

# Asia Journal of Global Studies

## FOREWORD

Approximately a year and a half has passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake and the subsequent disaster at the Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant in Fukushima, Japan. While the initial brunt of the disasters may have passed, a significant amount of work remains. Such work is not limited to the physical rebuilding of areas affected; it involves deep introspective reflection and the act of questioning previously unchallenged practices. As Japan continues to rebuild, both Japanese and non-Japanese work together in volunteer programs, further earthquake or tsunami precautions are being considered, and the world-wide discussion surrounding the risks of nuclear power progresses, especially in Japan where large protests continue against its use. No matter how difficult the task may be, we all - Japanese and non-Japanese alike - must reflect on the events that occurred March 11, 2011 and do our utmost to think critically and objectively about what can be learned from these tragedies for the sake of both current and future generations.

It is in this spirit of striving forward while vigilantly examining the past that AAGS members present their research in this issue. All are contributing scholars who reside at institutions throughout the world, including Japan, Switzerland, and Nigeria. The authors' four separate papers address a variety of complex, highly sensitive, and pressing issues ranging from ethno-religious conflicts, reconciliation, identity change, to the effects of global climate change and sustainability. While difficult to approach, these matters are connected to the quality and safety of thousands, arguably millions, of lives.

The first of these papers is by Browne Onuoha of the University of Lagos, Nigeria. Entitled "Ethno-religious Conflicts and State Fragility in Africa: Trends and Prospects for the 21st Century," Onuoha's paper addresses the increasing number of conflicts in Africa. It does so by examining a selection of conflicts within Africa and argues that ethno-religious conflicts are not only predictable but also explainable. The echoes of colonialism have carved deep scars throughout Africa, of which the most prominent today are visible in the political structures and borders superimposed on many regions which contain vastly differed religious groups, identities, and distinct linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Moreover, due to the lack of involvement in previous ruling colonial political structures, many political leaders in African nations are ill-equipped to handle the vast complexities of the current political and overwhelmingly diverse ethnic landscape in Africa. Through the presentation of four examples - each with various ethnic, religious, and identity based issues - it is shown that the interplay of ethnic groups must be reconsidered within the context of previously constructed state definitions rather than simply depending on currently existing borders. However, significant work remains for the understanding of the history of each region and the contextual pre-colonial borders to allow for effective development for future nations.

The next paper, "Identity Change as a Pathway to Peace: Zionism and the Challenges of Relinquishing Righteousness," also addresses the matter of identity, this time via the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Yuri Haasz from International Christian University, Japan, approaches the conflict by confronting nationalistic Zionist identity and the roadblocks it poses for moving forward with conflict resolution and reconciliation. To this length he introduces two approaches to conflict transformation. The first, "The Art of Conflict Transformation" by Graf et. al, and the second, an identity change approach by Kelman. He also brings various works on reconciliation by leaders in the field of reconciliation, such as Lederach, into the discussion. Haasz concludes that if Zionist identity remains unchanged, peace between Israelis and Palestinians is impossible. A deeper change and reflection of identity is necessary in regards to Zionist ideology to allow peace efforts to be truly fruitful. He recommends two areas connected to identity that still need to be explored in connection with the question of the identity change process, the first being the process of identity change on the individual level and the second that of the knowledge of the identity change process itself and its relation to initiatives of conflict transformation.

Next, we move on to another highly sensitive but critical matter, that of the Tibetan Plateau and the future of Asia. In "The Global Implications of Tibetan Interdependence," John Esposito of Chukyo University in Japan puts forth the proposition that Tibet should be considered more seriously on the global stage in regards to climate change and the effects of melting glaciers on the Tibetan Plateau. Esposito discusses the rivers that spread out from the Tibetan Plateau like arteries throughout Asia, each having been compromised in some manner due to climate

change, pollution, or indirectly as a result of politics. Ultimately the effects of such factors as reported by various sources such as the WWF (World Wide Fund) and the UNEP (United Nations Environment Program) forecast extreme water scarcity and food shortages by as soon as 2025. In concluding, Esposito examines three separate possible scenarios for the future, proposing "Freeze Tibet" to be considered with the commonly expounded "Free Tibet" slogan to stress the dangers and impact that the condition of the Tibetan Plateau could have on the rest of the world through the shrinking of glaciers, thawing permafrost, and affected grasslands.

Moving on from the issue of environment and global matters of sustainability we come to the issues of sustainability at the organizational level. Ending this edition of *AJGS* is a paper examining sustainability in the context of non-profit organizations by Yvonne Scherrer, Jan Frecè, and Claus-Heinrich Daub, "Evaluating Sustainability in Non-profit-organizations: An Approach for Sustainability Evaluation of Project Implementations." Building on extensive research conducted on both profit and non-profit organizations, Scherrer et. al seek to both address questions regarding the sustainability of such organizations as well as provide tools and guidelines for such matters to be utilized by non-profit organizations. They begin with an overview of the history of the research on sustainability studies, beginning with the origin of the term "sustainability" as one borrowed from the forestry sector for long-term balance and management, later broadening the understanding of sustainability to include not only resources and environmental issues but also deeply interwoven societal and economic matters. As concerns connected with the threat of climate change deepen, sustainable development becomes increasingly imperative. However, the very definition of what quantifies as sustainable and the matter of how, or even what, to measure in order to accurately evaluate an organization as sustainable has yet to be determined despite numerous high-level meetings around the world. While Scherrer et. al state that the research is still ongoing, initial findings - despite the complexity of being based upon a four dimensional framework with 108 indicators - have shown a few common problems that face NPO sustainability. NPOs, unlike other organizations, often involve a moral high ground element that may distract from a self-critical approach. Organizations may even see the extra work and accounting required for meeting a sustainability model as counterproductive to the effort that could be put toward their specific cause. Careful application of a sustainability framework as a point of orientation in harmony with the goals of the organization not only creates a clear profile for stakeholders, but also can serve to support the progressive mentality carried by many NPO volunteers and their stated missions.

**Associate Editor**

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**Note:** Editors for this issue were Derrick M. Nault (Editor in Chief), Tjerk O'Grady "Cj o gf "Uj ckj " "O cpci kpi "Gf kqt+."Brian David Berry (Associate Editor), John Esposito (Associate Editor), Sarah Houghton (Associate Editor), and Rab Paterson (Associate Editor)