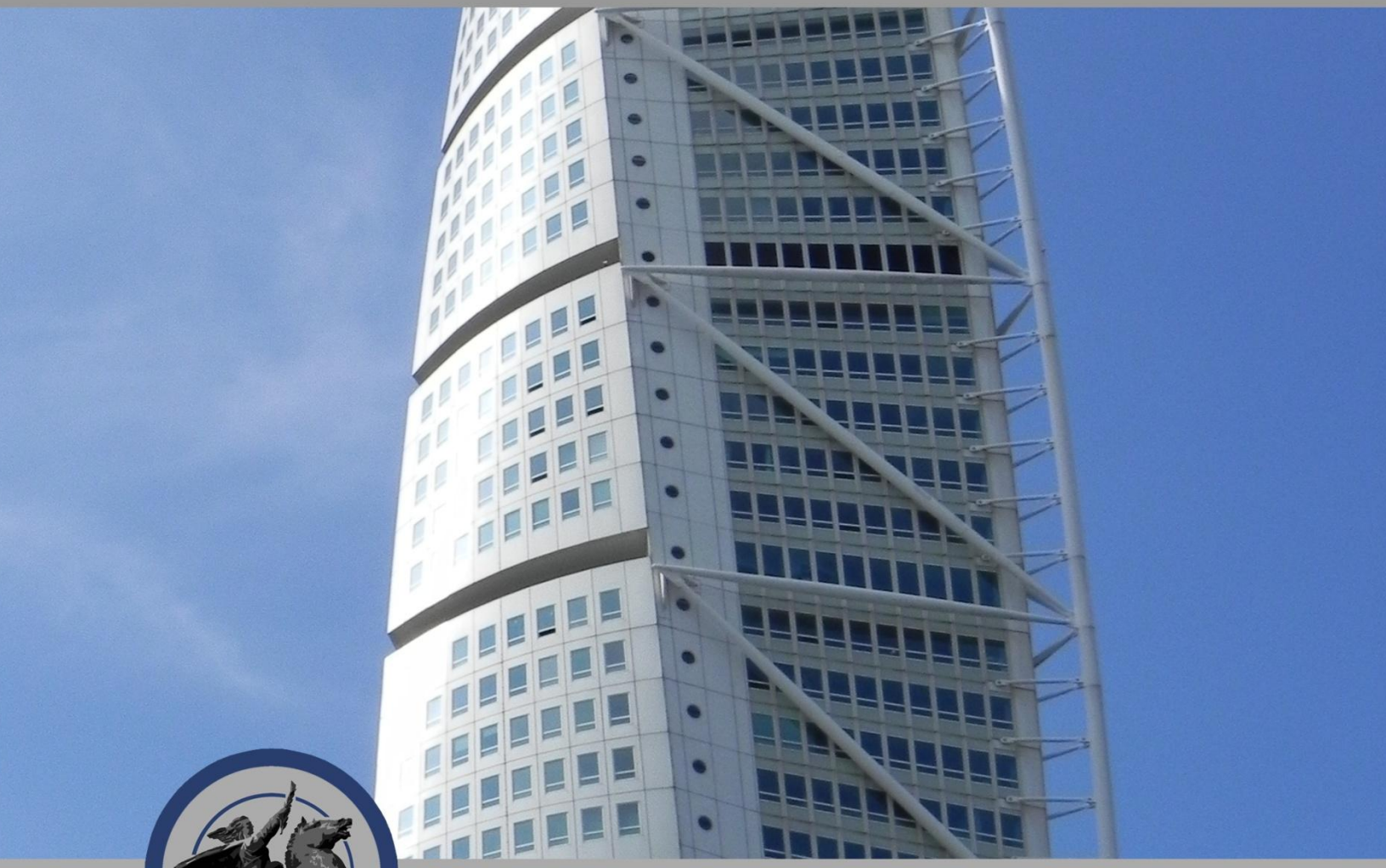
UDC 327

eISSN 1857-9760

JOURNAL of LIBERTY and INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS



Vol. 8 • No. 2 • 2022

DOI 10.47305/JLIA

www.e-jlia.com

This page intentionally left blank



JOURNAL of LIBERTY and INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Volume 8 • Number 2 • 2022

DOI: https://www.doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2127

Cover Image: Turning Torso skyscraper in Malmö (Sweden)
Photography by Ivana Grupche © 2022



This page intentionally left blank

Journal of Liberty and International Affairs
Published by the Institute for Research and European Studies

For further information, please visit: www.e-jlia.com

ISSN: 1857-9760 | UDC: 327 | DOI: 10.47305/JLIA

First published in April 2015

Please send all articles, essays, reviews, and documents to:

Regular Mail:
Institute for Research and European Studies
Orde Copela 13, Bitola (7000)
Republic of North Macedonia

E-Mail:
contact@e-jlia.com

Journal of Liberty and International Affairs is a triannual, open-access, and internationally peer-reviewed journal distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. All materials are published under an open-access license that gives authors permanent ownership of their work.

This is an open-access journal according to:

The publisher and the journal have registered deposit policy with:

Archiving:

Indexed in: Scopus, EBSCO, DOAJ, CEEOL, ERIHPLUS, HeinOnline, ANVUR, ProQuest, UGC-CARE List Group II, etc.

Any views expressed in this publication are the views of the authors and are not necessarily the views of the editors or publisher. Journal of Liberty and International Affairs is committed to freedom and liberty, pluralism, different views, and a public discussion.

About the Journal

Journal of Liberty and International Affairs is a triannual (3 regular issues per year), international, open-access, and peer-reviewed journal published by the Institute for Research and European Studies. The journal also encourages the publication of occasional Special Issues. It welcomes submissions from political sciences, international relations, international law, and related fields. The primary intention is to offer academic and public debate taking into account the following topics: Individual liberty; Libertarianism; Liberalism; Objectivism; Capitalism; Anarchism; Democracy; Political Anthropology; International relations and diplomacy; Public and private international law; Geopolitics; Nationalism; Multilateralism; Ideology; Politics and religion; Neo-Ottomanism; Yugosphere; Propaganda; Regional cooperation; European federalism; EU law and politics; European economic governance; EU foreign and security policy; Competitive federalism; Comparative constitutional law; Human rights and liberties; Gender studies; Emerging powers (BRICS; Russia; China; India etc.); Transatlantic relations and other related topics, that contribute to the understanding of liberty and international affairs from different angles. It is important to emphasize, that this journal devotes special attention to Europe / EU as a crucial factor in contemporary international affairs. Also, the journal editorial team encourages the submissions that treat Balkan issues, especially the attitude of the Balkan countries towards the European integration, and their place within the new international context.

Journal of Liberty and International Affairs is oriented towards a wide audience of interested fellow specialists, geared towards informing policy-makers and social workers and engaging students. It is opened to any researchers, regardless of their geographical origin, race, nationality, ideological affiliation, religion, or gender, as long as they have an adequate manuscript. Because the journal addresses a wide range of academics we encourage the presentation of research to be made at a level where it is understandable to a broad audience. The editorial team encourages both established and early career researchers and doctoral students to take part in this journal to stimulate a greater exchange of ideas and knowledge.

Journal of Liberty and International Affairs predominantly treats the topics of interest of political sciences, international relations, and international law, but also seeks to provide a quality interdisciplinary platform of debate for scholars and researchers on complementary disciplines, including social sciences and economics. The content of the journal is based on pure academic research, with a tendency to achieve the highest standards of research and publishing. The journal benefits from the contribution of its International Editorial Committee (IEC) composed of experienced, agile, and dedicated scholars and researchers. These scholars and researchers may be affiliated with a University or another academic institution; however, they participate in the IEC on a personal basis. Thus, their decisions are independent, unbiased by scientific or national prejudices, particular individuals, or conflicting interests. The IEC members are expected to: 1) review manuscripts at the request of journal editors; 2) provide second opinions on articles; 3) help identify suitable reviewers; 4) possibly oversee the review process for several articles in a particular stream-choosing reviewer; and 5) contributing to the final publication decision. Thus, the role of IEC members is to advise and support the journal editors, who have responsibility for the content of the journal.

Submitted manuscripts are subjects to initial editorial screening and anonymous peer-review at least by two reviewers. The journal editorial policy requires that each manuscript will be reviewed by individuals who are experienced and experts in the particular field of the submitted manuscript (e.g. political sciences, law, social sciences, or economics).

Journal of Liberty and International Affairs is identified by an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) and each article carries a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) which is a persistent identifier or handle used to identify objects uniquely, standardized by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). The publisher and the journal have registered a deposit policy with SHERPA/RoMEO. All the articles are freely available online upon publication. They are published under the liberal Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License (CC-BY). Each article is archived in SSOAR with an assigned URN (Unique Resource Name), which is a persistent identifier (PID) that enables unequivocal and permanent access to the publication and its scientific citation. The author holds the copyright and retains publishing rights without restrictions. Articles that have been accepted, will be published on the website of the journal and may be distributed to other online repositories or the author's pages on Academia.edu. To provide visibility of the published work, the journal is indexed and abstracted in multiple academic repositories and search engines. The journal editors share announcements, news, and related articles about the topic of the journal on Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/e.JLIA

EDITORIAL BOARD

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Goran Ilik, PhD, University St. Kliment Ohridski - Bitola, North Macedonia

MANAGING EDITORS

Mladen Karadjoski, PhD, University St. Kliment Ohridski - Bitola, North Macedonia
Artur Adamczyk, PhD, Centre for Europe, University of Warsaw, Poland
Angelo Viglianisi Ferraro, PhD, MICHR, Mediterranea University of Reggio Calabria, Italy

INTERNATIONAL EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Tara Smith, PhD, University of Texas at Austin, USA
Zhiqun Zhu, PhD, Bucknell University, USA
Vladimir Ortakovski, PhD, University St. Kliment Ohridski - Bitola, North Macedonia
Helmut Kury, PhD, University of Freiburg, Germany
Hans-Juergen Zahorka, Assessor iuris, LIBERTAS - European Institute GmbH, Germany
Hai Hong Nguyen, PhD, Queensland University of Technology, Australia
Gordana Dobrijevic, PhD, Singidunum University in Belgrade, Serbia
Cristina-Maria Dogot, PhD, University of Oradea, Romania
Muhamed Ali, PhD, University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates
Inan Ruma, PhD, Istanbul Bilgi University, Turkey
Marija Kostic, PhD, Singidunum University in Belgrade, Serbia
Isabel David, PhD, University of Lisbon, Portugal
Remenyi Peter, PhD, University of Pecs, Hungary
Slavejko Sasajkovski, PhD, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, North Macedonia
Przemyslaw Biskup, PhD, Polish Institute of International Affairs, Poland
Hitesh Gupta, PhD, SPEAK Foundation, India
Skip Worden, PhD, Independent Researcher, USA
Mehmet Sahin, PhD, Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey
Emel Elif Tugdar, PhD, University of Kurdistan Hawler, Iraqi Kurdistan, Iraq
Zoran Lutovac, PhD, Institute of Social Sciences, Serbia
Christian Ruggiero, PhD, Department of Communication and Social Research in Sapienza University, Italy
Nicolas Nord, PhD, University of Strasbourg, France
Gloria Esteban de la Rosa, PhD, University of Jaen, Spain
Habib Kazzi, PhD, Lebanese University, Lebanon
Sergii Burlutskyi, PhD, Donbass State Machine-building University, Ukraine
Anmol Mukhia, PhD, Jilin University, PR China
Pramod Jaiswal, PhD, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi, India
Polonca Kovac, PhD, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
Russell Foster, PhD, European Studies at the University of Amsterdam, Netherlands
Irvin Faniko, PhD, Academy of Security, Albania
Fabio Ratto Trabucco, PhD, Venetian University, Italy
Laura Maria Stanila, PhD, West University of Timisoara, Romania
Eyal Lewin, PhD, Ariel University, Israel
Tayeb Boutbouqalt, PhD, University of Abdel Malek Essaadi, Morocco
Ferdinand T. Abocejo, PhD, Eastern Visayas State University Tacloban, Philippines
Gergana Dimova, PhD, University of Winchester, UK
Iveta Reinholde, PhD, University of Latvia, Latvia
Bashar H. Malkawi, PhD, James E. Rogers College of Law, University of Arizona, USA
Carla Piffer, PhD,University of Vale do Itajaí (UNIVALI), Brazil
Paiman Ahmad, PhD, Department of Law, University of Raparin, Kurdistan Region, Iraq
Ezio Benedetti, PhD, Department of Social and Political Studies, University of Trieste, Italy
Marie-Line Karam, PhD, Lebanese American University, Lebanon
Erind Merkuri, PhD, University of Tirana, Albania
Bashkim Rrahmani, PhD, AAB College – Prishtina, Kosovo
Ioan Horga, PhD, University of Oradea, Romania
Tatyana Dronzina, PhD, University St. Kliment Ohridski - Sofia, Bulgaria
Djana Lusha, PhD, Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb, Croatia
Jeton Shasivari, PhD, Faculty of Law, SEEU - Tetovo, North Macedonia
Sidney Bravo Melgar, PhD, Andean University of Cusco, Peru
Emilia Alaverdov, PhD, Georgian Technical University, Georgia
Tony Tai-Ting Liu, PhD, National Chung Hsing University, Taiwan
Felipe Calderón-Valencia, PhD, University of Medellin (UdeM), Colombia
Selçuk Çolakoğlu, PhD, Beijing Normal University-Hong Kong Baptist University United International College, China
Biswajit Mohapatra, PhD, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Meghalaya, India
Rommel C. Banlaoi, PhD, International Studies Department of Miriam College, Philippines
Yiwei Wang, PhD, School of International Studies, Renmin University, China
Ngeow Chow-Bing, PhD, Institute of China Studies, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur
Sezai Ozcelik, PhD, Faculty of Administrative and Political Science, Cankiri Karatekin University, Turkey
Mudassir Fatah, PhD, Noida International University, Greater Noida, India
Murat Necip Arman, PhD, Department of International Relations, Aydin Adnan Menderes University, Turkey
Antonios Karaiskos, PhD, Graduate School of Law / Faculty of Law, Kyoto University, Japan

Elena Tilovska-Kechedji, PhD, University St. Kliment Ohridski - Bitola, North Macedonia
Thiago Felipe S. Avanci, PhD, CEST/Escola Politecnica/Universidade de Sao Paulo, Brazil
Angelos Kaskanis, PhD, Tactics Institute for Security and Counter-Terrorism, London, UK
Sinisa Malesevic, PhD, Chair of Sociology at the University College, Dublin, Ireland
Sanja Pesek, PhD, Department of Justice, Law and Criminology, American University, Washington, USA
Danijela Vukovic-Calasan, PhD, Faculty of Political Science, University of Montenegro - Podgorica, Montenegro
Esat A. Durguti, PhD, Faculty of Economy, University "Isa Boletini" - Mitrovica, Kosovo
Rumena Filipova, PhD, Institute for Global Analytics, Bulgaria
Aleksandra Kolakovic, PhD, Institute for Political Studies - Belgrade, Serbia
Prabhpreet Singh, PhD, School of Law, Manipal University Jaipur, India
Giuseppe Di Genio, PhD, Department of Law, University of Salerno, Italy
Vijay Laxmi Sharma, PhD, School of Law, Manipal University Jaipur, India
Ledion Krisafi, PhD, Albanian Institute for International Studies (AIIS) - Tirana, Albania
Marieta Safta, PhD, Faculty of Law at Titu Maiorescu University - Bucharest, Romania
Samuel Akpan Bassey, PhD, University of Calabar, Nigeria
Marc Nebojsa Vukadinovic, PhD, Sciences Po, France

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Oxana Karnaukhova, PhD, Southern Federal University, Russia
Judithanne Scourfield McLauchlan, PhD, the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, USA
Goran Bandov, PhD, University of Zagreb, Croatia
Deilton Ribeiro Brasil, PhD, University of Itaúna, Minas Gerais, Brazil
Dijana Stojanovic - Djordjevic, PhD, Independent Researcher, North Macedonia
Valeri Modebadze, PhD, Caucasus International University, Georgia
Masataka Nakauchi, PhD, Osaka University, Japan
Marko Babic, PhD, University of Warsaw, Poland
Elena Temelkovska - Anevska, PhD, University St. Kliment Ohridski - Bitola, North Macedonia
Angelina Stanojoska, PhD, University St. Kliment Ohridski - Bitola, North Macedonia
Aslam Khan, PhD, Yobe State University, Nigeria
Ice Ilijevski, PhD, University St. Kliment Ohridski - Bitola, North Macedonia
Eloi Martins Senhoras, PhD, Federal University of Roraima (UFRR), Brazil
Driton Kuqi, PhD, University of Tetovo, North Macedonia
Natalia Cuglesan, PhD, Babes-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Vesna Poposka, PhD, International Vision University, North Macedonia
Nikola Gjorshoski, PhD, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, North Macedonia

TECHNICAL EDITOR AND IT CONSULTANT

Aleksandar Kotevski, PhD

PR CONSULTANT

Aleksandar Georgiev, MA

LANGUAGE REDACTION

Bojan Gruevski, MA

This page intentionally left blank

Table of Contents

ARTICLES

Erëza A. Arifi
EVALUATING MACROECONOMIC FACTORS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON ECONOMIC GROWTH: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM WESTERN BALKAN ECONOMIES, 21

Simon Sngryan
ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF TRADE LIBERALIZATION WITH THIRD COUNTRIES: THE CASE OF THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION, 35

Nghi Thanh Nguyen, Thu Hang Tran, Dinh Thao Tran
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUBLIC SERVICE MOTIVATION, WORK ENJOYMENT, AND TASK PERFORMANCE: A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF HEALTHCARE WORKERS IN VIETNAM, 47

Faruk Ahmeti, Nazmi Zeqiri
SWITCHING FROM CASH TO CASHLESS PAYMENTS: CONSUMER BEHAVIOR EVIDENCE FROM KOSOVO, 61

Andon Kume
ANALYSIS OF THE INTEGRITY INDEX FOR PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN THE ALBANIAN DEVELOPING REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY, 75

Evi Aryati Arbay, Ari Santoso Widodo
THE POST-TRUTH PHENOMENON INFILTRATING THE US POLITICAL SYSTEM, MEDIA, AND POPULACE: THE CRITICAL THINKING ANALYSIS ABOUT DONALD TRUMP'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP, 87

Bojana Naumovska, Milka Dimitrovska
MACEDONIAN ELECTION RULES: CITIZENS VIS-À-VIS POLITICAL PARTIES, 108

Joana Kosho, Elda Zotaj
THE INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION OF CITIZENS IN THE EUROINTEGRATION PROCESS OF ALBANIA, 119

Muhamet J. Spahiu, Betim J. Spahiu
THE FACTORS INFLUENCING GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT GROWTH IN THE POST-PANDEMIC PERIOD: THE CASE OF KOSOVO, 136

Mohammad Reyaz, Sabir Ahamed
SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF SOFT POWER DIPLOMACY: A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF AFGHANS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT INDIA, 150

Theophilus Oyime Adejumo, John A. Adams, Gabriel T. Abumbe
TERRORISM AND ABRAHAMIC RELIGIOUS TRADITION: A FOCUS ON BOKO HARAM ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM IN THE NORTH-EASTERN NIGERIA, 177

Violet B. Eneyo, Jihad Talib, Frank Mbeh Attah, Erim Etim Offiong
IRAN'S NUCLEAR POLICY: NATURE, AMBITION, AND STRATEGY, 202

Jajati K. Pattnaik, Chandan K. Panda
CHINA'S GEO-ECONOMIC INTEREST IN AFRICA: A SHORT OVERVIEW, 223

Sooraj Kumar Maurya
ON JUST, JUSTICE AND DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE: A CRITICAL AND COMPARATIVE DISCOURSE, 240

Muhamed Ali
TURKEY'S SOFT POWER POLICY TOWARDS THE BALKANS: CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES, 255

Amer Ababakr
THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF INTERNATIONAL ORDER: A SHORT OVERVIEW, 266

Rukhsar Ahmad
THE LEGAL ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN PROTECTING CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN THE WAR-AFFECTED COUNTRIES: THE CASE OF IRAQ AND SYRIA, 281

Danilo Djikanovic
THE UNITED NATIONS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: UNDP IN THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY IN MONTENEGRO, 293

Robert Dopchie
THE INCREASING INFLUENCE OF EMERGING POWERS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS: A BRIEF ANALYSIS, 307

Yao Xuedan
FRENCH IMMIGRATION POLICY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, 321

Stephen Adi Odey, Bassey Samuel
UKRAINIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD RUSSIA BETWEEN 1991 AND 2004: THE START OF THE CONFLICT, 346

THEMATIC SECTION: RUSSIA'S WAR OF AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE

Aram Terzyan
UKRAINE DURING WAR: MAIN IMPLICATIONS, 332

Stephen Adi Odey, Bassey Samuel
UKRAINIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD RUSSIA BETWEEN 1991 AND 2004:
THE START OF THE CONFLICT, 346

This page intentionally left blank

SHARING AND PROMOTING YOUR ARTICLE

Sharing research, accomplishments, and ambitions with a wider audience makes you more visible in your field. This helps you get cited more, enabling you to cultivate a stronger reputation, promote your research, and move forward in your career. Sharing your article is an important part of the research.

General Conditions

- ★ Author's pre-prints on author server or institutional server only;
- ★ Author's post-prints on author's website, departmental website, employer's website, or institutional repository;
- ★ Authors retain copyright;
- ★ Published source must be acknowledged;
- ★ Publisher's version/PDF cannot be used;
- ★ Creative Commons Attribution License 3.0 Unported.

As an author, you benefit from sharing the appropriate version of your article which ensures that:

- ★ Your article makes it more visible, potentially increasing downloads and citations;
- ★ You always receive credit – you need to be cited accurately;
- ★ The integrity of the Scientific Record is not compromised - you should always direct readers to the most up-to-date version of your article - a link to the published journal article.

Promote Your Article

- ★ Consider search engine optimization and keywords to help readers discover your article;
- ★ Think about promoting your article through social media;
- ★ Decide how you will share your article.

ARTICLE GUIDELINES

Article title: Times New Roman; 14 pt; bold; alignment centered; single-line spacing; All Caps (max. 100 characters with spaces).

Author details: Times New Roman; 12 pt; single-line spacing; alignment centered. Please write the author details in the following order:

John Galt
Ayn Rand University - New York, USA
ORCID iD: https://orcid.org/0000
E-mail: galt@rand.uni.edu

Abstract and keywords: Between 150 and 200 words (5-7 keywords); Times New Roman; 12 pt; single-line spacing; justify. Write your abstract using concise, but complete, sentences. Get to the point quickly and always use the past tense because you are reporting on a study that has been completed. There are four things you need to include: 1) your research problem and objectives, 2) your methods, 3) your key results or arguments, and 4) your conclusion.

Article text: Times New Roman; 12 pt; justify; 1.5 line spacing; margins: Top: 2,5 cm; Bottom: 2,5 cm; Left: 3 cm; Right: 3 cm. The scope of submitted text should not exceed more than 30.000 characters (with spaces) including references. The text should be written in the neuter gender, concisely with correct orthography. Latin phrases should be set in *italics*.

Quotations: If they are brief (3 lines or fewer), quotations should be run on with the text. Longer quotations should be indented, without quotation marks. All indented quotations should be typed single-spaced.

Citation style: The author should follow Chicago Style (author-date system) for referencing, for example: (Dahl 1989, 45); (Geddes 1999, 134-43); (Linz 1975). All references should be given in full at first mention. Subsequent citations can be abbreviated. Footnotes should be kept to a minimum.

Headings and subheadings: Times New Roman; 12 pt; bold.

Tables: Times New Roman; bold; size 10; align heading left; single line spacing. Tables must be created in Word, not Excel. The table heading is situated above the table.

Figures: Times New Roman; bold; size 10; alignment centered; single line spacing. The authors must submit original electronic copies of the figures applied in the article in TIFF, JPG, or PNG format. Figure heading is situated under the figure. Consider aligning tables and figures at the center.

Dates: Dates should be given in the form: 26 December 1981.

References: The reference list appears at the end of your article, and provides more detailed information about the sources you cited. Each entry in the reference list also begins with the author's last name and the publication date, so that your reader can easily find any source they encounter in the text. For four or more authors, list all of the authors in the reference list; in the text, list only the first author, followed by *et al.* It is alphabetized by the author's last name.

PUBLICATION ETHICS

Journal of Liberty and International Affairs is determined to publish original work of value to the academic community in the best possible form and to the highest possible standards. We expect similar standards from our reviewers and authors. Honesty, originality, and fair dealing on the part of authors, and fairness, objectivity, and confidentiality on the part of editors and reviewers are among the critical values that enable us to achieve our aim. The journal fully accepts and behaves in accordance with the Core Practices established by the *Committee on Publication Ethics* (COPE) and is available free of charge on its website. For all parties involved in the act of publishing (the author, the journal editors, the reviewers, and the publisher) it is necessary to agree upon standards of expected ethical behavior. The ethics statements for *the Journal of Liberty and International Affairs* are based on COPE Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors.

EDITOR RESPONSIBILITIES:

Accountability

The editor of a peer-reviewed journal is responsible for deciding which articles submitted to the journal should be published, and, moreover, is accountable for everything published in the journal. In making these decisions, the editor may be guided by the policies of the journal's editorial board as well as by legal requirements regarding libel, copyright infringement, and plagiarism. The editor may confer with other editors or reviewers when making publication decisions. The editor should maintain the integrity of the academic record, preclude business needs from compromising intellectual and ethical standards, and always be willing to publish corrections, clarifications, retractions, and apologies when needed.

Fairness

The editor should evaluate manuscripts for intellectual content without regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, ethnic origin, citizenship, or political philosophy of the author(s). The editor will not disclose any information about a manuscript under consideration to anyone other than the author(s), reviewers and potential reviewers, and in some instances the editorial board members, as appropriate.

Confidentiality

The editor and any editorial staff must not disclose any information about a submitted manuscript to anyone other than the corresponding author, reviewers, potential reviewers, other editorial advisers, and the publisher, as appropriate.

Disclosure, conflicts of interest, and other issues

The editor will be guided by COPE's Guidelines for Retracting Articles when considering retracting, issuing expressions of concern about, and issuing corrections pertaining to articles that have been published in *the Journal of Liberty and International Affairs.*

Unpublished materials disclosed in a submitted manuscript must not be used in an editor's own research without the express written consent of the author. Privileged information or ideas obtained through peer review must be kept confidential and not used for personal advantage.

The editor is committed to ensuring that advertising, reprint, or other commercial revenue has no impact or influence on editorial decisions. The editor should seek to ensure a fair and appropriate peer-review process. Editors should recuse themselves (i.e. should ask a co-editor, associate editor or other members of the editorial board instead to review and consider) from considering manuscripts in which they have conflicts of interest resulting from competitive, collaborative, or other relationships or connections with

any of the authors, companies, or (possibly) institutions connected to the articles. Editors should require all contributors to disclose relevant competing interests and publish corrections if competing interests are revealed after publication. If needed, other appropriate action should be taken, such as the publication of a retraction or expression of concern.

Involvement and cooperation in investigations

Editors should guard the integrity of the published record by issuing corrections and retractions when needed and pursuing suspected or alleged research and publication misconduct. Editors should pursue reviewer and editorial misconduct. An editor should take reasonably responsive measures when ethical complaints have been presented concerning a submitted manuscript or published article.

REVIEWER RESPONSIBILITIES:

Contribution to editorial decisions

Peer-review assists the editor in making editorial decisions and, through the editorial communication with the author, may also assist the author in improving the manuscript.

Promptness

Any invited referee who feels unqualified to review the research reported in a manuscript or knows that its timely review will be impossible should immediately notify the editor so that alternative reviewers can be contacted.

Confidentiality

Any manuscripts received for review must be treated as confidential documents. They must not be shown to or discussed with others except if authorized by the editor.

Standards of objectivity

Reviews should be conducted objectively. Personal criticism of the author is unacceptable. Referees should express their views clearly with appropriate supporting arguments.

Acknowledgment of sources

Reviewers should identify relevant published work that has not been cited by the authors. Any statement that an observation, derivation, or argument had been previously reported should be accompanied by the relevant citation. A reviewer should also call to the editor's attention any substantial similarity or overlap between the manuscript under consideration and any other published data of which they have personal knowledge.

Disclosure and conflict of interest

Privileged information or ideas obtained through peer review must be kept confidential and not used for personal advantage. Reviewers should not consider evaluating manuscripts in which they have conflicts of interest resulting from competitive, collaborative, or other relationships or connections with any of the authors, companies, or institutions connected to the submission.

AUTHOR RESPONSIBILITIES:

Reporting standards

Authors reporting results of original research should present an accurate account of the work performed as well as an objective discussion of its significance. Underlying data should be represented accurately in

the manuscript. An article should contain sufficient detail and references to permit others to replicate the work. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behavior and are unacceptable.

Originality and Plagiarism

The authors should ensure that they have written entirely original works, and if the authors have used the work and/or words of others that this has been appropriately cited or quoted.

Multiple, redundant or concurrent publication

An author should not, in general, publish manuscripts describing essentially the same research in more than one journal or primary publication. Parallel submission of the same manuscript to more than one journal constitutes unethical publishing behavior and is unacceptable.

Acknowledgment of sources

Proper acknowledgment of the work of others must always be given. Authors should also cite publications that have been influential in determining the nature of the reported work.

Authorship of a manuscript

Authorship should be limited to those who have made a significant contribution to the conception, design, execution, or interpretation of the reported study. All those who have made significant contributions should be listed as co-authors. Where there are others who have participated in certain substantive aspects of the research project, they should be named in an Acknowledgement section. The corresponding author should ensure that all appropriate co-authors (according to the above definition) and no inappropriate co-authors are included in the author list of the manuscript and that all co-authors have seen and approved the final version of the article and have agreed to its submission for publication.

Hazards and human or animal subjects

If the work involves chemicals, procedures, or equipment that have any unusual hazards inherent in their use, the authors must clearly identify these in the manuscript.

Disclosure and conflicts of interest

All authors should disclose in their manuscript any financial or other substantive conflicts of interest that might be construed to influence the results or their interpretation in the manuscript. All sources of financial support for the project should be disclosed.

Fundamental errors in published works

When an author discovers a significant error or inaccuracy in his/her own published work, it is the author's obligation to promptly notify the journal's editor or publisher and cooperate with them to either retract the article or to publish an appropriate erratum.

PUBLISHER'S CONFIRMATION:

In cases of alleged or proven scientific misconduct, fraudulent publication, or plagiarism the publisher, in close collaboration with the editors, will take all appropriate measures to clarify the situation and to amend the article in question. This includes the prompt publication of an erratum or, in the most severe cases, the complete retraction of the affected work.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS:

To ensure objectivity and transparency in research and to ensure that accepted principles of ethical and professional conduct have been followed, authors should include informed consent if the research

involved human participants, and a statement on the welfare of animals if the research involving animals. Authors* should include the following statements (if applicable) in a separate section entitled "Compliance with Ethical Standards" before the References when submitting an article:

- ★ Research involving Human Participants and/or Animals Informed consent.
- ★ Informed consent.

The authors should specifically mention if a waiver was obtained for the study and the reason for the waiver. They should confirm that the study was conducted following the Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Acknowledgments

Anyone who does not meet the authorship criteria, such as people who provided technical help, institutional/department heads who provided general support, or medical writers who assisted with the preparation of the article content, should be acknowledged. Even if the authors have no one to acknowledge, the journal expects authors to include this section in the article and write "Not applicable."

Funding

All sources of funding for the research work and their role (if at all) in the design of the study and collection, analysis, interpretation of data, and in writing the article should be declared. Provide the name(s) of the funding agency/agencies along with the grant number(s). If the study did not receive any funding, the journal expects authors to include this section in the article and write "Not applicable."

RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS AND/OR ANIMALS:

Statement of human rights

When reporting studies that involve human participants, authors should include a statement that the studies have been approved by the appropriate institutional and/or national research ethics committee and have been performed in accordance with the ethical standards as laid down in the Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. If doubt exists whether the research was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki or comparable standards, the authors must explain the reasons for their approach, and demonstrate that the independent ethics committee or institutional review board explicitly approved the doubtful aspects of the study.

The following statements should be included in the text before the References section:

Ethical approval: "All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards."

For retrospective studies, please add the following sentence: "For this type of study, formal consent is not required."

Statement on the welfare of animals

The welfare of animals used for research must be respected. When reporting experiments on animals, authors should indicate whether the international, national, and/or institutional guidelines for the care and use of animals have been followed and that the studies have been approved by a research ethics committee at the institution or practice at which the studies were conducted (where such a committee exists).

For studies with animals, the following statement should be included in the text before the References section:

Ethical approval: "All applicable international, national, and/or institutional guidelines for the care and use of animals were followed."

If applicable (where such a committee exists): "All procedures performed in studies involving animals were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institution or practice at which the studies were conducted."

If articles do not contain studies with human participants or animals by any of the authors, please select one of the following statements:

- ★ "This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any of the authors."
- ★ "This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any of the authors."
- ★ "This article does not contain any studies with human participants or animals performed by any of the authors."

Informed consent

All individuals have individual rights that are not to be infringed. Individual participants in studies have, for example, the right to decide what happens to the (identifiable) personal data gathered, to what they have said during a study or an interview, as well as to any photograph that was taken.

Hence it is important that all participants gave their informed consent in writing prior to inclusion in the study. Identifying details (names, dates of birth, identity numbers, and other information) of the participants that were studied should not be published in written descriptions, photographs, and genetic profiles unless the information is essential for scientific purposes and the participant (or parent or guardian if the participant is incapable) gave written informed consent for publication.

Complete anonymity is difficult to achieve in some cases, and informed consent should be obtained if there is any doubt. If identifying characteristics are altered to protect anonymity, such as in genetic profiles, authors should provide assurance that alterations do not distort scientific meaning.

The following statement should be included in the text before the References section:

Informed consent: "Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study."

If identifying information about participants is available in the article, the following statement should be included: "Additional informed consent was obtained from all individual participants for whom identifying information is included in this article."

*The corresponding author should be prepared to collect documentation of compliance with ethical standards and send it if requested during peer-review or after publication. The author will be held responsible for false statements or failure to fulfill ethical standards.

This page intentionally left blank