

# **LETTER FROM THE EDITOR**

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Thank you to our editors and authors for another great issue of YJIS. This issue is the last one that I will helm as editor-in-chief, and I feel grateful for all that I've learned during my last three semesters at the journal. In particular, I am so grateful for my editing team who stayed on for two semesters: Aldrin Joseph Aldea (our next editor in chief!), Nazihatul Afifah Hamid, Vanessa Le, Lo Wing Tung Bonnie and Liam Quinn. It's been a pleasure to learn and grow alongside you all, and for those of you who remain on the staff I'm sure you will take the journal to new heights.

To our authors, thank you for sharing your work with us and doing the hard work of editing your papers to prepare them for publication. This issue's papers look mainly at issues of security and history, and highlight the ways that history informs the present. Whether it's by drawing connections between the current president of China with his historical predecessor Mao Zedong, or trying to understand Ukraine's past denuclearization in light of the current conflict, our authors try to make sense of how the past affects the present.

Our first paper is by Kester Abbott, who wrote about "The Role of Non-State Armed Groups in MENA's Development". In this paper, Abbott seeks to categorize the different non-state actors in the Middle East North Africa region, arguing that the blanket categorization of all non-state actors obscures their differences. This lack of nuance can lead to the failure of development initiatives that do not understand how to work with these actors. He categorizes non-state actors broadly into criminal organizations, insurgency groups and warlords, comparing and contrasting their proximity to states, their provision of social services and their goals and methods. By looking at specific cases in countries such as Iraq, Libya, and Lebanon, Abbott adds valuable insight on how these various non-state actors differ from one another, and the implications of such differences.

Continuing along on the theme of security, Lea Eileen Seyfarth writes on "Ukraine's Denuclearization—A Matter of Security". Given the current war in Ukraine, Ukraine's decision to give up its nuclear weapons in 1994 can be seen as puzzling from a realist perspective. Though many scholars consider this decision to be impractical from a security perspective and thus a result of a norms based focus, Seyfarth argues that Ukraine's decision can actually be explained from a realist perspective. Examining whether or not Ukraine's nuclear weapons actually served as

a credible security deterrent as well as the role of the US and the West in this decision, Seyfarth points out that Ukraine was primarily concerned with security and not constructivist norms, as other scholars argue.

The third paper is my own, and also looks to history, examining the eugenics discourse in Japan and colonial Korea. Eugenics as a uniquely modern framework rose to prominence in the early twentieth century and played an extremely influential role in international thought. Each country mediated their understanding of eugenics differently depending on both their historical and social context as well as their national aims. This paper examines how Japan interpreted eugenics as the only Asian colonial power and how this interpretation was then passed on to Korea. Japan and Korea's ethnic and geographical proximity led to similar interpretations of eugenics discourse, particularly when it came to the role of women in service of the nation.

The last paper of this issue by Monica Abrantes Villa Abrille is "Continuities and Breaks in Chinese Socialism: Contrasting Mao and Xi". In this paper, Abrille compares Mao Zedong with Xi Jinping, specifically in terms of how they interpret Chinese socialism. Though Abrille finds many similarities between these two leaders, separated as they are by time, she argues that this does not mean Xi's administration will have the same results as that of Mao's. This paper sheds interesting light on the PCR's history, specifically when it comes to Mao's legacy and how Xi's current administration is similar and different from that of Mao's.

Finally, this issue's interview is with Professor Soojeong Ha. Professor Ha is part of the Nordic Research Institute and works as an expert in the Scandinavian region and sustainable development. In this interview she shares her insights on sustainable development, particularly based on her experiences studying in Northern Europe.

To any and all readers, I hope you can learn something from the scholarship presented here. If you plan on submitting your work in the future, please check the submission guidelines at the end of the journal or on our website. Thank you!

**Hannah Kim**  
*Editor-in-Chief*