



Greetings All

The year 2020 will go down in living memory as the most pernicious year on record. The tremor of Covid-19 will reverberate for years to come. As nations and states recover, the lessons and opportunities must not be allowed to go unnoticed. On lessons, it is in neon lights that the global health regime under the World Trade Organization (WHO) needs more support. The withdrawal of the financial support by the United States of America (US) cannot be anything but the weakening of WHO. Without a strong WHO, poor states and nations cannot survive another Covid-19 onslaught. Notwithstanding this, we highlight one opportunity, *inter alia*, which Covid-19 brings to our shores to say that Universities should not throw away the online learning and teaching infrastructure. It should now be common knowledge that post-Covid-19 does not spell the end of future pandemics. The investments made in e-learning and teaching ought to be preserved. As an example, for every five modules, one should be taught online as a palpable indication of e-learning sustainability and continuity.

The level of corruption on the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) scandal in South Africa is nothing to be proud about. To hear of looting of Billions of Rands meant to help the poor and the sick should make us all to pause and take stock. What is unmissable is that as a country we are not producing ethical and moral leaders/public servants. Ethical and moral leaders prioritize service to the people over self-service. Our displeasure as voters must demonstrate our dislike on the ballot-box. As voters the only mechanism available to combat corruption is to elect ethical and moral leaders who fear and respect the people a bit more.

With these realities in mind, this issue of Political Animal continues to showcase the phenomenal work undertaken by our students and staff. At the beginning of Semester B, the Department of Politics and International Relations hosted the former Swedish Ambassador to South Africa, Ambassador Cecilia Julin for a lecture on feminist foreign policy. We showcase the achievements of some of our students. In the first issue for 2020 we asked students to share their experience(s) regarding the transition to online teaching and learning; in this issue we attempted to capture the Department's response to COVID-19. We also have a special feature interrogating how COVID-19 has impacted diplomatic practice. For all those students aiming to meet their publication quote, be sure to read the latest instalment of 'Research Skills for the 21st Century.'

Much gratitude goes to the editorial team. You guys have kept the ship steered in the right direction even during the most difficult times on record. One never received a complainant and was instead always met with eagerness to take on more tasks. The passion you have demonstrated deserves mention at every turn. Thanks also goes to our contributors for taking their time to lend an impactful thought on various issues of interest. Your sacrifices do not go unnoticed. To Prof Suzy Graham and Sven Botha, as custodians of the Political Animal Newsletter, we note you, and we appreciate you.

Sekgololo Johannes
Assistant Lead Editor, Political Animal

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Do you have comments, suggestions or have an idea for future issues, the editorial board would love to hear from you!

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All of the views and/or ideas expressed in Political Animal, are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Editorial Board, the Department of Politics and International Relations, the Faculty of Humanities or the University of Johannesburg, unless stated otherwise.



Prof Suzanne Graham has been HOD of the Department of Politics and International Relations since 2018.

Prof Graham's teaching and research interests include: foreign policy, terrorism, globalisation and international conflict.

Prof Graham has authored and co-authored several academic articles. She is also the author of the book, [Democratic South Africa's foreign policy: Voting Behaviour at the United Nations](#) (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

In November 2019 Prof Graham was named Co-president of RISC-RISE Consortium.

Dear UJ Politics Students,

This has been a very difficult year and yet we have managed to pull through and complete the academic year, with lessons learnt and hope for the future. Congratulations on excelling despite the mental strain, the physical restrictions, and all the worry and uncertainty. You deserve a round of applause! We hope you have a safe and happy festive season and stay well!

Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud - Maya Angelou



University of Johannesburg's Department of Politics: National, Regional, and International Rankings 2018,2019 and 2020
By Sekgololo Johannes

Year	International	National/Regional
2018	201-300	N/A
2019	201-300	1-3
2020	201-300	1-3

Sources: QS Top University Rankings, Shanghai Academic Ranking, The World University Rankings and University of Johannesburg

The Department of Politics and International Relations (the Department) at UJ has been consistently ranked in respectable position(s) for its outstanding performance; research; and teaching. The criteria for ranking ranges from academic reputation; employer reputation; to citation per publication. The Department has consistently been rated in the top 200-300 on Global Rankings for three years in a row according to the Shanghai and QS World University Rankings. For 2019-2020 the Department was ranked joint-first in South Africa. This confirms the commitment and dedication of both the staff and the students in the Department to robust teaching and learning respectfully.

Student news-Semester B 2020

**Combating human trafficking one student at a time
By Prudence Nefale**

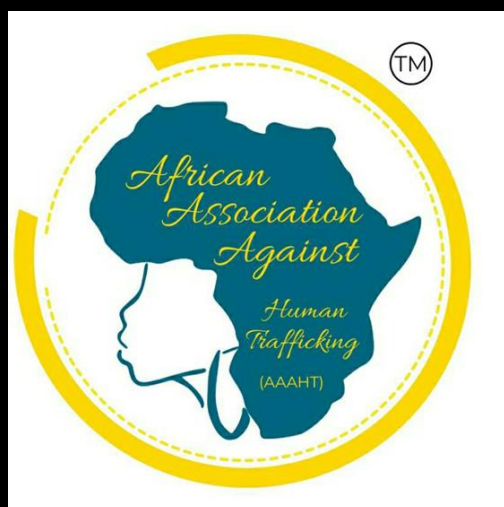
Human trafficking is a serious issue that affects thousands of people globally. The number of human trafficking cases increases with each year and has led to an outcry to come up with solutions to tackle this ongoing problem. Those in the International Relations field have a duty to help prevent and resolve such issues, which is why the third year Politics class of 2020 was tasked with a practical based on alleviating human trafficking.

"This year, the third-year practical class had to prepare two tasks that could conceivably be part of their actual work experience following their degree. Among the requirements, students were tasked with coming up with logos for an imaginary NPO whose purpose was to raise awareness on human trafficking issues," said Politics Professor, Victoria Graham. The third-year class delivered some outstanding work and were in turn awarded for this. Here are some of the best submissions received:

Best Overall Logo: G Zwane



Because you are more than your experiences



Runner Up Best Overall Logo: V Shaweni



Excellent Hand Drawn Logo: R Mathebula



Professional Logo Image (1): R Parkins



Professional Logo Image (2): A Mashingaidze



Clever Design Logo Concept (1): S Maxase



Clever Design Logo Concept (2): J Kruser



Unique Design Logo Concept: MG Tshabalala



Most touching Logo: S Muzawazi

The students were also required to write an opinion piece to raise awareness about human trafficking and to draw attention to their imaginary NPO. The top performing students were YV Nako (see op-ed below); B Mandlaze; CC Williams; G Zwane; TMR Bore; T Madia; MP Ntsane; L Chilaule; NP Dube; NWA France MC Mokoena; K Steward; and S Tshuma. **See YV Nako's op-ed below:**

Riddle me this: what is so old, it should be dead but is only growing stronger instead?

Across all forms of life, from wildlife to the oceans, danger is everywhere. Even for humans and all the systems of security which we have designed; this remains a challenge. One danger which continues to grow in extent is the threat to livelihood posed by human trafficking (HT). Women, men and children on this continent are all facing a continuously increasing risk of having their lives seized from their own control and subjected to exploitation from others under coercion or deception. The problem of HT is not new, in fact it is quite old, perhaps too old. As this issue continues to grow here in our home and globally, it is time to ensure that it is permanently put to rest. For this goal to be realized, a few things must happen. Luckily, some already have been done and even luckier is that what hasn't yet been done will surely be so soon.

Ominira, an African founded NPO, focused on 'discovering the range of interlocking forces and systemic factors and processes which perpetuate the problem of HT' here in Africa, promises to be one such "doer". What is more, is that their work is being done in addition to that produced by organisations such as the African Center for Strategic Studies and African Sisters Education Collaboration. This means that the 'things which must happen' already are. The works of these organisations is to enhance education, awareness, and security in Africa, whilst also strengthening the effectiveness and accountability of African institutions. This work encompasses the pervasive issue of HT and contributes towards its resolution.

The actions which must be taken in addition to the work of dedicated organisations, are firstly, the continued spread of awareness. This means that the issue of HT should be mandated as a part of the curriculum of all public schools, and prioritised as necessary home learning throughout Africa. Education regarding the nature, extent and the complexities of human trafficking in Africa is crucial in order to address the matter effectively. Secondly, is the implementation of existing policies on HT. It is evident that rather than introducing new policies which will also go unexecuted, African institutions must be held accountable for their current lack of implementation, which can be considered a crime against humanity at this point. Another crucial action to be taken by African governments and citizens is the provision of support resources to survivors of HT. The fact remains that survivors are the key to uncovering the operations of trafficking syndicates. Additionally, receiving support empowers survivors to join the fight against this spreading epidemic. Lastly, as globalisation has been considerably heightened by the internet and resultantly the dark web, such platforms are often exploited by traffickers to advertise and lure people typically under the pretence of immigration services. Consequently, the internet is a primary site for trafficking. It is, therefore, imperative that people be trained to recognize the signs of predators on the internet. This would address mainly sex trafficking, however, once begun it can be implemented to address other dimensions of HT in a wide variety of places. These actions will confront the problem and surely see it to eradication.

Now that we have identified the problem and then provided a course of action to address it, it is necessary to identify who will take this action. And dear reader, who better than you? Yes, you! The reality is HT is caused by issues which affect us all and its resolution will benefit us all. Forced labour, involuntary servitude and modern slavery are problems which exacerbate issues such as unemployment, poverty, crime and inequality, especially in the African context. Projections show that should HT no longer exist, such problems will also decrease in extent. If not for the lives of others, be a part of the solution for yourself! The answer to the riddle is human trafficking, the answer to human trafficking is us.

Human trafficking is a serious issue that affects thousands of people globally. The number of human trafficking cases increases with each year and has led to an outcry to come up with solutions to tackle this ongoing problem. As humanity, we are all responsible for raising awareness on this issue, which is why the 2020 third year Politics practical class was all about eradicating human trafficking. If you have information on suspected human trafficking or need help, please contact the South African National Human Trafficking Hotline on 0800 222 777.

Events hosted by the Department and its partners**Feminist foreign policy
By
Ambassador Cecelia Julin**

The fight against gender equality is a result of under-representation of women as voters, politicians, judges, leaders in organisations and industries and in academia and other sectors gave rise to Feminist Foreign Policy in Sweden. In order to understand more about Feminist Foreign Policy in Sweden, the University of Johannesburg (UJ) Department of Politics and International Relations (PIR) and the UJ Library, in collaboration with the Embassy of Sweden in Pretoria, hosted an online zoom public lecture with Ambassador Cecelia Julin. The lecture addressed South Africa- Sweden relations, women, peace and security and Sweden's term as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. The lecture was primarily directed to students, researchers and practitioners with a keen interest in diplomacy, foreign policy, gender, feminism and neutrality in international relations.

In her welcoming statement during the online Zoom lecture, Prof Suzanne Graham – an associate Professor of International Relations at the UJ Department of PIR and HOD of the same department said: “Thank you Ambassador Cecelia Julin for being here. I just want to take the opportunity to extend my condolences and sympathy to the families of those who suffered losses in relations to COVID-19 virus and also to say that South Africa shares in your losses as we and many other countries in the world experience similar losses”. Prof Graham further introduced Julin to the participants by acknowledging that: “So we are talking to the ambassador of Sweden to South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho and Namibia. Ambassador Julin entered the Swedish Diplomatic Services in 1984, serving as ambassador in Spain, Andorra and Slovakia with posting in Pures, Israel and the United States of America (USA). Julin also worked at the Departments of Trade Relations and Policies and has been Chiefs of Staff to the Minister of the European Union's Affairs and Trade, Deputy Head of the United States Unit and also served as Head of Departments for Press and Communication for Swedish Ministries at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Stockholm. Ambassador Julin has also served in committees for the Organisation for Economic Corporation and Development, something that many students who studied International Organisations should know of and become aware of, and has a steadfast negotiation in Tariff and Trade. Ambassador Julin completed Masters in Economics at the University of Stockholm”, she mentioned. Prof Graham later opened up the floor for Ambassador Cecelia Julin and thanked Ambassador Julin for making time and efforts to talk to the panel and participants about Feminist Foreign Policy and other matters.

Ambassador Cecelia Julin gave a big thank you to UJ and UJ Library for the platform which enabled her to talk about Sweden's favourite subject, which is Feminist Foreign Policy and thanked everyone who attended the online lecture using different web sites such as Facebook, Zoom, UJ Website and the Embassy Website. Julin began the lecture by first giving a short background on Swedish – South Africa relations, which was essential for the lecture. According to Julin, Billy Modise, who was an international student at the Lund University, Lund, Scania, Sweden in the early 1960s, was one strongly contributing character who influenced Sweden's involvement in the segregation and Apartheid struggle in South Africa, and since then, Sweden continued a relationship with South Africa even after Democratisation through the Official Development Corporations. The relationship between the two states earned Sweden a permanent exhibition at the Liliesleaf Farm in Rivonia for Sweden's role in South Africa, Johannesburg as the first western country to have such an exhibition there.

The major reason Sweden adopted a Feminist Government according to Ambassador Julin is because it is the right thing to do. The influenced was said to be due to the change in government in 2014 and since then, Sweden has had a coalition government between the Social Democrat and the Green Party, which earned them the esteem to become the first Feminist instituted Government in the world, followed by Canada, Mexico, and then Spain. Julin emphasised the basic reason for the implementation of the Feminist Policy in Sweden was the driven urgent realisation that Gender Equality is a matter of Human Rights of Democracy and Justice. The success of their policy was inspired by the long struggle and a lot of conscious decisions such as firstly, giving women the right to vote in parliamentary elections for the first time in 1921. Secondly, the institution of separate income taxation in 1971 which gave women incentives to work and not be seen as part of the husband's income and allowed them to join the labour force. Thirdly, in the 1970s, Sweden built up a good public and affordable Child Care System which was a prerequisite for women to be able to join the labour market. Lastly, in 1974, Sweden instituted Gender Neutric Page Parentally, which presently is 16 months, and three of those must be undertaken by either parents and gave incentives for fathers to join and care for their children as well. The struggle has surely paid off since Sweden currently has 47% of women in parliament, 4/8 leaders. Although Sweden is currently the only monarchy in the western world which does not have a female Prime Minister, the next crowning Head of State will be a women, Victoria, Crown Princess of Sweden, Duchess of Vastergotland and the apparent heir to the Swedish Throne, who will reign after her father, King Carl XVI Gustaf's resignation, thanks to the change of the Swedish order of succession which was changed in 1980 to a fully cognatic one. In essence, it means that the Monarch's elder's heir, regardless of gender, inherits the throne.

cognatic one. In essence, it means that the Monarch's elder's heir, regardless of gender, inherits the throne.

The Focus on the Feminist Foreign Policy, Ambassador Julin highlighted that: "It was due to Sweden's success in following a Feminist Foreign Policy from a Feminist Government. The first Prime Minister who launched the Feminist Foreign Policy in Sweden was quoted by Julin that: "First they would ignore you, then they would laugh at you, then they would fight you, then you will win –Mahatma Gandhi". Ambassador Julin revealed that when Sweden focuses on the Feminist Policy, it looks at what they call the three Rs known as Rights, Representation and Restores. The major aim of the 'Rights' is to defend basic human rights and to support all women and girls' full enjoyment of human rights including combating all forms of violence and discrimination that may restrict their freedom of action. The Second R is Representation, which means we all promote women's participation and influence in decision-making at all levels and we seek to have dialogues with women represented on many levels as voters, politicians, judges, leaders in organisations and industries and in academia. The most important part is Restores. It is known that women own less than 20% of the world's land. In some countries, women do not have legal rights to own land. Globally, it is said that 300 million fewer women own a mobile phone compared to men, something that limits their opportunities to access information, and in many countries, have access to services such as Banking. Sweden also added the three Rs by a fourth R, which is Reality. It had to be a Reality Check and base all its actions on the actual facts", she stated.

From the Embassy side, they have tried to engage in ongoing discussions affecting South Africa's societies about issues that touch on women's rights and inequality. Ambassador Julin mentioned that: "The Embassy of Sweden to South Africa in Pretoria have for several years been part of the '16 Days Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV)', which is unfortunately so relevant in South Africa. The Embassy of Sweden since lockdown have implemented a platform known as 'Keeping Up Dialogues' mostly dedicated to GBV where experts from South Africa and Sweden were talking about how COVID-19 and lockdown has increased the cases and murder rates of GBV in South Africa. In order to end Human Trafficking, Sweden has been promoting a Policy in many countries that makes it legal to sell sexual service but illegal to buy it. In essence, a business can exist but if it's illegal to buy those services, customer base would decline and eventually the empire would collapse. The Sweden Embassy also worked on the Initiative known as WIKI-GAP online generated by Wikipedia, where they have invited female contributors around the world such as students, academics, journalists and etc. to write articles and thus far, over 4000 new articles have been added online. The Embassy, together with Denmark, Belgium and Netherlands, launched the 'She Decides

Among other interested parties to write articles and thus far, over 4,000 new articles have been added online. The Embassy, together with Denmark, Belgium and Netherlands, launched the 'She Decides Movement' which was launched in 2017 to substitute the funds that President Donald Trump withdrew from the Sexual Harassment Helping Movement", she mentioned.

Ambassador Julin also proudly announced that: "The Embassy of Sweden have generally increased their funding for Organisations working with Sexual Reproduction and Rights. They also worked with 'She Trades' which is a UN Trade Organisation that works with developing countries to allow females to trade fair and freely. They are currently financing the projects that will support Female Entrepreneurs around the world to connect with the markets, and the ambition to have an estimated 1 Million Female Entrepreneurs that have new markets by 2035. Sweden's term as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2017 and 2018 enabled it to work on issues of Women Peace and Security due to the votes they got from every country in Africa.

A lot of issues they dealt with during their term at the UN Security Council aligned with the 2035 resolution on Women's Peace and Security. A lot of issues Sweden advocated during its term especially Women and Peace Security includes successful increase of women participation in the Peace Processes in Colombia, Mali and Syria. Sweden Embassy also published together with the United States of America (USA) reports which have a strong focus on women and gender issues on the Foreign Ministry Web Page even though they are all in Swedish and could not be translated in other languages due to lack of resources. Lastly, they instituted Female Media Network all across the world including Africa supporting females Media Networks by incorporating with DIRCO to train all females Media Networks.

Prof Graham closed the online lecture and thanked the ambassador for the wonderful presentation. The Dialogue was also opened by Prof Graham with Sven Botha monitored the Web Chats and Q & A under Zoom. Part of the questions and comments raised by participants included can Feminism topple Patriarchy in the Third World Countries? And how can Black Feminism be understood in the long-standing struggle of Race and Ethnic Inequality against Women of Colour?

Event details

Date: 14 July 2020

Event coverage by: Caroline Williams

Partners: UJ Department of Politics and International Relations, the Embassy of Sweden in Pretoria and the UJ Library

Responding to COVID-19

The Department's response to COVID-19

By Noxolo Pearl Dube

Recent months have brought massive alterations in the lives of all students. The outbreak of the deadly Corona Virus has seen an unexpected but not-so bumpy transition from contact classes to online learning. For many Humanities students, this has been a blessing, with the assistance of the Department of Politics and International Relations playing a great role in helping students navigate around what has become the new norm.

The Department in conjunction with the Faculty has gone over and above to provide all its students with adequate support during this time to achieve a transition that is as smooth as possible. Efforts such as a shift in the magnitude of the usage of communication platforms including emails have aided optimal communication between lecturers and students as well as that which exists between students and their respective Faculty Officers and tutors. For students who struggle with contact interactions and social anxiety, this has been a win- effective communication between lecturers and students without the sweats and nervousness, amazing!

Between network issues experienced by students in remote areas, load shedding, a home full of family and a general lack of resources and viable, conducive environment to study and deliver assignments, one is bound to suffer academically, right? False! To assist students and provide them with the assistance required to perform optimally despite their circumstances, The Faculty together with the Department lowered the percentage required to qualify for examinations by 10 percent. Allowing majority of students to write, which ultimately translates to less students being excluded academically for reasons beyond their control. To combat the issue of a lack of resources, the institution allocated monthly data and learning devices to students to aid online learning.

These measures have been appreciated by many students including myself and first year MA Dissertation student; Nelson Isibor- an international student who stated that travelling over 5000km to pursue his studies was never a simple decision, it is a choice that is challenging under normal circumstances and that the outbreak of the COVID-19 has brought its fair share of challenges, adding to those which came with studying in a foreign country. Nelson reported that being in his level and year of study has played a great role in his ability to adapt because even under ideal circumstances, face to face interaction with his instructors is not required. He did however add that the implementation by his supervisors of an online system for scheduled review sessions as well as the provision of monthly data bundles has assisted him and kept him on track with his academics, he

the implementation by his supervisors of an online system for scheduled review sessions as well as the provision of monthly data bundles has assisted him and kept him on track with his academics, he expressed gratitude for the support and assistance he has experienced from both the Department as well as the Faculty, according to Isibor (2020, e-mail communication).

For undergraduate students such as myself, further efforts include the provision of leeway for submissions, which were put into place to ensure that each student has the necessary time to complete and submit all their work despite any challenges they may come into contact with during these times. The implementation of an online application system for sick exams at the Faculty, in the event of missing the initial exam, with a flexible timeframe for completion and submission has made it easier for students to organize themselves and apply online. The Department has also maintained its open-door policy during these testing times, thus enabling students to reach out to lecturers to discuss both academic and, when needed, personal matters. Counselling services were also availed telephonically and via platforms such as Skype by UJ's Centre for Psychological Services and Career Development (PsyCaD).

So while being away from the physical institution and the people in it has been challenging, it is quite evident that the academic aspect of things has been less of a challenge than anticipated, thanks to the Department of Politics and International Relations and the Faculty of Humanities. The pros do somewhat outweigh the cons. It cannot possibly get better than being able to attend a class whilst in bed!



What makes the Honours program in Politics and International Relations at UJ unique? Honours students share their reflections

By Sfiso Sabela

How do students currently enrolled for the honours program at the department of politics and international relations at UJ feel about their course? Let us keep in mind that the Politics and IR course offered at UJ was named joint first in the country by ShanghaiRankings in their GRAS (Global Ranking of Academic Subjects) in a study released on the 29th of June 2020.

According to the students interviewed for this insert, learning at this level does not only happen within lecture halls or, due to the ongoing global pandemic crisis, online in a formal class environment but it is an integrative process of academic development, personal development and career development. They also pointed out that they have been helped to access material, psychosocial and intellectual tools necessary to complete their studies successfully.

Most of the students who shared their opinions with us pointed out that they were already in love with the discipline and that getting the opportunity to work with what they have described as “experts in the field” has only made their honours experience worthwhile, this coupled with the opportunities for experiential learning, global citizenship, interdisciplinary research, networked communities, leadership development and other creative endeavours has offered this group of students confidence not only in their ability to conduct and produce sound academic work, their comprehension of the theoretical knowledge gained from undergraduate years but their ability to critically examine current political, social and economic and technological developments and their impact.

Another issue that appears to a prominent feature is the relationship the honors students have with their supervisors, one of the students we interviewed, Natasha, stated that her supervisor “makes the whole process less scary and is always very assuring”, this indicates a culture of providing psychosocial support, going a step further than just providing academic and informational support.

Finally, we asked the honors students for advice they could share with their undergraduate fellows in the same stream and Busisiwe Sibizo said “they must be open to learning new things and staying focused”, she added, “they must plan their time well and work very hard to stay disciplined”. The group also suggested that there is a variety of careers available to students willing to work hard and operate in environments that may be new to them.

The Publications Showcase

Have your work featured in the Politics and IR Publications Showcase

The Publications Showcase is a new feature designed with a dual purpose. Firstly, this feature aims to showcase the prolific publishing culture of the Department of Politics and International Relations at UJ. Secondly, it is hoped that students will use this information to identify political mentors and supervisors with greater ease. The Publications Showcase features publications published by both staff and students over the last 6 months

In preparation for issue 2, the Editors would like to invite all lecturers, researchers and students in the Department to submit a list of their latest research outputs (2020 and 2021 only) via email to: uj.politicalanimal@gmail.com by no later than the 2nd April 2021. Please note that only submitted publications will appear in this feature.

Output for the UJ-Wits 2020 Student Conference

Featured in this issue are publications by both students and staff, from a student conference which took place in 2019, published in a special section of the South African Journal of International Affairs:

1. Graham, V. 2020. "Election 2019: Change and Stability in South Africa's Democracy" review. South African Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 27 (2).
2. Ndawana, E. 2020. "The military and democratisation in post-Mugabe Zimbabwe". South African Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 27 (2).

Note: Only UJ participants are featured here.

Join the Publications Working Group in Politics and International Relations

Due social distancing brought on by COVID-19, the Politics and IR Working Group has not met in some time. However, the Working Group still has interactions via WhatsApp.

New participants are always welcome!

Get in touch:

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Political Science, International Relations and COVID-19

Prof Costa. A Georghiou is the Co-director of the Centre for African Diplomacy and Leadership at the SARChi Chair for African Diplomacy and Foreign Policy at the University of Johannesburg.

Prof Georghiou's teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate level include: foreign policy, international relations theory, research methodology and diplomacy.

Prior to joining academia, Prof Georghiou served as a South African diplomat for more than a decade with postings in Greece and South Korea amongst other states.

Covid-19: Its Impact on Diplomacy and Global Governance **By Prof Costa A. Georghiou**

In a previous article of mine entitled [“Covid-19: natural curb to overpopulation”](#) ([The Star](#), 28 July 2020), I reflected on how extensive biometric tracking could help humanity in forestalling and controlling fast-moving deadly viruses. As a follow-up to my ideas contained in that article, I now consider four trends that have manifested themselves since the advent of the pandemic.

Although it was recently announced that three vaccines against Covid-19 have been developed which might imply that the global recovery from the pandemic could perhaps be realised over a medium-term period, the shockwave inflicted on the world by this global disease has undeniably had a long-term impact on diplomacy and global governance. The changes emanating from the pandemic are unavoidably forcing foreign ministries to change their foreign policy objectives for the foreseeable future.

Firstly, Covid-19 has led to foreign policy decision-making to be increasingly done by a state's executive power, thereby bypassing bureaucratic diplomatic practices. This disturbing trend for instance can be observed in many states of the world from instances where more political appointments are being made, instead of career professionals, in ambassadorial posts. The threat from the coronavirus pandemic has resulted in a greater demand on executive control over foreign policy, which is actually more commonly witnessed after a terrorist attack on the citizens of a state. As the threat from Covid-19 may never totally recede, decision-making practices surrendered to the executive are expected to endure for a long time to come.

The challenge to diplomacy, raised by the global disease, is not only from executive control, but what happens when normal ‘physical’ interactions of diplomacy become increasingly sporadic. The days of pointless diplomatic discussions, traveling, dinners and cocktails now seem to have been replaced by late night zoom sessions and document sharing via software. For example, the UN General Assembly debate held in June 2020, normally the largest event on the multilateral calendar, was for the first time in its 75-year history held virtually. Historically, diplomats and world leaders have always made great efforts to meet their counterparts at this annual event, believing face-to-face diplomacy offers the best possible way to read each other's intentions. Recently though, a growing number of diplomatic gatherings, including the G8, G20 and UN Security Council meetings, have taken place virtually. The question to be asked is whether such ‘simulated’ interactions could still provide adequate indications and hints for

relationships to be trusted, maintained and developed?

Secondly, it has been interesting to witness in the media how Covid-19 has generated mounting discontent with multilateral governance. The epidemic has given credence to the long-held belief that the contemporary system of global governance, e.g. by the G8 and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, does not fully reflect strategic realities. Global institutions, such as the WHO and UN Human Rights Commission, have become more political than practical and others, such as the UN, FIFA and International Olympic Committee, have become ineffective, bloated and corrupt. The current state system is increasingly powerless to achieve its stated objectives as epitomized for example by the policies of the WTO and World Intellectual Property Organisation.

Thirdly, we see how the pandemic is not only accelerating changes in long-term trends in foreign policy management, multilateral governance administration, but Covid-19 has further forced resistant foreign ministries to adapt to digital technology. There is currently a sense of disorientation, even 'impending doom' prevailing in the current international system which is being exacerbated by the accelerating pace of technological disruption. The political and diplomatic systems that were shaped during the industrial era to manage a world of steam engines, oil refineries and television sets, are now being challenged, not only by 4IR but also by this global pandemic. Social media has added an important real-time dimension to diplomacy, making communication ultra-fast and, by necessity, often less precise. The implementation of digital practices is proving problematic and exasperating. Digital diplomacy gives fewer opportunities for networking, off-the-record exchanging of ideas, and the use of non-verbal signals. According to Hocking and Melissen, for the first time, Ministries of Foreign Affairs have no other option than allowing diplomats with delegated authority to make mistakes in the social media – and to correct such mishaps immediately and preferably repeatedly.

The potential of data science is to draw large data sets into the study and practice of diplomacy and allow diplomats and scholars to become comfortable in engaging with and analysing increasingly large and unstructured data, inter alia on infection rates in the population. However, the use of data science will have to maintain a focus on issues meaningful for diplomacy and provide insights relevant to diplomacy. The emphasis must be on the diplomatic rather than the data challenges. Even with a rapid return to normality, the technological changes already implemented will have an enduring impact. Post-pandemic planning for foreign ministries now has the potential to transform diplomacy and global governance even more.

Although there is still no consensus among diplomats on how to use social media, extensive modification to an online environment presents cost-savings that would otherwise be impossible in a face-to-face setting. The more time spent in the digital diplomacy environment, the less likely foreign ministries will return to previous practices. As has been noted by commentators in the education, business, and retail fields, the changes precipitated by Covid-19 are here to stay.

Lastly, most foreign ministries will face fiscal pressures over the next five years. The technological transformation of the 4IR that is currently taking place, besides the social, diplomatic and political impact, also has an economic dimension.

Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon (GAFA for short), not to mention IBM and Microsoft, are companies that have more financial influence than some sovereign states. The multinational pharmaceutical companies, such as Pfizer, BioNTech, Moderna and AstraZeneca, and several others, will become major players in a revolution that is turning access to data on (the health and survival rate of) individuals into a new raw material.

As far as budgetary cuts are concerned it should be noted that, in 2020, Covid-19 affected almost all states and more than 50 million people around the world. It has governments operating in a context of radical uncertainty, and faced with difficult trade-offs given the health, economic and social challenges it raises. By the last quarter of 2020, more than half of the world's population had experienced a lockdown with strong containment measures. Beyond the health and human tragedy of the pandemic, it is now widely recognised that the disease triggered the most serious economic crisis since World War II. Many economies will not recover their 2019 output levels until 2022 at the earliest (OECD, 2020[1]). A rebound of the epidemic is increasing the uncertainty. The nature of the crisis is unparalleled: beyond the short-term repeated health and economic shocks, the long-term effects on human capital, productivity and behaviour may be long-lasting. The Covid-19 crisis has exceedingly fast-tracked some pre-existing trends, in particular digitalisation. It has stunned the world, setting in motion revolutionary changes with a wide range of new scenarios for the future (OECD, 2020[2]).

In conclusion it can be expected that there will be an increase in executive power over foreign policy, growing dissatisfaction with multilateral governance, potential cost-savings from continued use of digital technology, but also a subsequent call for budgetary cuts to foreign ministries. The lack of decisive action by governments surrounding the pandemic has made the world more volatile. If the virus persists for a long time, world economic development will become even more complex and problematic. Besides the four trends discussed, other incongruent factors will of course also come into play, for example international travel and trade will be hampered by restrictions while anti-economic globalising movements will be reinforced by higher unemployment rates across the globe. All these developments will necessitate a renewed and effective global diplomatic response.

Hocking B & J Melissen, *Diplomacy in the Digital Age*. Clingendael Netherlands Institute of International Relations. The Hague. July 2015, p. 14.

OECD (2020) [1], *OECD Economic Outlook, Interim Report September 2020*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/34ffc900-en>.

OECD (2020) [2], *Strategic foresight for the COVID-19 crisis and beyond: Using futures thinking to design better public policies*, OECD Publishing, <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/strategic-foresight-for-the-covid->

UJ Politics MA Candidate scoops international award

Master of Arts candidate, Salman Khan, was bestowed with an Ambassador of Peace Award in July 2020 by the International Think Tank Institute of Peace and Development.

Congratulations Salman Khan! May you continue to achieve great things!

Politics Masters candidate lecturers at DIRCO

Master of Arts (Politics) student, Sven Botha, was invited by the diplomatic training academy of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) to deliver a guest lecture on



search Skills for the 21st Century (Number 4)

Sven is the Lead Editor of *Political Animal* and a postgraduate student within the Department of Politics and International Relations at UJ. In addition to his affiliation to UJ, Sven is also an associate with the Centre for African Studies at Leiden University (the Netherlands).

Sven is also a member of the National Executive Council of the South African Association of Political Studies (SAAPS) as well as the chairperson of the SAAPS Research Committee on Early-Career Research.

Sven's research interests include: terrorism and counter-terrorism in the Global South as well as the facilitation and promotion of early-career research.

How to write an academic article **Sven Botha**

An academic article is one of the most common outlets employed by researchers to publish academic research. Key characteristics of an academic article include: the use of formal language, adherence to a systematic format and structure, the application of the English language as well as the employment of peer-review. Upon successful completion of a postgraduate qualification it is essential for students, graduates and early-career scholars to publish their data, results, analysis, concepts, methods and findings so as to ensure that their research reaches a healthy readership. So, 'how does one write an academic article?' To answer this question in one word it would be: 'systematically.' The following steps should be followed:

1. **Clarify for your scope:** A typical postgraduate thesis is between six and seven chapters long. When planning an article, you should decide which section of your thesis your article. In making this decision ask yourself: 'which chapter makes the most innovative contribution to the literature?' In most cases research focuses on overall results, methodology and conceptualisation.
2. **Clarify the layout and structure:** Now that you had decided what to publish, you can work on your layout. It is imperative that your article is logically structured as this will make it easier for a reader to work through your article. A well-structured article should have an: introduction, a conceptual and/or methodological framework, a historical/contextual background to your subject, problem or case study, a discussion or analysis and a conclusion.
3. **Keep at it:** A typical academic article is between 5,000 and 10,000 words in length. This is lengthy by any standard. As a result, it is advisable that you work on your article for an hour or two a day to ensure that you make reasonable progress.
4. **Revise your work:** Your first draft will never be perfect! A good researcher should always revise their work to ensure that it is as error-free as possible, logical and neat. Neat and well-structured work shows the reader that the researcher cares about his/her research.
5. **Revise your references:** References are the hallmark of good scholarship. Make sure that you reference throughout your article as you write; in doing so you will minimise the possibility of missing or forgetting a reference before submitting your final draft.
6. **Ask for a pre-peer review:** Researchers do not live or work in a vacuum. It is advisable that you approach a fellow researcher that you trust and ask them to read over the final draft of your article before you submit it for peer review. In doing so, a colleague may be able to provide you with some useful feedback before you submit. The colleague you approach could be a subject matter expert or could be an expert on another field. In the case of the latter, this can be particularly useful as it could help you to determine how easy it is for non-subject matter experts and laypersons to comprehend your work.
7. **Monitor developments in relation to your research:** Just because your thesis is complete, this does not mean that your area of research stagnates. As a researcher you have a responsibility to make sure that your article reflects the most up-to-date information. Using Google Alerts, journal alerts or the researcher-app.com are good tracking tools.

The next instalment of 'Research Skills for 21st Century' will address how to handle feedback from peer reviewers.

Happy writing!