

Editorial Note

Ross Ryan

After focusing in on the environmental dimension of peace and conflict studies in our previous issue, this spring issue of the *Review* pulls the lens back once again to take in a broader sweep of the discipline. The articles compiled in this collection should, therefore, be treated individually, as each provides a distinct insight into an issue of its own framing, informed by a particular, though typically interdisciplinary conceptual grounding. Still, there are some common themes across the issue – pointing less to a shared ideological or philosophical doctrine so much as an intellectual curiosity and a willingness to challenge perceived truths, characteristics which extend far beyond individual disciplines, and indeed, academia itself. One such theme is *intervention* (whether by state, NGO, economic, or other social actors), and the motivations, implications, and ethics involved in social engineering or activism of any kind. Often, intervention is accompanied by a competition of narratives, and some of the following articles have engaged with this process head on, especially Lachica’s analysis of the 1999 intervention into East Timor, which contextualizes the Australian government’s policies within a clear theoretical understanding of state behaviour in the international arena. Others approach the issue from another angle, as it were, such as Ahmed’s research findings on gaps between the theory of ethical intervention espoused by many NGOs working in Pakistan (embodied by the recent development of peace and conflict impact assessments), and the realities experienced by those on the ground. Although it is far less central to the argument, the theme of intervention appears again in Ikuomola & Okunola’s analysis of factors inhibiting greater gender-balance and democratic participation in Nigerian politics, in terms of the political machinations of “godfathers”, for example, and again in Cui’s exploration of Sino-Japanese relations in light of increasing environmental cooperation, which touches on the issue of official development assistance, among several others. Of course, all of these articles evoke multiple themes, some more fundamental than intervention, such as the intersection of identity and politics, and the relative weight of economic factors in the mechanics of conflict escalation, protraction, and resolution. This latter theme is the explicit focus of the final research article in this collection, Thornton & Gude’s analysis of peace agreements in Colombia, which argues for the greater consideration of economic factors in future peace negotiations. I am grateful to all of our contributors, including Nieto and Mapuva for their book reviews, as well as our board of editors, and, of course, our readers. As always, your comments and contributions are more than welcome, please direct all correspondence to editor@review.upeace.org. Ross Ryan
Managing Editor

A Publication of:

