Editorial

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With this issue of *JIRD*, the process of transitioning between editorial regimes officially comes to an end. Although the new team has been involved with managing the process of manuscript review and revision for approximately a year, the articles published in Volume 11 largely consisted of manuscripts that we assumed responsibility for somewhere in the middle of their journey towards publication. We appreciate the editorial work on those manuscripts that was done by the previous editorial regime.

The issue you have in your hands now is the first ‘post-transition’ issue of *JIRD*. All four of the articles in this issue were the responsibility of the new editorial team at least from their first round of peer review, which means that all of the editorial feedback that the authors received about their manuscripts came from the current Associate Editors and myself. Obviously, like any editorial team, we rely on the peer reviewers to give their expert assessment of and critical engagement with the manuscripts that we receive, but how editors interpret and frame those peer review reports obviously makes a great deal of difference. Beginning with this issue, you are seeing the unalloyed results of the new team’s editorial guidance. We hope that you are as pleased with the final product as we are.

With this issue we are also inaugurating a new tradition: an editorial introduction to each issue of the journal, in which the manuscripts to follow are introduced and set in context. It is our feeling that if we as the editorial team cannot explain the significance of a manuscript in broadly comprehensible terms, then it probably ought not be published in the journal; as a concrete sign of that commitment, we are undertaking to spell out that significance at the outset of each issue from now on. Think of these editorial introductions as our opportunity to explain to you, the reader, why you ought to pay attention to the manuscripts that follow, even if they lie outside of your particular subfield or specific research interest. Reading broadly may be the best antidote to needless specialization in any academic field, and that’s something that we’d very much like to promote.

Without further ado, here’s what we have on offer in this issue.

In our lead article, André Broome tackles both a practical problem of governance and a conceptual puzzle of explanation simultaneously. Broome wonders why policies relating to the control of money and the establishment of

currency zones succeed or fail, an issue of obvious practical importance in a world beset by financial turmoil. Broome also rejects both a narrow rationalist focus on individual material incentives and an equally narrow constructivist focus on ideas and normative beliefs, arguing that a historical sociology approach that takes the everyday practices of socially embedded non-elite actors as a starting point is a better analytical tool to use in explaining the dynamics of currency practices, and applies this tool to the demise of the ruble zone in the former Soviet Union in 1991–1993.

In our second article, Yoshihiro Nakano presents a critical analysis of the seminal French post-development thinker Serge Latouche. Nakano concentrates on Latouche's work *L'autre Afrique* (The Other Africa), and explicates how Latouche seeks to ground a normative approach to development on the irreducible alterity of those places and peoples excluded from dominant global socioeconomic arrangements. As for Levinas, this irreducible alterity calls for a recognition of the Other rather than the Other's assimilation — a stance with profound implications for the project of 'development' itself.

In our third article, Carlos Yordán presents a twinned normative and empirical analysis of contemporary peace operations. Drawing on Habermas, Yordán argues that we can see both strategic and communicative logics at play in the efforts of members of the international community to build and sustain peace in war-torn societies, although the strategic logic seems to dominate both at the international level and at the level of domestic practice within the target society. He argues that a more balanced use of both logics is more likely to produce self-sustaining peaceful orders, and is also an ethically preferable program for addressing post-conflict situations.

In our final selection for this issue, Robert Bosco presents a powerful critique of the dominant way that International Relations scholars and scholarship deal with religion in world politics. Rejecting a framing of the issue of religion in terms of a tension between the 'religious' and the 'secular,' Bosco draws on religious studies scholarship to suggest that the superior analytical approach highlights the politics of defining whether some phenomenon is 'religious' or not, and, instead of beginning with an abstract definition of religion, allows that category to emerge from the empirical analysis. In this way, Bosco suggests, we may be able to avoid the persistent and misleading associations between religion and violence, or religion and the pre-modern.

We feel that this is a strong beginning for Volume 12. Stay tuned for other special features in the months ahead.

Patrick Thaddeus Jackson
Editor-in-chief