promptly your article will get into print, you should contact the journal, probably the editorial assistant if there is one, to ask how long it is currently taking accepted articles to appear in print.

Writing the article

Although it may seem blindingly obvious, it is important to remember that a journal article needs to be a discrete entity, capable of standing alone. It is particularly important to bear this in mind when you are trying to spin publications out of your thesis. Because the thesis is a much larger, integrated whole, significant rewriting and recasting may be required to enable a chapter to work as an article. It is, therefore, often a good idea to try to publish conference papers based on the thesis, as they are already written to stand alone and should be roughly the right length.

The key thing to remember when writing a journal article is that you must (rather as you do with your PhD but much more briefly) set out very clearly the contribution that it makes in relation to a body of literature, such as an on-going debate or a particular methodological approach. This literature should be one that is relevant to the journal to which you are submitting (for example a body of international political economy literature for an IPE journal, a body of comparative politics literature for a journal in that field). In this, journal articles can be very different from book chapters where you might begin by connecting your chapter to the themes or key issues of the book. You can think

of that literature as a ‘hook’, something on which you can ‘hang’ your article and demonstrate its importance or significance.

A journal article should also discuss its approach and/or data sources. How you do this depends very much on the kinds of data you use: with quantitative data, for example, you would need to set out its sources and discuss its reliability; with qualitative interviews you might want to discuss how they were conducted. This should not occupy too much space but is important in supporting your conclusions.

The better journal article sets out its argument and structure clearly in the introduction. In the conclusion it discusses the significance and implications of findings (rather than simply repeating those findings). Writing an abstract that succinctly sets out the issue and the argument can help to structure the article. While there are no strict rules about how journal articles are structured, you will usually find these common elements.

Submitting the article

You should pay attention to the journal’s submission guidelines, which tend to be printed in each issue of the journal and which are usually available online. (The submissions guidelines for the PSA’s journals -- *BJPIR*, *Political Studies*, *Political Studies Review* and *POLITICS* -- are reproduced at the back of this guide.) These guidelines will tell you how and to whom to submit your article. The latter is particularly significant if there has been a recent change in who edits the journal. In order to facilitate the refereeing process (see below), you should provide an anonymised version of your article. This means not putting your name on the text, removing phrases such as ‘as I have argued elsewhere’ with a reference and may, depending on the journal, involve removing all detailed references to yourself. Not submitting in the correct form or to the previous editor(s) will just slow down consideration of your article. The guidelines will also inform you of word limits (if any) and the journal’s house style (use of headings and sub-headings, referencing style, and whether they use US or UK spelling). Journals based in the United States tend to be a bit more relaxed about word limits, but British-based journals are often quite strict and your article may be rejected simply for being over-length. Submissions are much less likely to be rejected outright for not conforming to the house style, but you will have to conform to it

before the piece will be finally accepted for publication.

The screening process

There are three main stages in the screening process: pre-screening; refereeing; and decision making. Pre-screening is conducted in-house by the editors and involves assessing whether the article’s substance, approach and length are appropriate to the journal. It may well also involve a preliminary evaluation of the article’s quality, with very poor articles being rejected without being sent out to referees. This is done so as not to try the patience of referees, but it means that there are unlikely to be extensive comments.

The heart of the screening process is refereeing. Referees advise the editors about whether a submission should be published and are encouraged to provide feedback to the author(s). Most journals send potential articles to two or three referees. The norm is for refereeing to be ‘double-blind’ – that is, the referees do not know who the author is (hence the need to anonymise the text) and the author does not know who the referees are. This is intended to enhance the impartiality of the refereeing process.

Refereeing is by far the most time consuming stage of the screening process. It takes a long time because there are few inducements for the referee other than a sense of professional responsibility. It can, therefore, take the editors time to find appropriate scholars who are willing to referee a submitted article and it is usual to give a referee one or two months in which to write a report (this recognises that refereeing must compete with other, more pressing demands). The most significant delays come from referees procrastinating and missing deadlines and sometimes pulling out altogether at a late date, which may force the editors to start the process again with a new referee. It is therefore not unusual for the screening to take six months, even a year, although some of the major US journals aim for four months and *POLITICS* aims for 10 weeks. Because of the potential for delay in the refereeing process some journals send articles out to three referees, but will make a decision based on only two referees’ reports (never fewer) if one of the referees does not come through in a reasonable period.

Referees, due to the requirements of their task, tend to be critical. Moreover, they tend to evaluate submissions against an absolute standard and to not make allowances for the status of the journal; this is where the editors come in (see below). Some referees, encouraged by the anonymity of author and referee, can even be brutal. It is therefore necessary as an author to develop a thick skin, especially as you may think that the referee has completely missed the point. Some referees, however, are extremely conscientious and constructive. Their comments can really help you to strengthen and improve your argument, and thus the article. Many referees fall in between these two extremes. Some, thankfully relatively few, invest so little time and energy in the reviewing process that their comments are of little help to the editors and even less to the author. Others seek to impose their own views of important questions or appropriate methods, objecting that the article does not answer the question that interests them or use the methodology they favour. Perhaps not surprisingly, therefore, it is not uncommon to receive very different comments, and even different recommendations for acceptance or rejection, from the referees.

The three principal recommendation options among which referees are usually asked to choose are:

- 1) accept the article with no or only minor corrections;
- 2) request that it be revised and resubmitted, sometimes also called accept subject to substantive revisions; and
- 3) reject.

There used to be a tendency for referees to choose the middle option, so as to avoid rejecting an article. But there seems to have been a move away from this, with some editors giving explicit instruction to referees to reject articles unless they really think they are realistically publishable. In addition, there are other incentives for referees to be decisive: if a referee recommends revise and resubmit, he or she is both expected to provide extensive comments about how this should be done and will likely be asked to referee the resubmitted piece. As a consequence of the tightening up on the ‘revise and resubmit’ option, more articles are rejected, but articles that are given a ‘revise and resubmit’ have a very strong chance of being accepted by the journal.

Informed by the referees' reports the editors will decide what to do with the article. As noted above, referees frequently disagree, at least in their specific comments if not in their final recommendations. For the most prestigious, and therefore competitive journals one negative referee's report may be sufficient for the editors to reject the article. Editors of less prestigious journals, however, are more likely to exercise discretion. Even editors of prestigious journals may discount a referee's recommendation if they doubt the quality of the review. Thus, the editors will have to evaluate both the quality and substance of each referee's comments and weigh them against the other reports. The more disparate the opinions and the sketchier the reports, the harder it is for the editors to make a decision. If the editors decide to ask the author to revise and resubmit, they should provide specific guidance on how this should be done, especially if the referees diverged substantially in their comments.

What to do after submitting

You (and all authors) need to bear in mind that yours is only one of many submissions under consideration and it is much more important to you than to anybody else. That does not mean, however, that you should be passive. If you have not heard anything for three months after receiving acknowledgement of your submission, contact the editors, or better the editorial assistant, to ask what is happening with your article. It will almost certainly be with the referees, but this contact will probably spur the editors to chase them. You can continue to follow up every couple of months if necessary. It is usually better to address procedural questions to the editorial assistant, if there is one, who is more likely to know where in the process an article is. In all of your interactions with the editorial team be polite. You want them on your side and exercising discretion to your advantage.

After the decision

If you have been accepted, congratulations! You can up-date your CV. If you are asked to revise and resubmit your article, be sure to include a covering letter in which you describe what changes you have made in response to the referees' comments. You can also explain why you have not taken some of the comments on board; it is your work after all. That said, always take the comments seriously and treat them with respect, the same referees will probably be evaluating the resubmission.

If your article is rejected, don't argue with the editors' decision. You are entitled to an explanation, but the decision is an academic judgement. Complaining will not help and will only antagonise the editors. Move on and submit your piece elsewhere. It is important to bear in mind that even a rejected article is only rejected from one journal and there are many others out there to which you can submit. So console yourself with the fact that you might have been unlucky in having had tough referees this time round, engage with the more useful referee comments, perhaps seek advice from your supervisor, and try again. Also, remember that editors consider and make a decision on each article, not its author, so just because you have been turned down on this occasion does not mean you should not submit papers to them in the future.

Ethics

The one professional ethic that is unique to journal publishing is that, however slow and unpredictable the process is, it is not acceptable to submit the same article to more than one journal at the same time. If you are caught, and through the process of refereeing there is a good chance of this, all of the journals in question are likely to reject the article. Moreover, it is highly unethical to publish the same article in more than one place (at least not without permission). It is acceptable to submit more than one article based on the same research, but each should have a distinctive take on the material and they should not present the same data—journals are usually unwilling to publish research that has been published elsewhere before. Be careful of publishing too many articles that are too similar; you will get a reputation as a 'cut and paste artist' and people may stop reading your work because it is so repetitive. This is bad enough after you have established a relationship for significant scholarship, but is lethal if you are trying to build one.

Conclusion

Publishing is a professional necessity. Although you will be looking to publish your thesis as a book once you have submitted (see Chapter 4), while pursuing your PhD you should be looking to publish. Journal articles are an excellent way to do this as they are more prestigious and have higher profiles than book chapters. They are more prestigious because the screening process is perceived to be (and usually is) more rigorous. This means that publishing a journal article is more difficult, but also potentially more

rewarding, particularly if you get valuable comments from your referees. Publishing in journals is not easy, but if it were it would not really be worth doing, so take up the challenge and submit!

Notes

¹This chapter draws on Charles Lees's presentation on publishing in journals to the 2006 PSA Graduate Conference in Reading and on discussions with PhD students at the Universities of Edinburgh (June 2006) and Glasgow (January 2007). I am grateful to Jane Duckett and Paul Graham, my co-editors, and Christopher Berry, Daniel Hammond, Ana Langer, Murray Leith, Craig Smith and Stephen White for their comments on earlier drafts of this chapter.

²For example, the Politics and International Studies Panel for the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise has explicitly rejected establishing a ranking of journals. See UAO 39 Politics and International Studies Panel Working Methods, available at: www.rae.ac.uk/panels/main/j/politics.

³The most commonly used indicator of prestige is the ISI's 'impact factor', which reports the number of citations per article published in the two previous calendar years. Thus a journal's 2006 impact factor is based on the number of citations in ISI listed journals in 2006 to articles published in the journal in 2004 and 2005. The ISI was not designed for the social sciences, and the impact factors of politics journals are quite low, which means that the rankings of journals can be very volatile from year to year. The ISI can be accessed through the Web of Knowledge (<http://wok.mimas.ac.uk/>). It is common to consider the categories of Politics, International Relations and Public Administration together. There have been a couple of recent attempts to develop lists of prestigious politics journals. Simon Hix recently developed a list of 63 journals based primarily on number of citations. ('A Global Ranking of Political Science Departments' *Political Studies Review* 2/3, 2004, p. 298.). James C. Garand and Michael W. Giles surveyed US political scientists about their opinions of journals, ranking 115 journals, but focusing on the top 30 ('Journals in the Discipline: A Report on a New Survey of American Political Scientists,' *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 36/2, 2003, 293-308). To emphasise, these rankings have no formal status and have their biases; not least that some specialist journals have excellent reputations, but small readerships and so attract fewer citations. You might, however, find them useful in identifying journals to which you might submit.



3. Publishing Review Articles

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In the mind of some people review articles are of lesser importance or quality than articles based on primary research. This is an attitude that has been reinforced by the RAE process which has led to the perception that papers not based on primary research are of less value. However, I believe that this is a false view, and review articles make a valuable contribution to knowledge. Review articles, like other articles and books, are neither good nor bad in themselves but depend on the quality of the article. Indeed, it is the case that the review articles are frequently the most cited publications. Some review articles can be magisterial in their sweep, and in the way that they analyse a field of research, and the best can define a new research agenda. Indeed, in the so-called hard sciences a review article is often seen as a major contribution to the development of particular scientific question by pulling together all the data on a research theme and thus providing an overview of where research in a particular area has reached. A good review article in political science can have a similar impact. The line between review articles and research articles can be blurred. A leading review article can build on the review to make an original understanding of an issue, theme or approach in politics.

The first thing to bear in mind is that there are different types of reviews. The most simple and straightforward are reviews of a single book. These can range from a few hundred words to over a 1000. Simple book reviews are a good way into publishing. They are not usually refereed, they are relatively short and they provide good practice for getting published. Moreover, there are more books than reviewers and so editors are often looking for people to review books. Essentially with a book review of this type it is important to summarise the book and make a few critical, in a friendly way, comments about the nature of the book. It is unproductive to 'slate' a book because judgments are always subjective and somebody's heart and soul has gone into producing it. However, there is no need to avoid constructive criticism. It is important not to do too many simple book reviews. They are useful but time consuming, and nobody has ever been appointed to a post for the number of book

reviews that they have written.

More substantial reviews can often deal with books that cover a common theme. In a sense these are extended book reviews and can range from 1000 to occasionally up to 5000 words. Whilst these are in some ways the easiest forms of review articles, it is important to think about how to tackle a long review. The extra space means that it is important that the review is more than a summary of the books and so it should place the books in a wider context. More importantly, it provides the opportunity to deal with some of the issues raised in the books under review. An extended book review means it is possible to develop your own perspective and arguments on a particular issue. It is important when doing this type of review to think what themes you will develop from the books being reviewed and use the review as a way of developing an essay with a clear approach.

Also remember that many journals need reviewers and you can register your interest in being a reviewer with a journal. This does sometimes lead to the commissioning of longer review articles. It is also the case with *Political Studies Review* that the editors are open to suggestions for review articles, or symposia – where a single or a number of books are discussed by several authors. So if you have a good idea, approach an editor.

The more usual review article can be as long as a normal article and have, as I suggested, equal worth. The aim of this type of review is not to focus on a limited number of articles or books but really to write a paper that can:

- Review the state of the art in a discipline or sub-discipline
- Examine a new body of theoretical or empirical work
- Introduce a politics audience to complementary work from another discipline such as philosophy or geography
- Take a particular empirical problem and review cross-disciplinary work on that area
- Review a field or subfield and suggest a way of developing it or a new agenda.

A good review article can thus open up a debate on a particular area; outline new areas of research; introduce new approaches and shape the way that a field is perceived and developed.

Writing a good review article takes considerable thought and some skill. The best reviews condense what may be an extensive body of

work into maybe 8,000 words. This has to be done in a way that demonstrates a mastery of the literature, and, in the best reviews, it is able to add something new to that literature; either in way of interpretation or in terms of suggesting a new way forward for research. It is important that review articles are not descriptions of what a number of authors write but develops themes and omissions in the literature. A review should be a critique that attempts to sum up a body of literature and place it into a wider context. It needs to pull out the key contributions of the literature and its failings and where it can develop.

There is no single way of structuring a review article. However, it is important to ensure that a review article is organised around themes and not books. The themes could be historical in the sense of examining how a concept (or concepts) has developed over time, or it could be analytical in the sense of grouping together particular approaches to a concept or literature. What is crucial for a good review is to have some sense of development. A good review will build on the existing literature to present a new argument, to think about evidence in a particular way or make a theoretical or conceptual advance. If a review just summarises the positions and goes no further, the reader is left hanging, and the review is a review and not a contribution to knowledge. It is not possible to say that a review article is distinct in some sui generis way from an ordinary article. However, review articles often take a broader sweep and may not be making claims to generating new evidence, whereas on the whole a research article is usually dealing with a specific focus on a particular problem (see Chapter 2).

A review article is a good way of getting into publishing for the first time and can be a good discipline for learning how to structure a large amount of material into a readable and relatively short paper. There are a number of reasons why a new entrant to the profession should consider a review article. First, it can be done without primary research and so with limited resources it is possible to gather the material for a review article. Second, most doctoral theses start with a literature review and it should be relatively straightforward to develop your literature review into a review article. In your thesis you may have brought together a body of literature for the first time and it is good way to disseminate your knowledge or approach. Third, it is a good way of getting a name as an expert in a particular area. Review articles do get noticed and so your

name will be associated with a particular subfield. Finally, to get a review article published on a particular area can be useful in terms of establishing credibility for a research grant bid. In making a research bid you need to demonstrate a grasp of the existing literature, an expertise in the area and the ability to make a significant advance in understanding. A review article allows you to do all of these things and so can prepare the ground for a research bid.

If you are thinking of writing a review article it is important, as with any other publication, to do your research. Not all journals publish review articles, or at least they do not have a distinctive review article section, so look at the journal and examine which ones do reviews and how they organise their review articles. Are they state of the discipline or are they reviewing new bodies of work? Often with a review article it is a good idea to contact the editor and ask if they are interested in a review article in a particular area. All the PSA journals include some type of review articles so take a look at what has been published and see where your work would best fit.

Some review articles may not present themselves as review articles. A review article that takes a new line or develops a particular argument or theoretical approach can be presented as an original paper and be like any other journal article, and so you need to consider how you are presenting your review, and what claims you are making for it. Are you essentially building on an existing body of literature to develop an original article or are you doing a state of the literature debate? If so, it is important to do the background research and make sure that your review is comprehensive. You then need to think about your themes and to highlight what is distinctive about your approach. It is a good idea to get a number of people to read your review and to take account of their points. Review articles are usually reviewed in the same way as research articles and so it is important that you consider the reviewing process and the need to satisfy reviewers (see Chapter 2). In the review process it is important to distinguish between presenting a review article as either a specific review piece or an ordinary article. If it is the latter then it will be important to convince the referees that the paper is making an original contribution to debate.

A good review article is difficult to do, but when done well and with a distinctive approach to a subject they can be amongst the most highly

regarded and cited pieces of work. As such it is important to give serious attention to review articles and to think about how you can use your work to develop an overview of your area. Moreover, reviews and review articles are a good way in to the world of publishing. Talk to your colleagues and supervisors, and think about how to develop your work into a review piece that may shape the future research agenda of a particular field.



4. Publishing your PhD

Heidi Bagtazo

Senior Commissioning Editor, Routledge

As a commissioning editor of a politics and international studies research list at a commercial press, my aim in this chapter is to provide a brief guide to converting and publishing a PhD thesis from a publisher's perspective.

There can be a lot of pressure on successful doctoral candidates and junior researchers to convert and publish their PhD theses. The publication of a first monograph can strongly contribute to the success of a junior academic's career: it enables the author's work to become more widely read and cited; it can strengthen the author's reputation; and it can help a candidate when seeking a job and/or applying for grants and funding.

While many PhD theses are suitable for conversion and publication as academic books, on occasion some are not. The potential for a PhD thesis to be published as a book is not decided by academic quality alone, but also by its commercial potential. Some PhDs can lend themselves better to being published as journal articles, while some can be suitable for both. Publishers depend on academic referees to assess the academic quality and standard of a volume and when a commissioning editor considers new proposals for publication, their approach is not as an academic, but as a publisher. Publishing is a competitive business and assessing a book's commercial potential is an important consideration. The monographs that tend to be most successful, commercially and academically, are those that: make a significant and original contribution to the field, empirically and/or theoretically; appeal to a sufficiently large proportion of the discipline or one of the larger sub-disciplines; have international appeal, either discussing subjects of international relevance or including international case studies; have a comparative approach; and present findings and conclusions that can be applied more broadly across the discipline.

Finding a publisher

While you may wish to begin thinking about how you might publish your thesis earlier, many publishers prefer you to wait until your PhD has been awarded before you submit your project to them. One of the first steps to publishing a book that originates from your PhD thesis is to identify an appropriate publisher.

Many academic publishers and presses today focus on textbook publishing only and it is important to find one that publishes monographs, research titles and PhD conversions. Large academic conferences including the PSA, UACES and BISA in the UK, the ISA and APSA in America, and the ECPR in Europe, often feature book exhibitions where publishers display their latest publications. These exhibitions are useful places where you can seek advice from publishers and also gain an overview of the scope of their lists. It can also be useful to talk to your former supervisor and examiners for any recommendations as they will be more familiar with and experienced in academic publishing.

Identify a publisher who publishes in your area. The most obvious choices would be university presses and commercial academic publishers. There are also non-profit publishers and publishing professional associations, for example the ECPR has a small publishing programme, but there are few other outlets for publishing academic monographs that also offer effective marketing and distribution. A university press can sometimes publish books that a commercial publisher could not, but in today's very challenging environment for monograph publishers, they too are increasingly constrained by commercial expectations. There are also niche publishers that specialise in areas in which bigger publishers may not publish.

When seeking a publisher it is important to identify one that has a good reputation for publishing extensively in the same area as your potential book. The academic reputation of a publisher is normally grounded in the process of peer reviewing projects and manuscripts, and with whom you publish can affect how the book is perceived. From a practical point of view, if you are aware of a publisher's publications in your field that suggests that the publisher has effective marketing and distribution.

The marketing and distribution offered by a publishing company should be a key consideration. Academic research publishing is rarely, if ever, lucrative and the aim of publishing is to disseminate research more widely to a larger and interested audience. Your first book should enhance your reputation and has the potential to further your career and bring about new opportunities. If an excellent book is written and published, but not supported by sufficient marketing and distribution, it is likely to sink without making an impact. When considering a publisher, it

might be prudent to find out about the following:

- Does the publisher offer global distribution and marketing?
- Do they have sales teams / offices in and outside the UK who will promote and sell their books to the local market?
- Does the publisher co-publish their titles in the US, or will/can they arrange to co-publish your book in the US with a US publishing partner?
- Does the publisher send out review copies to key academic journals?
- Does the publisher effectively market their books in catalogues and offer author flyers or other marketing material? Are the catalogues mailed internationally or only in the UK?
- Does the publisher attend large academic conferences and take part in book exhibitions?

All of the above make an important contribution to raising the profile of an academic book and can significantly increase sales. As the author you too can play an important part in the promotion of your book: promoting the book and displaying flyers when giving presentations and announcing the book through relevant list serves. This is very effective marketing as it is targeted at people who really are interested in the subject of the book.

You may also wish to consider submitting your book to a series. At Routledge almost all our research titles are published in series that are either thematic, reflecting sub-disciplines, or related to a professional association. Book series are an effective way to market books. A series can bring related titles to the attention of readers of individual titles and libraries can register their interest in a series and receive books on a standing order basis. Even if you do not submit your book proposal for a specific series, the publisher may place a book in a series on your behalf. You can usually find information about book series from publishers' catalogues, their websites and at conferences.

If the series has academic series editors then you may wish to approach them for some feedback before submitting the formal proposal to the publisher. They can provide valuable advice on the content of your book and on how to submit and prepare your proposal for a publisher. The more active the individual series editors are, the more advantageous it is to publish your book in

that series. These series can offer a more detailed and involved review process as the series editors will provide feedback on the content of your book, in addition to the academic reports solicited during the review process. Publishing in such series can be more challenging as the series editors will choose books that reflect their interests and the interest of the series. It can also be more competitive as most series editors can only take on the responsibility for a limited number of books and can therefore cherry pick the books they consider to have the best potential.

It is a good idea to identify whether the press requires subsidies for the production of the book, as this can be a substantial cost. Many of the larger publishers do not require authors to contribute to the normal production costs of the book. However, there are some costs that are usually the author's responsibility; these include permissions costs for reproducing any previously published material and the indexing of the book. Routledge always requires that monographs have an index and if the author does not wish to provide her/his own, the cost can be charged to the author's royalties, rather than being paid upfront.

Understanding the market

The market for academic books has become increasingly challenging. Many libraries have faced budget cuts over the past ten years and there is increasing competition for library budgets from journals and there is further competition from information freely available on the Internet. It is good to be aware that most PhD conversions and research titles are published in hardback format. They are generally sold at a high price mainly to the international library market. They tend to have a small first print run of approximately 400 copies. For a published book to be considered a commercial success, it needs to sell approximately 75% of the initial print run, which should ensure that the book's sales have covered production costs and its share of company overheads and so broken even. Although individual chapters might appear on secondary reading lists or in course readers, most research titles are unlikely to be adopted and used as a textbook for undergraduate students; the expected audience would be advanced students, researchers and academics in the field. For a book to succeed in this competitive market, it will need to have international appeal. Books with narrowly focused case studies on areas of limited interest do not tend

to sell as well. A book might be of high scholarly merit but if it is considered unlikely to be a commercial success, it might be rejected.

When writing a proposal you need to bear your potential audience in mind at all times. A PhD is written for a specific audience: the supervisor and the external examiners. A book is published for a much broader audience and it is very likely that the potential purchaser of your book will have different expectations. For example, while the literature review is an important part of a thesis, a book purchaser will be more interested in your specific findings and research rather than the books you have read. You also need to bear in mind that the purchaser is not always the reader. Libraries purchase the large majority of hardback monographs, sometimes at the request of university lecturers. Often titles are purchased by libraries that have registered their interest in specific subject areas or in specific series and are sent the book automatically or on approval. For this reason, it is very important that the title is clear and descriptive, using key words indicating the content and subject appeal of the book to potential buyers. Given that most research publishing sells to the international library market, the title needs to be clear to non-native English speakers and non subject specialists. A clear and descriptive title can also ensure that your book is easily found by potential readers using key word searches on book databases.

Writing and submitting your proposal

Before you begin writing your proposal it is advisable that you have a look at the publisher's website to see if they provide instructions about submitting a proposal for publication. This can provide substantial guidance. Most publishers request very similar material, including the following:

- A statement of aims including 3-4 paragraphs outlining the rationale behind the book;
- A detailed synopsis and chapter headings & length and schedule;
- Definition of the market;
- A list and assessment of the main competing titles;
- CV / author biography; and
- Sample chapters / full manuscript.

The word length of the final manuscript is expected to be between 80,000 – 100,000 words. It is very rare for a PhD to be published in the

format of the thesis and a proposal for a PhD conversion should also include the changes you intend to make.

Questions and issues to consider include:

- Which parts will you cut or modify?
- How you will be adapting the language and style, as well, as annotations and references? This would include reducing any unnecessary jargon and footnotes.
- Most people find it necessary to streamline the argument and the writing to reduce repetitions and overlaps and to lighten the empirical material.
- You may wish to restructure the content, changing the order of the chapters.
- You will need to explain how you will draw out and expand the main findings and conclusions.
- If some time has passed since the PhD was written, you will also need to ensure the book is up-to-date.

When you submit your proposal, it is useful to try and find out the name of the commissioning editor and address the cover letter to her/him. You should also look at the publisher's website to see how they prefer to receive submissions, whether they accept proposals by e-mail or prefer them to be submitted by postal mail.

The review process

If your book is accepted for consideration by the press, the proposal, sample chapters or manuscript will usually be reviewed by at least two academics in the field and the anonymous reviews will then be forwarded to you. The reviewers will be asked to comment on a number of issues, including: the subject area / topic of the proposal; the strengths and weaknesses of proposed book; how the project might be improved; the size of the market and potential competing titles; the author's qualifications; and finally whether they recommend publication. You will be invited to respond to the comments and while you are not obliged to take all of the reviewers' suggestions on board, you should explain why if you do not do so. At this stage you may wish to revise the proposal and the table of contents. If the changes are significant, the publisher may send the revised proposal to be reviewed again.

If at this stage both you and your editor are satisfied with your response to the reviews / revised proposal and proposed changes, it will

then be presented by your editor to her/his editorial board for contract approval. If your proposal is accepted, you will be offered a contract. It is possible that your proposal might not be accepted, but that you are invited to revise your proposal in line with specific comments and resubmit. In this case it is likely that your revised proposal will need go through the review process again and would be treated as a new project. If your proposal is not approved, you will also be informed with a brief explanation why.

The most common reasons for a book proposal to be rejected are: negative academic reviews received during the review process; the book does not make a substantial or original contribution to the discipline; the market may be considered to be too small for the book to be commercially viable; the book may not fit the company's strategy for the specific list; there are too many competing titles and the market may be saturated; or the publisher may have similar titles under contract already. An editorial board's decision is usually final and while you can ask for further feedback, this might not be provided. If the proposal is rejected on commercial grounds, you could ask the editor if there is another publisher s/he could recommend. If the reviews provide constructive suggestions about how the book can be improved, you may wish to rethink your proposal and resubmit it. For example, if the book is considered not to be commercially viable based on the narrow focus of the case studies, further case studies could be researched and included to give the book a broader and more comparative context. This would also increase the book's market appeal.

The review process can take some time; it varies from project to project, and can depend on the publisher and the time of year. Routledge expects the process to take approximately three to six months.

The contract and delivery of the final manuscript

If you are offered a contract, it will explain your responsibilities and the responsibilities and obligations of the publisher. It will also indicate the word length, the expected delivery date, the royalties, and the number of presentation copies you can expect. The royalties for research publishing are generally low, they can be non-existent and in some cases a subsidy is requested. If this occurs, you might wish to approach another publisher.

You can expect to be given guidance about how the final manuscript should be formatted in the form of a booklet with 'instructions for authors' or similar. Some publishers require camera ready copy, which means the author has to submit the final manuscript fully typeset. If this is the case, the publisher should provide guidelines about how to prepare the copy.

When you deliver your final manuscript, the final manuscript is likely to be reviewed again by academic referees and / or approved by the press before it is accepted for publication. You may at this stage be required to make further changes to your manuscript and then resubmit. When your final manuscript is accepted, the production of your book will begin and your manuscript will go through most of the following stages:

- **Copyediting:** this involves a detailed reading of your manuscript to ensure the text is consistent, grammatically correct and correctly referenced. The copy-editor will send the author a list of queries that need to be answered before the manuscript is typeset.
- **Typesetting:** the manuscript is typeset according to the house style as it will appear in the published book.
- **First proofs:** at this stage the author is sent the proofs to check for any errors in the typesetting. A professional proof-reader may also be employed at the same time to do the same task. It is also at this stage that the index needs to be created; either by the author or the publisher may commission a professional indexer on the author's behalf.
- **Second proofs:** the corrections are made and revised proofs checked.
- **Printing:** the manuscript and files are finalised and the book is printed and bound.
- **Publication:** the advance copies are sent approximately five days before publication and the remaining author copies are sent when the books are received and logged into the warehouse. The book is now available for purchase.

The production schedules vary from publisher to publisher and it is hard to specify how long this will take. At Routledge our production schedules are considered to be reasonably quick, with publication taking approximately six to seven months from when our production department begins work on the book, after the final manuscript has been accepted.

Ethics

While multiple submissions are not acceptable for journal articles, many book publishers do accept that you might submit your proposal and manuscript to more than one publisher simultaneously. It is sensible to discuss this with the editor when you first submit your project as some publishers are not willing to consider a project under these terms. When a publisher does accept a project that has been submitted to multiple publishers, it is the author's responsibility to inform the other publisher(s). Should you choose to accept a contract from one publisher, you must inform the other publishers as soon as possible and withdraw your project from consideration. One final recommendation regarding multiple submissions would be to ensure that you change any references to other publishers and editors in your cover letter and proposal. It does not create a good impression when an editor receives letter that explains how keen the author is to publish his/her book with a competing press.

Including previously published material in the book, for example chapters that have been published in academic journals or in edited collections, is not normally an issue for publishers, as long as this material does not exceed one third of the final book. It can even be considered beneficial to have published one or two chapters in journals, particularly well-respected journals, as this demonstrates that the author has successfully published as an academic and their work has met the rigorous review standards set by many journals. Publishing an article can also increase interest in a potential book and act as advance marketing for the author's future publications.

Conclusion

If you are unsure or have any questions about publishing your thesis, do ask your supervisor and more senior colleagues' advice and if you are at an academic conference, speak to a commissioning editor about the process. Most editors are approachable and happy to answer your questions, and can provide you with some initial feedback before you submit a proposal. If you have submitted your proposal unsuccessfully, do some more research and approach another publisher and/or consider publishing one or two chapters from your thesis as journal articles. Depending on how time sensitive the thesis is, it is also acceptable to take a break and come back to your thesis at a later date. It is not unusual for an author to publish one or two journal articles from the thesis and then prepare a proposal for a monograph based on a fully revised, restructured and updated PhD thesis two or three years after it was awarded. Publishing your first book can be hard work, but very gratifying and rewarding. I wish you the best of luck!





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BJPIR is keen to encourage contributions which fall within a wide definition of British Politics or place it in a broader perspective, including work which problematizes the notions of Britain or the U.K.

General work on theoretical, international, European Union or comparative themes which uses important illustrative material, or significantly illuminates the British case is also welcomed.

The editors are particularly enthusiastic to encourage articles which:

- Put Britain in a comparative, European and international focus
- Place contemporary developments in British politics in historical and theoretical perspective
- Examine British contributions to the study of politics in the fields of the history of political thought, contemporary political theory, international relations and comparative politics
- Analyse the history, development and contemporary status of British political science.

Articles of more than 8,000 words will not normally be accepted.

Manuscripts should be sent to:

British Journal of Politics and International Relations
School of Politics
University of Nottingham
Nottingham NG7 2RD, UK

Tel: + 44 0 115 846 7529
Fax: +44 0 115 951 4859
E-Mail: BJPIR@nottingham.ac.uk

For style guidelines, please visit:
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Articles should normally be no more than 9000 words in length including all notes and references. Shorter research notes and responses are also welcome.

To submit a manuscript to *Political Studies*, go to <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/post>. To upload a manuscript, please prepare the following files:

1. An abstract of no more than 300 words
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3. The article with any references to the identity of the authors (for example, in acknowledgements, headers, footers or in the reference list) removed to allow for double-blind peer review.

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To submit a review article to *Political Studies Review*, please prepare a Word document and send it as an email attachment to **Rene Bailey** at politicalstudies@sheffield.ac.uk.

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Political Studies Review aims to provide one of the world's more extensive review services for books on politics, a tradition maintained since the first issue of *Political Studies* in 1953. The journal receives around 1500 books a year for review and aims to publish printed reviews of 300 - 400 books per year. Book reviews are no longer than 400 words per book.

Reviewers undertake these short reviews without payment, as a professional service to colleagues. Reviewers can, of course, keep the books they have covered.

Books available for review

To request a book to review, email **Dawn King** at psreview@sheffield.ac.uk and tell us your name, institutional affiliation and brief details of your research interests and publications.

For further information about submitting a review or a book review to PSR and for style guidelines visit:

www.blackwellpublishing.com/psr and click on 'Author Guidelines'



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POLITICS appears three times a year. The editors invite contributions dealing with substantive issues of current interest in any area of political

science. All pieces will be refereed, including those commissioned by the editors.

POLITICS is committed only to general standards of academic debate and all submissions will be considered without prejudice to the area of the discipline covered or the viewpoints expressed. Final decisions regarding publication lie with the editors.

The editors are keen to encourage the submission of short responses and critiques and more substantial pieces that reflect upon the discipline of political science and might be useful in teaching. Material submitted by post-graduate students is especially welcome.

Manuscripts of articles should be submitted electronically to politicsjournal@socsci.gla.ac.uk.

The editors can be contacted at:

The Editors, *POLITICS*, Department of Politics,
Adam Smith Building, University of Glasgow,
Glasgow G12 8RT

Tel: +44 (0) 141 330 3384
Fax +44 (0) 141 330 5071

Email: politicsjournal@socsci.gla.ac.uk

Articles of more than 4000 words will not normally be accepted.

For style guidelines, visit:
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The **Political Studies Association** is a leading organisation in the UK linking academics in political science and current affairs, theorists and practitioners, policy-makers, journalists, researchers and students in higher education.

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