Introduction

Welcome to our inaugural issue of the *Journal of International and Global Studies*. This online journal has been launched as a forum for an interdisciplinary approach to comprehending the consequences of globalization and all of its manifestations throughout the world. The first issue of the journal contains a variety of highly readable essays from different disciplines that offer insights on global processes and international issues. The first essay “The Cultural Effects of the Narcoeconomy on Rural Mexico” by James McDonald concentrates on a recent topic that has generated a lot of international press coverage, but has received very little analytical treatment by social scientists. McDonald’s ethnographic research on how the narcoeconomy has influenced new forms of consumption and identity formation in rural Mexico details how local changes are influenced by global trends. Insightful in-depth descriptions and analysis by McDonald of how traditional patterns of hierarchy and status are eroding in a rural Mexican locale due to the narco-activities provide a context for evaluating these trends as they impinge on both U.S. and Mexican interrelationships and global trends.

The second essay “Planning for Internationalization By Investing in Faculty” by Lisa K. Childress is an important contribution on how higher education institutions can enhance their international orientations by careful planning and budgeting. In a detailed investigation of the internationalization of Duke University and the University of Richmond, Childress demonstrates how higher education can become more internationalized at this crucial stage of global interdependency through innovative financial planning and resource allocation to help faculty engage in more international research. The third essay “Population, rural development, and land use among settler households in an agricultural frontier in Guatemala’s Maya Biosphere Reserve” by geographer David Carr discusses the demographic, social, political, and ecological dimensions of an attempt to contain deforestation in a Maya region of Guatemala. Carr’s study is the first detailed statistically representative sample of a population settling in the biodiverse region of Sierra de Lacandón National Park a frontier area in Guatemala. By assessing the recent population growth along with the social, political, and religious influences within this frontier region in this reserve area established by UNESCO, Carr offers a perspective on how environmental sustainability and loss of habitat ought to be understood and managed.

The fourth essay “Nuclear Proliferation and Authority in World Politics” by Brian Frederking, Kaitlyne Motl, and Nishant Timilsina is a probing analysis and argument about nuclear proliferation and collective security issues drawing from the current cases of North Korea and Iran. Recognizing that global security involves hierarchical rules of authority, the authors argue that hierarchical and unilateral decision-making can become coercive and constrain collective security negotiations and agreement. Establishing the legitimacy of hierarchical rules through mutually based multilateral agreements and open discussions and diplomacy can produce more effective global security as is demonstrated by recent decision-making in North Korea. The fifth essay “Islam, Cultural Hybridity and Cosmopolitanism: New Muslim Intellectuals on Globalization” by Carool Kersten explores the new Muslim discourses emerging within the Islamic world that distances itself from both extreme secular or radical Islamist tendencies and the simplistic binary postulates regarding a ‘clash of civilizations’ or ‘Jihad versus McWorld.’ By focusing on Muslim thinkers such as the Sorbonne-based Mohammed Arkoun and the Egyptian Hasan Hanafi and Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia, Kersten demonstrates how these new discourses reveal a nuanced form of cosmopolitanism and cultural hybridity that overcome more restricted Islamic identities.
The sixth essay “Nepal’s Civil War and Its Economic Costs” by economist Gyan Pradhan provides an analysis of the macroeconomic conditions that have resulted from the tragic Maoist-produced conflict in Nepal. Although Pradhan employs the heuristic techniques and models used within macro-econometric analysis, the essay can be readily understood by non-economists and general readers who want to improve their understanding of the difficulties faced by the peoples within contemporary Nepalese society.

In fact, all of the essays in the first issue of the Journal of International and Global Studies are aimed at a general audience without any specific disciplinary training. We intend to maintain this standard of generalized interdisciplinary readability for all of our essays in future issues of our journal.

Finally, this inaugural issue of Journal of International and Global Studies has substantial reviews of ten books by reputable scholars around the world that have a bearing on globalization issues. We hope that you enjoy and profit from the essays and reviews in this online journal and continue to return to this site www.lindenwood.edu/jigs to pursue useful contributions on understanding globalization issues.

Sincerely,

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