



Australian Political
Studies Association

APSA 2021

PhD Thesis Prize

Award annually for the best PhD dissertation in political science, broadly defined.

Award presenter:
Dr Peter Tangney

Winning Thesis:
The Republican Dilemma: Liberating Republicanism, Sacrificing Pluralism

by Lars Moen
Australia National University

The graphic is a white rectangular area with a grey border, set against a yellow triangular background in the bottom right corner. It contains text about the APSA 2021 PhD Thesis Prize, including the award's purpose, the presenter, and the winning thesis by Lars Moen.

Judging panel comments:

Moen's thesis identifies and examines a dilemma arising for republican concepts of freedom: between adopting a moderate republican freedom that is indistinct from pure negative freedom (i.e. the absence of any interference whatever) and adopting a stronger form of republicanism that would reduce the scope of freedom in ways that undermine pluralism and liberal neutrality.

Juxtaposing different concepts of freedom and their relationship to republicanism, pluralism and liberalism, Moen provides a highly original and sophisticated argument of considerable importance for the challenges faced by contemporary liberal democracies. This thesis critically engages with an impressive array of theoretical approaches and combines them into unique arguments in each of the thesis' substantive chapters. In so doing, Moen challenges our general understanding of how individuals' freedom from interference is realised in modern society, a challenge that is even more important in times of global crises.

Moen's thesis demonstrates an academic maturity that is exceedingly rare from a PhD scholar and this monograph will make a very fine publication. It is a testament to Moen's clarity and economy of expression and his ability to draw the reader into his abstract study, that this thesis amply demonstrates contemporary relevance in an engaging and thought-provoking way. Truly excellent.