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Abstract

Background *The Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue Canadienne de science politique* (CJPS/RCSP) is a well-established international journal with a wide readership published by Cambridge University Press that serves the Canadian and international political science community.

Analysis In addition to reviewing the journal's current operations, this article reviews the main challenges faced in attempting to serve as a primary outlet for research on Canadian politics and government, as well as an omnibus journal of interest to an international audience. Additionally, operating as a fully bilingual journal and adapting to the new open access publishing model precipitated by changes to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's Aid to Scholarly Journals program each present their own challenges.

Conclusion and implications This article concludes by reviewing options for addressing the open access challenge.

Keywords Journal publishing; Bilingual publishing; Political science; Open access; Canada

Résumé

Contexte La *Revue Canadienne de science politique/Canadian Journal of Political Science (RCSP/CJPS)* est une publication internationale bilingue bien établie. Publiée par les *Presses de l'Université Cambridge*, elle rejoint un large public en desservant les communautés canadienne et internationale de chercheurs s'intéressant à la science politique.

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Analyse En plus de passer en revue son fonctionnement actuel, l'article porte sur les défis que les éditeurs.trices ont dû relever depuis la publication du premier numéro. À titre d'exemple, la revue possède le double mandat de servir de débouché pour la recherche dans le champ de la politique canadienne tout en demeurant une revue omnibus s'adressant à un plus large public. À ceci s'ajoute les difficultés liées au fait de produire une revue bilingue. Enfin, plus récemment, la RCSP/CJPS a été placée devant le dilemme de se conformer ou non aux changements apportés au *Programme d'aide aux revues savantes* du *Conseil de recherche en sciences humaines du Canada* visant l'implantation du modèle du libre accès pour toutes les revues financées.

Conclusion L'article conclut en explorant les solutions à emprunter pour faire face au défi du passage au libre accès aux publications savantes.

Mots clés Édition de revues; Édition bilingue; Libre accès; Science politique; Canada

Introduction

The *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique (CJPS/RCSP)* is a bilingual omnibus print and online journal with a strong focus on Canadian politics and government, published jointly by the Canadian Political Science Association (CPSA) and the Société québécoise de science politique (SQSP) (Cambridge University Press, 2019a). Adhering to the highest scholarly standards, the *CJPS/RCSP* is considered the premier outlet for refereed scholarship in political science in Canada (Marland, 2017). The journal's main objective is to publish high-quality original research that makes a theoretical contribution to the discipline and attracts the interest of a wide academic audience. Two teams, one headed by the English language editor and another headed by the French language editor, oversee all editorial aspects of the journal's production, assisted by a 28-member editorial advisory board selected to ensure disciplinary breadth, as well as gender and regional representation. The English and French language co-editors assume editorial control over the entire content of the journal, cooperating in the evaluation, selection, and preparation of all materials. The well-respected Cambridge University Press (CUP), one of the world's largest not-for-profit university presses, oversees all the production, marketing, and sales of the journal. The *CJPS/RCSP* publishes quarterly, with each volume comprised mainly of a number of research articles and book reviews, the annual presidential address, and the occasional research note.

History and objectives of the *CJPS/RCSP*

The *CJPS/RCSP* first appeared in 1968 with a mission to publish research on "Canadian problems analyzed within the framework of political science" (Bergeron & Meisel, 1968, p. 1). Prior to that, the *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science (CJEPS)*, which had been in publication since 1935, had been the primary outlet for research focused on political science in the country (White, 2017). By the 1960s, however, significant growth in the number of political science departments across the country, a concomitant increase in the number of political scientists, and the increased importance of refereed publications for tenure and promotion decisions led to unhappiness with the limited attention devoted to political science in *CJEPS* (White, 2017). As a result, there was a conscious effort to establish a journal unique to the discipline (Meisel, 2017). From its inception, the *CJPS/RCSP* has been an official journal of two associations: the CPSA and the SQSP.

Turning to the more technical side of the journal's production, the journal's first issue was published by the University of Toronto Press (UTP), continuing with the practice of its predecessor, *CJEPS*. In 1977, the production of the journal was moved to Wilfrid Laurier University Press, with professor John McMenemy, of the political science department, appointed managing editor (subsequently renamed administrative editor).¹ A move to CUP in 2004, however, eventually eliminated the need for the position. Soon after the move, the English language side of the journal became completely electronic; it is currently managed through Editorial Manager (EM), CUP's submission-management software system (White, 2017). As of the fall of 2017, French language submissions are now also managed through EM. Prior to this, all French language submissions were handled directly by the French language team. The journal continues to be published by CUP, and it makes full use of the range of professional services offered by the press, including copy-editing, typesetting, production, distribution, marketing, indexing, and circulation. The journal has also made use of CUP's expertise relating to publishing ethics.

With the continuity in administration provided by CUP, it became possible to initiate a more regular rotation of the editorial teams across the country and universities. The board of directors of the CPSA typically appoints the English language team on a three-year rotating basis, following a national call for proposals. The SQSP similarly appoints the French language editorial team on a three-year rotating basis.

Since it was founded, the journal has had two primary objectives: to continue to achieve the high quality of publications that had been the case for *CJEPS*, and to produce a truly bilingual journal in comparison to the almost exclusively English *CJEPS*. Achieving the first goal in its earliest years was made possible in part by having the editors directly invite a number of pre-eminent political scientists across the country to write research articles for the new journal. A scan of the earliest tables of contents reveals that this strategy was successful (White, 2017). More recently, the journal's reputation as the flagship national journal for Canadian political science has helped to maintain its overall quality. By 1999, however, the journal's editors were identifying the *CJPS/RCSP* as an *omnibus journal of political science* – one devoted to covering all aspects of the discipline rather than one exclusively devoted to Canadian politics and government (Marland, 2017). Increasingly, however, the *CJPS/RCSP* has had to compete for quality submissions with a rising number of rival publishing outlets for political science brought on by the digital transformation in journal publishing (Marland, 2017). This dual mandate, to serve both as an omnibus journal and the premier outlet for Canada-focused research, is not always an easy one to navigate in the current journal-publishing environment, especially as it tends to focus on impact factors as a measure of journal quality. A focus on Canadian politics does shelter the journal somewhat from global publishing pressures, but the overall growth in the number of academic publishing outlets is hard to ignore. Between 2008 and 2018, the number of political science journals indexed in the Journal Citation Reports (InCites) grew from 99 to 176 (Papillon, O'Neill, Bourque, Marland, & White, 2019).

The journal does not solicit manuscripts but rather publishes original research in the form of research articles, research notes, and review essays, as well as book reviews and

the annual presidential address to the CPSA. The journal also occasionally publishes special issues or symposiums with short introductions. Recent notable special issues include the double-length issue that was produced to celebrate the journal's 50th anniversary in March 2017 and the June 2017 "Finding Feminism" special issue.

In terms of scope, the *CJPS/RCSP* is an omnibus journal, not restricted to any particular subfield or disciplinary or regional orientation. As such, an objective is to include articles from all the major subfields of the discipline in every volume, as well as non-Canadian case studies to expand the journal's readership and reputation beyond Canada. The journal publishes articles by scholars from both Canada and abroad in international relations, political theory, comparative politics, Canadian politics, and other subfields. In recent years, the journal has seen a notable growth in scholarship focused on gender and politics, as well as Indigenous politics.

The reality, however, is that the journal is squarely a *Canadian* journal. Not surprisingly, the subfield of Canadian politics is especially well represented in articles reflecting the centre of balance among the associations' members. The journal also lacks rival outlets catering to high-quality scholarship focused specifically on Canadian politics. To be sure, Canadian political scientists publish in a variety of outlets, including a number of high-quality journals devoted to various disciplinary subfields, such as *Canadian Public Administration*. The only other journal devoted squarely to Canadian politics – the online and open access *Canadian Political Science Review* – is not yet considered a direct competitor to the *CJPS/RCSP* due, in part, to inconsistencies in its publishing frequency.

Over the past 50 years, a significant percentage of authors who have published in the *CJPS/RCSP* were located in Canada, about three out of four (White, 2017). Moreover, a majority of articles published since 1968 have focused on some aspect of Canadian politics and government: 64 percent (White, 2017). Most of the remainder have focused on political theory (15 percent), comparative politics (15 percent), international relations (five percent), and methods (one percent), with some minor variation in these percentages between the French and English language articles (White, 2017).

Achieving the second goal – producing a truly bilingual journal – has also presented some challenges. At the journal's foundation, the desire for a bilingual journal rested on the reality of Canada's linguistic duality and of the two working languages of Canadian political scientists (Cardinal & Bernier, 2017; Godbout, 2017). The decision was made at that time to appoint co-editors, their responsibilities divided on a linguistic basis, a practice that continues to this day. To our knowledge, this is the only Canadian journal that divides chief editorial responsibilities on this basis. Each co-editor assumes responsibility for articles in one of the two languages and oversees a separate editorial team, the English team is composed of assistant editors, a book review editor, and an editorial assistant, and the French team is composed of a book review editor and an editorial assistant. The teams are not housed in the same universities, and indeed, even individual teams are sometimes split across universities. The editorial advisory board is similarly divided, with the CPSA appointing 16 members to assist the English language team with its editorial duties and the SQSP appointing the remaining 12 members to

assist the French language team. Historically, the two editorial teams have had a “distinctly ‘two solitudes’ tenor” (White, 2017, p. 20), working largely independent of each other (Cardinal & Bernier, 2017). The current teams, however, have made a concerted effort to work more closely on the production of the journal, holding joint meetings and staying in regular communication, with the co-editors working more closely on editorial decisions. This closer working relationship is encouraged by the current appointment of two fully bilingual co-editors.

With the publication of the *CJPS/RCSP*'s December 2019 issue, close to 270 French language research articles will have been published in the journal since it was founded in 1968. The current working objective is to include one or two French language articles in each issue and for half of the book reviews to be in French. But that objective has not always been met. In the decade after the first issue of the journal was published in 1968, 20 percent of its research articles appeared in French (White, 2017). That percentage dropped over the years, hitting a low of 15 percent between 1988 and 2007, but then rebounded somewhat to 18 percent between 2007 and 2016. In an effort to encourage cross-language reading and citing, the journal began providing abstracts in both languages for every research article in 1981. Similarly, outreach efforts have recently been made to academic conferences in an attempt to encourage French language submissions.

The bilingual nature of the journal presents a number of particular challenges, one being the number of French language manuscripts submitted for possible publication in the *CJPS/RCSP*. The reality is that a number of factors encourage Canadian political scientists, including Francophones, to publish their research output in English. For one, research suggests that French language research articles are less likely to be cited than English language ones (Imbeau & Ouimet, 2010). All academic researchers, regardless of their working language, unquestionably desire to reach the widest possible audience. Moreover, given the increased and increasing importance of citation counts and Altmetric scores for tenure, promotion, and merit decisions, the potential reach of French versus English language journals undoubtedly factors into authors' submission decisions and preferred publication outlets. It is also the case that a recent survey revealed that a majority of Francophone Canadian political scientists agreed that English “has become the *lingua franca*” of the discipline, although they also noted that “French continues to be a significant part of the dissemination of knowledge” (Rocher & Stockemer, 2017, p. 99).

Another challenge to maintaining the bilingual nature of the journal has been the appearance of an alternative outlet to the *CJPS/RCSP* for French language articles, especially those devoted to Québec politics and Francophone scholarship (Marland, 2017). The SQSP officially launched the *Revue québécoise de science politique* in 1982, thus adding a second official journal to its roster. In 1995, the journal was rebranded and relaunched as *Politique et Sociétés*, with the following mission statement: “*Politique et Sociétés* est une revue générale de science politique dont l'objectif est de diffuser la réflexion et la recherche de langue française provenant tant du Québec que de l'étranger” (translation: a general political science journal whose objective is to disseminate French language reflection and research from Québec and abroad) (Société

québécoise de science politique, 2019). *Politique et Sociétés* is currently an open access (OA) journal available on the Érudit (2019) platform. As such, Francophone political scientists who wish to publish their work in French have options beyond the *CJPS/RCSP*.

The number of French submissions received annually has varied over time, although numbers have doubled in the last couple of years. This increase in numbers, however, is undoubtedly linked to several recent changes and decisions. For one, both the CUP web platform and EM software became fully bilingual in 2017; the French language editorial team fully adopted EM for manuscript submissions and review that same year. The fact that the journal clearly displays its bilingual character on the publisher's website as well as its submission platform sends a message regarding the journal's commitment to its bilingual nature to a wide community of researchers.

Current operations

Current operations are such that each co-editor serves as a liaison between the journal and one of its scholarly associations. The CPSA has entered into a formal agreement with the SQSP to publish the journal. The CPSA and SQSP are the sole owners of the journal's title, although they play no role in editorial decisions and exercise no control over editorial policy. The CPSA and SQSP jointly determine the publishing house that will assume the responsibility for the production and distribution of the journal. The CPSA also provides administrative support to the *CJPS/RCSP*, including the translation of abstracts and other material, and clerical and financial administration. Each association facilitates a direct subscription to the journal for its members via membership fees. Finally, each association provides the respective editorial teams with partial financing to assist with the hiring of various assistants to help with the administrative tasks associated with managing an academic journal.

A number of metrics suggest that the *CJPS/RCSP* has a solid foundation and is well poised for the future. Although there have been significant fluctuations from year to year, the journal has seen a steady increase in the number of submissions received over the past few years. The journal's commitment to ensuring a rigorous review process as one mechanism for maintaining the quality of the publication is also clear (in any given year, roughly 40 percent of manuscripts are not sent out for review). The journal employs a double-blind review process to evaluate original submissions and normally seeks three reviews per submission. The current teams have also explicitly sought to expand the pool of reviewers beyond North America. Similarly, a commitment to reducing the time it takes to advise authors of the first decision, in part as a marketing tool, has been successful (in 2018, it stood at 49 days). The total number of pages in each volume has grown over time, from an average low of 663 in the first decade in print to closer to 1,000 on average in recent years (White, 2017). The journal currently appears in more than 30 Canadian and international indexes, and in 2017, the journal saw an average of 7,800 downloads per month (Papillon et al., 2019). The journal provides both traditional individual subscriptions and institutional ones, but increasingly these are being replaced with subscriptions through consortia that CUP negotiates with libraries around the world. The journal saw significant growth in its overall circulation in 2017 with its inclusion in the Research4Life aid and donation program, which

CUP has partnered with, increasing the reach of the journal to developing countries in the Middle East and Africa.

The *CJPS/RCSP* is a hybrid journal with a business model that relies on subscription revenue but also allows authors to offer their articles as Gold Open Access (via the payment of article-processing charges) or Green Open Access (by allowing authors to archive the accepted but not typeset version of the article on an institutional or non-commercial repository). To date only three authors have chosen the Gold Open Access option for their articles, which is not uncommon for authors in the humanities and social sciences, where over 50 percent of publications are not funded through research grants (Papillon et al., 2019). The number of authors seeking OA outlets is, however, likely to rise, given increasing pressure from research funders for output to be available via OA. We have no way of tracking how many authors have made use of the Green Open Access option, although studies suggest that the pickup for this option has been especially low (Piwowar, Priem, Lariviere, Alperin, Matthias, Norlander, Farley, West, & Haustein, 2018).

Cambridge University Press (2019a) provides a dedicated website (via Cambridge Core) and social media advertising for the journal. Each issue of the journal is ungated for a limited period of time and promoted via social media with @CUP_PoliSci. The first appearance of articles on FirstView² is also promoted via social media. Additionally, the journal's editorial teams have recently attempted to expand the journal's reach via its own social media activities. Launched in 2017, the *CJPS/RCSP*'s Twitter account (@CJPS_RCSP) currently has 920 followers, and the teams began collecting author Twitter handles during the submission process to assist with the promotion of research articles and book reviews. The journal has also made use of CUP's willingness to ungate articles (i.e., move them out from behind the subscription paywall) to promote the journal's content. This includes ungating the three papers selected annually as finalists for the John McMenemy Prize, which is awarded to the best research paper published in the previous year's volume of the *CJPS/RCSP*. Alongside these, bilingual interviews with the authors of the three finalists are posted to CUP's (2019a) journal website. Another promotion strategy is to ungate a series of related journal articles tied to a current political issue or event. In the fall of 2018, for example, a series of articles focused on municipal elections in Canada were ungated at the same time that several municipal elections were taking place (CUP, 2019b).

Challenges

Without question, the greatest challenge the journal currently faces is the push toward OA as the standard for the dissemination of academic research (for a summary of this issue and its specific challenges for journals in the humanities and social sciences, including the *CJPS/RCSP*, see Papillon et al., 2019). This pressure was introduced by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council's (SSHRC) 2018 policy requiring that journals wishing to apply for its Aid to Scholarly Journals grant program adopt an OA policy, one requiring that the published version of record for all peer-reviewed content be freely accessible after no more than a 12-month embargo. The *CJPS/RCSP* has relied on the SSHRC grant in past years to assist in mounting the journal, but the journal's current business model does not comply with these newly introduced SSHRC requirements. The journal has until 2021 to adjust its current business model or it will forfeit

the final year of its current SSHRC grant. The CPSA and SQSP have not, as of November 2019, made a final decision regarding how to proceed.

The move to OA in academic publishing is unlikely to be reversed, but in the long-term, adopting an OA policy to maintain SSHRC funding would necessarily mean a loss of journal subscription revenues. How much of a loss, however, is unclear. Cutting the journal's association with CUP and moving to a fully OA nonprofit digital platform such as Érudit is not a feasible option for a journal with a broad international subscription base such as *CJPS/RCSP*. The loss of the journal's Cambridge Core website – an online platform for books and journals with sophisticated functionality – accompanying such a move would be substantial. Nonprofit OA digital platforms simply could not provide a comparable level of support for such things as marketing, print and advanced online production, enhanced search features, data analytics, citation linking, peer-review systems, digital archiving and abstracters, and the indexer and library relations that CUP currently offers. A move to fully embrace Gold Open Access – especially with article-processing charges – is similarly unfeasible. The use of article-processing charges in the humanities and social sciences has not mirrored that found in the STEM sciences and would likely turn a significant number of authors away from the journal, which would be unsustainable over the long-term. Since 2016, a full 30 percent of authors published in the *CJPS/RCSP* had no traceable source of funding, which obviously limits their ability to cover article-processing charges (Papillon et al., 2019). A more feasible option is to keep the current hybrid model, while beginning to make published articles freely accessible after a 12-month embargo. Such a move would comply with SSHRC policy and is unlikely to lead to significant losses in subscription revenues in the short-to-medium term. As with many disciplinary journals tied to a professional association, journal revenues help to support the work of the association and the academic community itself (Papillon et al., 2019). The loss of *CJPS/RCSP* journal revenues has an impact on more than simply the journal, given the important support provided by the two disciplinary associations to academic activities – including the organization of an annual meeting and the contribution of student travel grants and reduced membership fees for those attending the meetings.

In summary, the *CJPS/RCSP* is a bilingual journal of the Canadian Political Science Association and the Société québécoise de science politique. The print and online journal has an objective to publish high-quality research in all areas of political science and to serve as the premier outlet for research focused on Canadian politics and government. The work of the journal is divided between two editorial teams on a linguistic basis, with English language and French language co-editors heading up their respective teams. Cambridge University Press has published the journal since 2004, offering a range of services to the editorial teams and the international dissemination of the *CJPS/RCSP*. The bilingual nature of the journal presents certain challenges, most notably in generating strong and consistent numbers of manuscript subscriptions. The journal's desire to serve as both an omnibus and a Canada-focused research outlet is also challenging, given the growing number of alternative research outlets and the increased focus on publishing metrics, such as a journal's impact factor. The growing push to adopt OA as the preferred, and in some cases only, publishing model for academic research is an additional challenge.

Notes

1. The John McMenemy Prize, named in his honour, is awarded annually at the CPSA conference to the author(s) of the best research article published in the previous volume of the *CJPS/RCSP*.
2. Articles that appear online on FirstView are peer-reviewed, corrected, and typeset articles (i.e., the version of record), only pagination and volume/issue information are absent.

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