

## Preface

In 2015, Jack Winterton, a Government Department undergraduate proposed the shockingly novel idea that undergraduate students were not only interested in pursuing independent research projects, but could also coalesce into a group with its own unique identity. So was born the LSE Undergraduate Political Review (UPR), Jack's brainchild. He sought to create a new presence in the LSE Government Department and single-handedly, Jack generated interest among a group of like-minded students. Their initial projects were research-oriented blogs for the newly created UPR website and a methods course for political science undergraduates. With an established website and twitter account, Jack, as Editor-in-Chief, handed the formative UPR over to Joshua Manby and his team of enthusiastic undergraduate researchers. In its second year, the UPR hosted its first academic conference, thus helping to grow and embed the UPR into the culture of the Government Department. Hannah Bailey then took over as the third Editor-in-Chief of the UPR, and further expanded its activities to include two independent teams of students (a year later, doubled to four teams) each pursuing its own dissertation-length research project. These evolved into academic papers, which the teams then presented formerly at national and European academic conferences. The UPR also published its first journal, complete with articles representing undergraduate research internationally. In its fourth year, with Karina Moxon, the UPR added a new activity—an international essay competition for aspiring Sixth Form students. It also continued all the previous array of research activities, including its second journal, again with excellent international undergraduate research.

That brings us to summer 2019, and the present journal. As you will see, the current volume showcases the best of undergraduate research in politics, with papers from Princeton University, Durham University, Kings College London, and of course, the London School of Economics and Political Science. One could hardly hope for a better array of important topics, ranging from the effect of refugees on voting behaviour, the effects of China's aid and influence in Sub-Saharan Africa, a political theory perspective on Catalan Independence, Putin's rhetoric as a leadership tool, the fragility of the nation-state in the Middle East, and Sweden's lessons for the Trump administration in dealing with migrants.

The LSE UPR is now an established and thriving group within our Government Department. The dedication of UPR members to excellent research is evident in all their activities. This is a group of students who have navigated not only the logistical challenges of university committees and inevitable bureaucracy, but have also managed to create a unique culture among undergraduate students who are passionate about research. The LSE UPR has matured into an "institution" (in the best sense of the word!) within our department and within the LSE. Over its four short years, the many dozens of students who have dedicated their time, their intelligence and their diligence to growing the UPR have demonstrated that Jack's original idea could be the catalyst for a larger research presence among LSE students. Students are often attracted to the LSE because of its world-leading academic research. The LSE has long excelled in offering new insights and innovative methods for understanding our political world. The LSE UPR is now a firmly established part of this research culture.

To students and professionals, I urge you to engage with the UPR in its many research activities. And to the incoming Editor-in-Chief, Adam Hudson and the UPR Team for 2019-20, I wish you all the success and I look forward to seeing the UPR evolve and grow further.

Cheryl Schonhardt-Bailey  
*Professor, and Head of Government Department*