

## **Editorial comment : Introduction**

We are proud to announce the relaunch of the The Interdisciplinary Journal of International Studies (IJIS).

The Interdisciplinary Journal of International Studies is an academic space where students critically engage with key theories and issue areas in the social sciences and humanities in an interdisciplinary perspective. The IJIS is an independent student-driven and faculty-refereed academic journal based at Aalborg University, Denmark. It was established in 2002, and with this relaunch we hope to (re)establish a platform for academic student engagement in debates and critical procurement of studies within international affairs at Aalborg University.

IJIS is a journal that combines student publications from the Master programs of Development and International Relation Studies, European Studies and Global Refugee Studies.

The Department of Culture and Global Studies is a cross-faculty department linking together The Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Social Sciences. Research activities within the Department of Culture and Global Studies cover a wide span, emphasizing the interplay between cultural, social and political processes in a globalized world, and with a special focus on intercultural communication, transnational relations, creation of identity and the production of culture.

Development and International Relations provides theoretical insight into international relations from a social science and historical perspective, as well as knowledge on different social and cultural patterns and their evolution. Development and International development students analyze aspects of the economic, cultural, political, social and societal development from an interdisciplinary perspective, when engaging with theories with focus on social relations in an international and development perspective.

European Studies is an interdisciplinary master with focus on European problem areas in a social science and historical perspective. Engaging in different social and cultural patterns, European Studies provides a thorough insight on central aspects of European integration processes while drawing on theories on international relations to analyze central aspects of European development.

Global Refugee Studies aims to foster and communicate a deeper understanding of what happens when the world is moved and people move within it. Whether conflict, land-grabbing or poverty are

the critical moving factors, a multidisciplinary research approach offers analyses of the relationship between large-scale political and economic processes and the lived experiences of people before, while and after movement. Global Refugee's students explore the underlying dynamics of forced migration, the ways in which refugees and marginalized people maneuver, and the intersection between these groups and authorities' attempt to curb, tap into, or manage these movements, through inter alia border control, humanitarian interventions or integration policies. Global Refugee Studies contributes with critical analyses, such as how the colonial encounter still shapes how we today relate to displacement and social hierarchies including, but not limited to, relations of race, gender, and class.

The theme of this issue is a 'mosaic' of topics to display the broad, diverse, interdisciplinary nature of the studies of international affairs at Aalborg University. The purpose of this issue is to show what inspires, concerns and separates the waters in a student perspective within the respective disciplines included in the journal. As such has seven previous students published articles and essays portraying their diverse, interdisciplinary and critical engagement.

Helene Blensted investigates the socially constructed narratives that surround development assistance in a small town in Côte d'Ivoire in her article. Through participant observations and qualitative interviews, she finds that field staff of aid agencies and beneficiaries of development assistance have constructed opposing narratives, which explains why the two groups do not always agree on what has happened and why. Blensted argues that the two narratives maintained by field staff are counterproductive to the mission of aid agencies, because the narratives imply that beneficiaries are to blame for a multitude of problems. As the narratives turn a blind eye to programme failures and structural causes for poverty, it consequently makes sustainable development unattainable.

Donya Kahil argues in her article that the security interests of Israel have developed a highly controlling "mobility regime" that discriminate Palestinians from Jews as unequal citizens and non-citizens. Her article addresses the challenges that Palestinian tourism actors faces, and reveals how Israel's implementation of security measures, affects the mobility of Palestinians and challenge the Palestinian tourism actors' access to the tourism field. Kahil's article show how Israel's mobility regime is based on discriminatory procedures and practices, rather than on an assumption that local Palestinians constitute a danger or a risk to Israel.

In Ana Paula Caruso's article, she analyzes how local human resources are appointed, managed and dismissed in rural communities in Argentina. Based on the notion that bureaucracies are not only an instrument for policy implementation, but an actor that participates in policy formulation, enhancing democracy and local economic development, her research reviews the human resource appointment and management strategies followed by rural municipalities in Buenos Aires Province, Argentina. Caruso's article describes how and why Mayors consistently choose to build teams prioritizing loyalty and political support over capacity with the result of a bureaucracy that lacks both autonomy and capacity.

José Joaquín Arce Bayona writes about anti-colonial struggles in metropolitan France in his article. On October 28th 2005, the death of two French youth of immigrant background provoked the eruption of three weeks of rioting that quickly spread from the Parisian quarters populaires to the rest of France. Media coverage was symptomatic in its homogenizing of a heterogeneous population, externalizing the youth of the banlieues as a foreign, hostile other, despite the fact that many of these youths were actually French citizens. Intellectuals and leftist organization, while more sympathetic, saw in the riots a lack of a political direction that could take its subversive potential, to orient it towards a revolutionary dynamic. Absent from both analyses was the long history against racialized oppression in France. The riots were symptomatic of a process that has been long in the making not only in France, but all over Europe: the emergence of multicultural minority communities engaged in social movements and political organizations. Bayona explores the emergence of one of those political organizations: the Parti des Indigènes de la République (PIR), with a focus on their critical thinking and philosophies. Drawing on decolonial theories and methodologies, as well as woman of colour feminism, Bayona concludes that the PIR makes important contributions to understanding the relation between the state and communities of colour in France, our understandings of contemporary dynamics of colonization/decolonization, and provide relevant political strategies for articulating anti-colonial struggles with other forms of emancipatory struggles from within metropolitan societies.

Anna Akou Bakmand Bernthsen writes a narrative essay on where she is today professionally, and how she has used and are still using her educational background from Global Refugee Studies (GRS). Bernthsen is among the first batch of GRS students to graduate, and in her essay, she describes her experiences as a graduate in a labor market that has not previously received GRS

students. “The world did not seem as ready for us, as we thought we were ready for the world” she writes, in her description of the challenges as well as the opportunities she experienced as a GRS graduate. With a point of reference in Søren Kierkegaard, Bernthsen’s essay is a description of her own journey into the labor market, and how GRS has been, and continuously is, a foundation for her professional career in its many unexpected varieties.

Sif Lehman Jensen’s essay takes departure in unconsidered ethics in relation to her first long-term ethnographic fieldwork amongst female rebel suspects in a prison in the Philippines in 2014-15. Jensen argues that much can be learned from reflecting on one’s own beginner’s mistakes when entering into a field of particular sensitive character. In her essay, she discusses the potential risks and precariousness that follow analyzing and writing about this group of women as part of her master thesis, and how to make up for her initial lack of awareness. With female participation in the armed Muslim rebellion at the core of her research question, Jensen aims to emphasize the importance of thorough ethical consideration throughout the research project and concludes that being well-informed and reflective about the ethical dimension of research in social sciences, is what justifies inquiring into the precarious lives of people at risk.

Freja Toft Stagsted Sørensen discuss South Sudan in her essay. After independence in 2011 the country was characterized by peace and hope, but the peace was short-lived as internal conflicts in government broke out in 2013. This caused Sørensen to wonder how and why South Sudan, which for so many decades were part of a civil war, is now itself facing what appears to be the exact same civil war internally in South Sudan that it endured as part of the Sudan. South Sudan experience discrimination of different ethnicities and a power struggle to a such extent that it is putting independence and recognition of the state at risk. In her essay, Sørensen discuss what happened to the dream and the state-building process in South Sudan and asks: Has it failed?

With this relaunch of the Interdisciplinary Journal of International Studies, we encourage graduate and postgraduate students of International Affairs at Aalborg University to submit publications and engage in the aim of making student research visible in the academic debates.

With the wish of an inspiring and instructive reading,

Nina Maegaard Sharar

Journal Editor