

**Webster Research Cluster 2023**

**Abstracts**

**Jemimah Ndugwa**

*The cost of greening humanitarian action*

Issues caused by climate change and environmental disasters are widely discussed, but how much does the humanitarian sector do to help deal with them? This paper will look into the work done by humanitarian organizations to integrate the environment and climate change into their operations.

**Maryvelma O'Neil**

*The Virtual Illés initiative*

The Virtual Illés Initiative is an interactive and immersive reconstruction of The Illés Relief (1873), a remarkable miniature model that depicts the Old City of Jerusalem and the developing New City at the time of its fabrication. It is a pioneering digital humanities project that aims to complete historic records of 19th century Jerusalem within an interactive virtual environment.

The Virtual Illés Initiative is a bespoke mapping system that features a range of modular interactive tools, such as historical map overlays, interactive archival materials and 3D models, immersive GIS mappings, real time light and more.

It is an evolving collaborative project and we welcome contributions from scholars, researchers, students and citizens. We invite you to contribute new documentation and artifacts, other elements of intangible culture, personal glimpses of the living city and memorabilia including diaries, letters, memoirs, and photographs. These contributions will be used to annotate and animate the relief, and to challenge conventional historiographical views of Jerusalem.

**Éric Ciria**

*Prospects of Russo-Ukrainian reconciliation: A vestige of the Cold War?*

Victimhood nationalism has long been a product of interstate conflicts which oftentimes anchor deep in the people's history and yet constitute a blockage towards rebuilding cooperative and friendly relationships in the present time. Mostly, they would materialize themselves in the form of grievances collected by victims of past deeds still alive today, written testimonies, memorials or recognitions that participate in the collective trauma. But the world has greatly evolved and so did the methods used to appeal to emotions. With Information Technology progress, everything can be recorded and saved forever. The digitization of victimhood nationalism unlocked new powerful and innovative ways to sensitize people, but also to contextualize them in the present time and identify other reasons behind mourning and loss. This article hypothesizes that reconciliation is impeded

when the political use of victimhood nationalism in foreign policy takes place within an environment perceived as hostile.

First, it argues that Russia perceives the current geopolitical environment in Europe proved as untrustworthy, highly manipulated by the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Second, this article suggests that through social media, both Ukraine and Russia have institutionalized victimhood nationalism to shame and name-tag one another, appealing to mercy and emotions in order to obtain justification or legitimation for their current foreign policies. The article concludes by making a comparative study with past examples that relate to the dynamics reflected in the case of Russia and Ukraine, including the cessation of South Sudan from Sudan, the Vietnam war, South Korea and Japan relationships.

### **Michelangelo De Donà**

*Third world and public policies: the case of major works in Africa.*

The abstract proposed intends to present the role of state institutions, of the UN system (in particular the World Bank and UNESCO) as well as of Italian construction companies in the realization of major works, such as hydroelectric plants, in overseas countries in the post-colonial and Cold War era. This entrepreneurial activity (both for technical consultancy in design and for the executive part) has led to an influx of people to the African continent: these are engineers, surveyors, workers and their families with the relative organization of housing, education, health services, canteens and the recreational sector. There has also been no shortage of efforts to integrate the best local elements into the various construction sites.

Among the most qualified companies in the sector is Lodigiani/Impregilo Spa, chosen as a case-study also because it was the most successful in winning, at least until the 1970s, a share of the market in the sector, especially in works financed by the World Bank or other international financing agencies. Competition from other European companies, but also from Italy itself, was not negligible. For the construction of the most important hydroelectric plant in the world at that time, I am referring to the Kariba dam, the "GILT" pact was set up, which brought together the four Italian companies most experienced in hydraulic constructions (Girola, Impresit, Lodigiani, Torno). After the inauguration of Kariba in 1960 (an event of an era that was about to decline, that of the British Empire), Impregilo Spa was created and there was a considerable increase in all the specializations of large works, as well as a very special intervention such as the rescue of the temples of Abu Simbel in Egypt (1964-1968), in which UNESCO also played an important role.

The backdrop to all these interventions was the choice of the West to grant loans (at very low interest rates) for the production of energy from the great rivers and the former USSR, which staked everything on the Aswan dam. Both models, however, had nothing to do with the customs and traditions of African countries.

### **Bayader Binmahfouz**

*Instagram and young Saudi people: how does the usage of Instagram affect the well-being?*

This research explores how young Saudi people living in Switzerland are affected by the usage of Instagram. Young Saudi people aged between 18 and 28 were selected as a case study. An online survey was established and four face-to-face interviews were conducted.

The data that was collected by these two methods reveals that young people consider themselves addicted to Instagram without a gender difference. However, the addiction is explained in various ways such as time killing machine and checking up on friends-family method.

The data shows that Instagram has a negative impact on the mental health of young Saudi people as it makes them feel bad for their body shapes and the lifestyle they conduct. In this context, Arab women, part of the interviews, showed that the body shapes that they envy are part of the Western culture.

Additionally, it was also found that majority of female participants use filters offered by Instagram to change their faces-bodies in order to look "better", showing the influence of the application on their self-esteem. Whereas the data shows a slightly better results for male participants, showing the envy only to the lifestyle, not the body image, however, exclusions are present.

The results importantly show that Instagram ads and post affect young Saudi people on their decisions to have cosmetic interventions, and a strong gender difference is depicted in this area, females having higher chances towards interventions.

### **Marcello Puca**

#### *The long-run determinants of Civic Capital*

The term *civic capital* refers to the set of norms and values that allow individuals to collaborate and attain shared objectives, making it essential for the functioning of democratic societies by promoting civic engagement, collective action, and social cohesion. Despite its widespread application in explaining phenomena such as economic growth, political stability, and overall economic well-being, the reasons behind why certain societies accumulate more civic capital than others remain an open question. This presentation will explore recent developments in the study of civic capital and its determinants, which encompass both individual and contextual factors. Additionally, it will suggest potential avenues for future research.

### **Danielle Sophie Tietchou Tegang**

#### *Neocolonialism or mutual aid? A case study on France and its former colonies*

My presentation will be centered around the key elements of my thesis. It will outline the main forces that lead to the development of my topic and the theories which founded neocolonialism. The research will observe France's economic and political interactions with three of its former colonies in order to evaluate their relationship. Are their exchanges mutually beneficial or is one party benefitting from the other?

The former colonies chosen are: Senegal, Cameroon & Djibouti

### **Joseph Marques**

#### *Sub-national diplomacy: the internationalization of Brazilian cities*

Cities have emerged as new and important players in international relations. Often driven by local political leaders, business elites or entire communities, cities now play a crucial role on a wide range of issues such as climate change, migration, mobility, gender equality creative industries, among others. Cities are also redefining their role in international affairs

by creating and joining *networks of cities* which allow for cities to develop their ability to internationalize, share best practices and leverage their power to define and influence the agenda at multilateral organizations, international agencies and regional institutions. Can cities truly develop their own foreign policy? How do cities organize themselves to promote their international goals? What has been their track record across different administrations and changes in government?

The focus of this research project is the internationalization process of Brazilian cities (i.e. Curitiba, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Santos, Brasilia) in order to identify the major factors leading to successful internationalization, best practices and structural bottlenecks. The project's hypothesis questions whether the internationalization of Brazilian cities has an impact on the country's foreign policy and, ultimately, whether it may serve as a model for other (South American) cities.

The project's methodological approach is centered around semi-structured interviews of city officials, an electronic questionnaire circulated among a representative group of the local community in each city and an extensive review of academic and policy papers on this topic. The choice of this research topic is largely driven by my interest in preparing a semester-long course on *Global Cities* as well as a specific syllabus for a related graduate course on *Cities and Migration, Climate Change and the Environment*.

### **Naraana Enkhjin**

*The Impact of Democratization on Internal Migration in Post-Socialist Mongolia: A Study of the Mongolian Government's Ger Programs*

Mongolia suffers from higher-than-average global warming and struggles with land degradation, water scarcity, sandstorms, and dzud. From poor infrastructure after the Democratic Revolution in 1990, water scarcity has been rampant, especially with the lucrative and water-intensive mining industry, environmental disasters called dzud, land degradation due to poor management of animals, overgrazing, and goat herding in high demand due to the country's other most significant sector, cashmere, leading many herders to migrate to urban areas of Mongolia, notably Ulaanbaatar, the capital city. These rural-to-urban internal migrants often settle on the outskirts of Ulaanbaatar in what is known as the Ger District. With increasing numbers of internal migrants in Mongolia, the Mongolian government have undertaken policies and initiatives to address this issue, such as the Ger District Development Program, the One Window, the One Stop Policy, and the legalisation of informal settlement. This Thesis aims to evaluate the effectiveness of these Ger District programs and whether these programs promote the urbanisation of rural areas, discriminative policies towards internal migrants, or integration of internal migrants in rural cities by linking back to the core political change in Mongolia by addressing the various interlinking impact of the transition from Socialism to Democracy.

### **Stefano Catelani**

*The ISDS reform*

During the last sixty years protection of foreign investments has evolved from diplomacy, and even worse the gunboat diplomacy of previous centuries, to a protection based on the rule of law (investment law) and an Investor State Dispute Settlement mechanism (ISDS) based on international arbitration. The recent criticism of ISDS is based primarily on the fact

that this system is potentially limiting the right to regulate of States due to fear of legal actions and requests for damages by investors. Because of such criticism, Uncitral launched a few years ago an initiative to reform the system (Uncitral Working Group 3) aimed at finding solutions in line with a more advanced balance between the need to protect investments in order to continue to attract Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) and the need to preserve the right of regulating economic activities by host States. We would like to focus on two of the many aspects of the ISDS reform on which WG3 is now working: third party funding and mediation of Investor State disputes which are possibly more closely related than it appears at first glance.

**Dora Duarte, Lucienne I. Bigler-Perrotin, and Françoise V. Maillard Strüby**

*Feeling Isolated: A Parsesciencing Inquiry*

This investigation is interested in what adults have to say concerning their experiences of feeling isolated. Parsesciencing as mode of inquiry for this investigation is used to discover the meaning of the living experiences through a study of a person's descriptions of experiences. Parsesciencing as one of the basic science nursing modes of inquiry (Parse, 2016) is a phenomenological- hermeneutic mode of inquiry. It is phenomenological, as it seeks to discover the essence of experiences. It is hermeneutic as data are interpreted through the lens of humanbecoming paradigm (Parse, 2021).

The individuals' descriptions of experiences of feeling isolated may contribute to further understanding of the experience of feeling isolated as a universal living experience guided by the humanbecoming paradigm (Parse, 2021) of the nursing discipline, and as an essence to living quality. Individuals' descriptions of personal experiences of feeling isolated may also contribute to the enhancement of nursing knowledge, healthcare and ways nurses interact with patients in practice.

**Lionel Fatton**

*Japan's rush to the Pacific war: the institutional roots of overbalancing*

In the mid-1930s, Japan withdrew from a naval arms control framework that had restrained military buildup on both sides of the Pacific Ocean since the early 1920s. By doing so, Japan not only triggered a naval arms race with the United States that exhausted its economy, it also destroyed the last institutionalized structure regulating the relationship between the two Pacific powers. Japan and the United States became caught in a spiral of tensions that culminated with the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. Puzzling is the fact that the international environment in the Asia-Pacific was relatively stable in the mid-1930s, while Washington was pursuing a policy of accommodation toward Tokyo. By rejecting arms control and engaging in unfettered naval expansion, Japan overbalanced against the United States and began its rush to the Pacific.

**Julianna Sandholm-Bark and Camilla Ivesdal**

*A First Look into the Data Collected for 'Art in Geneva Now: 20 Conversations with Contemporary Artists' by Julianna Sandholm-Bark*

## **Richard Randell**

### *Automobility, Modernity and the Anthropocene*

Richard Randell's recent research and publications have focused on the relationship between automobility and the Anthropocene, conceptualizing automobility as a central apparatus of the Anthropocene. He is currently working on two archival research projects that have been partially supported by Webster University Geneva. The first is a reconstruction of the General Motors Futurama pavilion at the 1939/40 New York World's Fair. In September last year he conducted archival research at the New York Public Library, which holds the World's Fair archives; at the General Motors archives in Detroit and at Kettering University in Flint, Michigan; and at the Norman Bel Geddes archives, the designer of the Futurama exhibition, which are held by the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin. The second project is based on research at the Talcott Parsons archives, which are held by Harvard University. It focuses on the sociologist Talcott Parsons's translation and reading of Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. The GM Futurama exhibit and much of Parsons's literary oeuvre exhibit an extraordinary faith and confidence in sociotechnical progress. If they may be described as representative of the period of high-modernity, and post-modernity described as the time in which the destruction wrought by high-modernity became increasingly visible, the Anthropocene would be the epoch in which we have become aware that the destruction and violence wrought by modernity has transformed the entire planet.

## **Vicken Cheterian**

### *International relations after the war in Ukraine: Russia-Turkey relations*

Russia and Turkey developed a particular type of relationship which could be described as "hybrid", "frenemies", "co-opetition", "conflictual cooperation", the essence of which is simultaneously geopolitical competitors finding themselves on different sides of international conflicts, but also collaborating on several strategic domains. The Russian invasion of Ukraine and Western sanctions on Russia polarized international relations. Yet, unexpectedly, the Russia-Turkey relationship did not change its course, Turkey did not join the other NATO members in clearly opposing Russia. Why? And what does this tell us about the rules and mechanisms of international relations today?

## **Anastassia Duka**

### *Evolutionary perspectives in Schizophrenia: a review of existing theories and their application in treatment methods*

Despite its maladaptive nature, schizophrenia is still prevalent amongst the general population with no indication of rate decline. Although treatment methods exist, none can boast curative properties and carry substantial risk to those being treated. In an effort to elucidate why incidence rates of schizophrenia have never seen a decline, this paper will review evolutionary literature to seek possible justification and infer potential alternative treatments.