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Strengthening *RIPE*'s commitment to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in our field

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As editors of the *Review of International Political Economy (RIPE)*, we are committed to expanding intellectual horizons and reflecting diverse perspectives to stimulate eye-opening discussions of global political and economic affairs. In delivering the journal's mission of encouraging a global, interdisciplinary, and pluralist approach to publishing peer-reviewed excellent and innovative international political economy research, we strive to offer an inclusive space for academic conversation among scholars of diverse backgrounds.¹

Scholarship on bias, exclusion, and inequality in the profession – especially along lines of gender, race and societies of origin – reveals myriad ways in which social science journals, including in political science and international relations and economics, fall short. Without clear commitments to equality, diversity, and inclusion, we are likely to miss the opportunity to tap into ‘the different intuitions carried by now-under-represented scholars [that] will expose previously hidden assumptions, provoke new insights, provide inspiration for new theories, and likely produce new hypotheses that help identify new empirical regularities’ (Lake, 2016: 1116).

It is unfortunate that academic journals too often contribute to perpetuating representation biases rather than help to resolve them. Studies have documented persistent gaps in journal placement, authorship, citations, and submission rates (cf. Brown et al., 2020; Dion et al., 2018; Maliniak et al., 2013; Mügge et al., 2018; Williams et al., 2015; Nedal & Nexon, 2018; see also Cambridge University Press (2020) collection on Gender Gaps in

Political Science), which seem to run especially deep in prestigious and highly-ranked journals (Breuning & Sanders, 2007; Lohaus & Wemheuer-Vogelaar, 2020). In other words, not only are women and racial and ethnic minority scholars, as well as scholars from the Global South cited disproportionately less by their colleagues ‘than would be expected given their representation in the field’ (APSA, 2011: 15), but they are less likely to be authors in leading journals, even after their general underrepresentation in the field is taken into account (Breuning & Sanders, 2007: 347-351; Teele & Thelen, 2017). These issues are not a reflection of research quality, but rather, are underpinned by deep-rooted economic and interest based dynamics within academia (McClain et al, 2016).²

We are also acutely aware that journals can play an important role in creating an inclusive academic community by challenging and helping to correct bias, exclusion, and marginalization in our field. Scholarship published and cited within journals helps academics to secure jobs and build careers. It shapes patterns of professional recognition and the attribution of ideas. It also helps to determine which topics and ideas get to ‘count’ as international political economy, from disciplinary handbooks to university classrooms. Research has chronicled how inequality and bias in academic publishing ripple outward, shaping bias in most corners of professional life. They affect assessments of the quality of research, the impact and influence of researchers, and the awarding of academic funding. They structure patterns of professional recognition (Ackerly & True, 2008; Engeli & Mügge, 2020; Ahmed, 2012; Wright et al 2007), as well as tenure and promotion. They contribute to the ‘leaky pipeline’ of underrepresented scholars who leave PhD programs, academic jobs, and academia altogether before reaching senior roles (Montforti & Michelson, 2008).

While the solutions to these problems are multi-faceted and complex, there can be little doubt that journals and journal editors have an important role to play. This is especially needed, and extra challenging in our field, international political economy, because it tends to

fare poorly compared to other subfields when it comes to demographic diversity; for instance, the gender balance within the International Studies Association's International Political Economy section is 399 male to 251 female (and less than 5% other and no answer), while in the British International Studies Association International Political Economy Group the ratio is 68 male / 24 female.³

We want RIPE to help promote inclusion and diversity rather than perpetuate inequality, bias, and exclusion in the field of international political economy. We have taken action that we hope can contribute to broader change across academia. In the remainder of this brief editorial, we discuss these efforts and where we hope to go from here. The purpose is not to boast about our achievements to date – indeed, there is still far too much work to be done—nor even to mark a new era in RIPE. Rather, we hope to make a modest contribution to the ongoing conversation within our field about concrete action that can be taken by academic journals and their editorial boards to strengthen commitments to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Our work so far

Guided by suggestions that have emerged from research and task forces within professional associations about how journals can help to address bias in publishing and academia more broadly, we have sought to strengthen our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in five key ways.

First, we have considered the composition of our editorial board and international advisory board, and have sought to improve the participation of underrepresented scholars and/or scholars with expertise on underrepresented regions and topics. In 2019, RIPE announced an all-woman Editorial Board for the first time in its history.⁴ Our current editorial board includes six women and one man. Racial and ethnic diversity remains a work in

progress, however, as all but one of the current board is white. To facilitate our pluralist mission, the board carries expertise on a wide range of topics (from Islamic finance to forced labour), theoretical perspectives (from Marxism to macroeconomics), and methods (from critical theory to quantitative social science). We are in the process of expanding our international advisory board so it better reflects the breadth of the field.

Second, as of this year, we have begun to publish annual Diversity Statements, the first of which is included in this issue (Bair et al., 2021). Through these reports, we will share information about diversity across as many areas of our work as possible, including our editorial board, international advisory board, guest editors of special issues and fora, and contributing authors, within the constraints of data availability and protection.

Third, we have also sought to broaden the diversity of topics and authors published in RIPE. We have done this by actively encouraging submissions on social media groups and platforms that bring together under-represented groups in international political economy. We have introduced the pedagogical interventions submissions category to reflect diversity in IPE in both research *and teaching* (Clift, Kristensen & Rosamond, 2020; Seabrooke & Young, 2017). In broadening our scope in this way, we also hope to attract more submissions from a wider range of IPE scholars who are under-represented at research-intensive institutions (e.g. Advani, Sen & Warwick, 2020). And indeed, the very first article in this new format we published was on ‘Decolonizing the IPE Syllabus’ (Mantz, 2019). As well, we have made clear that our Special Issue competition welcomes under-represented topics. For instance, in 2018, we invited proposals for special issues that pushed the frontiers of international political economy, emphasising our interest in scholarship that advanced new directions. We noted that possible topics included ‘decolonizing political economy; migration and refugees; work and labour; and feminist political economy’. In 2020, we published a Special Issue on "International Financial Institutions and Gendered Circuits of Labour and

Violence" (RIPE issue 27:6), guest edited by two leading feminist political economists.

Another special issue on the "Feminist Global Political Economies of Work and Social Reproduction" is currently in the final stages of the review process.

Fourth, and relatedly, we have sought to hold a spotlight on diversity issues within IPE, and launch conversations about how these can best be addressed. To this end, we have supported a project initiated by RIPE board members Genevieve LeBaron and Jacqueline Best, and former RIPE Lead Editor Daniel Mügge and editor-in-chief of *New Political Economy (NPE)* Colin Hay, to tackle blind spots in political economy scholarship and the professional biases that these relate to and reinforce. In 2019, editors from RIPE and NPE convened a workshop called 'Political Economy on Trial: Reflections After a Decade of Unforeseen Developments', which led to a double special issue of RIPE and NPE focused on political economy's blind spots. Noting the 'self-reinforcing correspondence between topics that have counted as important, people to whom they matter personally, and the latter's ability to build careers on them' (LeBaron et al., 2020: 1), the RIPE special issue pushes political economy scholarship to embrace critical but historically marginalised topics, such as gender, race, colonialism, and climate change. By supporting this project, we have sought to affirm the importance of conversations about diversity within the field, as well as signal our journal's openness to receiving submissions that cover these and other underappreciated topics.

Finally, we have adopted language within our 'Instructions for Authors' asking contributors to RIPE to reflect on and address possible bias in their citations. Contributors will now be asked to reflect on the extent to which their bibliography reflects scholarship by diverse researchers, including those from underrepresented groups.

The road ahead

As the editors of one of the field's leading journals, we aim to advance the diversity of international political economy as both a professional academic community and an area of intellectual inquiry. The steps described above represent initial efforts in this direction, informed by research documenting the systemic and institutional challenges and biases that many women and people of colour, and other underrepresented scholars face throughout their careers. There is much collective work ahead, and we are eager to engage with other journal editors and professional associations aligned with this mission.

A few of the areas that we are looking at going forward are: expanding the expertise of our international advisory board; increasing the diversity of our reviewer pool; advancing our commitment to racial and ethnic diversity on the editorial board; collecting and tracking more holistic data on diversity across RIPE's operations (including data on submission and acceptance rates by gender and country of institutional affiliation, as well as quantitatively examining whether the gender and country of institutional affiliation of reviewers impacts the probability of article acceptance); positive outreach efforts to expand our current submission pool; and collaborating with professional associations, other journal editors, and diversity initiatives within international political economy. In this endeavour, we appreciate our readers' support and wholeheartedly welcome your input and ideas about how we can further strengthen and expand our work. Achieving greater diversity will help the journal to better fulfil its mandate by enriching the way scholars see and understand international political economy.⁵

Notes

¹ Freeman and Huang (2015) analysed the ethnic identity of authors in over 2.5 million scientific papers written by US-based authors from 1985 to 2008 and found that, despite the predominance of authors publishing with those of similar ethnicity, diversity of inputs by

author ethnicity, location, and references led to higher impact of the papers and more citations.

² We thank Aida A. Hozic and Robbie Shilliam for their insights on this point.

³ Personal communications with convenors, 6 October 2020 and 15 October 2020. Data on other axes of diversity for the IPE groupings of these associations –such as ethnic diversity and diversity in geographical location of scholars— was unavailable at the time we requested it.

⁴ RIPE is edited by six editors and one lead editor, who comprise the journal’s Editorial Board.

⁵ Thanks to J. P. Singh for this valuable point.

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