Introduction

Welcome to Volume 4 Number 2 of the Journal of International and Global Studies. We continue to increase our subscriptions to this free open access online interdisciplinary journal. If you would like to subscribe to the journal just click on the tab at the top of the page below the journal title. We will be sure to send you the web link to the journal so that you can read and download the essays in accordance with your interests. You will also provide us with a data base so that we can draw on your expertise for peer reviewing essays for the journal.

This spring issue features five essays from a variety of different disciplines, a review essay, and book reviews on globalization topics (defined broadly) that is a predominant theme of the journal. The lead essay, by Canadian geographers Conny Davidsen and Laura Kiff, explores the developments of global conservation and carbon-related issues as it relates to the Ecuadorian Amazon. In Ecuador’s Yasuni-ITT Initiative, oil reserves are left underground in exchange for international compensation payments provided by voluntary contributions by governments and non-governmental actors in an international conservation partnership and trust fund under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme. Davidsen and Kiff apply a model that draws on the theoretical concept of the “ecological state” to examine the implications of such a carbon-and-conservation model on global governance structures toward a “global ecological state” (or global eco-state). The authors maintain that questions arise about the role of national economies and sovereign states and international networks in challenging the paradigm of neoliberal extraction developments.

The second essay by International Studies scholar Shawn Smallman also investigates the role of state sovereignty and Global North and South issues in respect to the sharing of viral samples of avian influenza. The First World developed nations argued that the sharing of viral samples is necessary to prevent a global epidemic and to sustain global health security, whereas the developing world, represented by Indonesia, maintained that the sharing of viral samples represented biopiracy that violated a country’s sovereign control of its biological resources. In 2007, Indonesia learned that the World Health Organization (WHO) had shared a viral sample collected in Indonesia with a pharmaceutical company, which had then modified and patented the virus. The company allegedly then offered to sell the vaccine to Indonesia for protection against the strain of virus circulating in that country. In addition, the Indonesia health minister charged that Western countries were stockpiling the Tamiflu virus and it was not available for their own country. As a result, Indonesia saw this as a case of biopiracy and neocolonialism and began to refuse to share its viral samples of influenza strains. Many developing countries agreed with the Indonesia strategy. Smallman examines this case in the light of the competing views of the First World Nations and the developing world and its implications for WHO that resulted in the Pandemic Influenza Plan of 2011, which attempted to reconcile the two different views and resolve a classic collective action problem where each participant would be worse off by following their national interests.

The essay by Sotiris Petropoulos from the University of Peloponnese is an analysis of the BRIC(S) following the global financial crisis of 2008 and beyond. Globalization and economic interdependence has created the conditions for new patterns of global governance as the BRIC(S) have initiated policies and strategies that place pressure on developing countries. Petropoulos evaluates the influence of the BRIC(S) in the light of academic debates over the role of emerging nations in respect to global governance. Although there is variation in the political and economic developments within the BRIC(S) countries, he notes that they are all major leaders in their
respective regions and view themselves outside of the existing global governance structure, the basis of an “us” and “them” (the Western powers) dynamics. Petropoulos describes the manner in which the BRIC(S) have managed to challenge the global structure following the financial crisis of 2008 and demonstrates their new economic and political influence.

David Aworawo at the University of Lagos assesses the patterns of violence and the nature of conflict resolution in the oil-producing enclave of the Niger Delta in the past three decades. He notes the report that the United Nations Environment Programme published in August 2011 that reveals that the Niger Delta area is one of the most intensely polluted in the world. The extraction of oil and gas that have created intense environmental pollution and extreme poverty have produced and sustained the development of violence in the region. Aworawo draws on five years of fieldwork, as well as government, intergovernmental, and non-governmental sources, to explore these issues in the Niger Delta. Drawing on the perspectives of peace and social justice scholars such as Edward Azar and John Galtung, Aworawo examines how environmental pollution has exacerbated conflict and violence in the region. Oil production has led to disastrous circumstances for the rural economy by polluting the land and creating government corruption that has had ill effects for the Ogoni population and others. As Aworawo indicates, conditions have improved since 2010, but further improvements are needed to help reduce the dire results of environmental pollution in the region.

The final essay by Enrico Beltramini focuses on globalization during the sixteenth century when the Portuguese and Spanish were colonizing the Americas and Asia and the emergence of Roman Catholic theological doctrines that dealt with the encounter with non-Christian populations. These theological developments have had global implications for contemporary Roman Catholic perceptions and thought about non-Christians up to the present. Beltramini describes the discourse regarding globalization (a social science narrative) and Modernity (a philosophical narrative) as espoused by Kant, Hegel, Weber, and subsequently Habermas, to provide a framework for the discussion of Iberian colonialism and the evolution of Roman Catholic theology (a theological narrative) during the sixteenth century. Beltramini places these developments within the context of Iberian colonialism and the transformation of medieval views of the world as Christian to that of a more pluralistic framework.

Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay at the University of Oslo writes a review essay on two Routledge books dealing with India, Robert Byron’s An Essay on India, and Adrian Carton’s Mixed Race and Modernity in Colonial India: Changing concepts of hybridity across empires. As in the past, we have a number of book reviews for those scholars who have an interest in interdisciplinary research and in globalization and its consequences throughout the world. Again, as we stated in our first issue of the journal, we intend to maintain this standard of generalized interdisciplinary readability for all of our essays and book reviews in future issues of our journal. We hope that you will subscribe to our journal to read future essays, review essays, and book reviews. We also invite you to submit essays, review essays, book reviews, and suggest possible book reviews for the journal.

Sincerely,

Raymond Scupin, PhD
Director: Center for International and Global Studies
Professor of Anthropology and International Studies
Lindenwood University
Email: Rscupin@lindenwood.edu