

Editorial

This June, STSS extends across geographical areas to offer an overview on a variety of issues, apparently unrelated but ultimately linked by an attempt to better understand governance in a number of fields.

The first article by Anastasiya Mahon and Scott Walker (2023) deals with counterterrorism (CT) policies to suggest that illiberal states, such as Russia, will likely use CT policy to enhance the ruling regime's goals in ways that liberal states would not. To do this, the article focuses on the critical changes in Russia's CT policy under Putin and demonstrates how Putin-era Russian CT policies have been used indirectly to advance the Kremlin's desire to suppress domestic opposition and enhance its political standing both at home and abroad.

The next article by Mariam Darchiashvili and Elene Gavashelishvili (2023) explores the consequences of friendly and affordable reproductive services. Using Georgia as a case study, they first investigate how surrogacy is regulated and managed in everyday life in Georgia. Further to that, they present a study of surrogacy clinics and agencies in Tbilisi and Batumi in 2021 and 2022 to reveal the sizeable role informalities play in everyday surrogacy negotiations.

The third article by Joseph P. Helou (2023) employs Giddens' theory of structuration to identify why the practices of power sharing among the political elite in the context of post-war settings can spawn inflection points that divert the political process off course and incubate avenues for other transitions. Using Lebanon as a case study, it highlights three transitions in post-war Lebanon: A) the post-Taif process (1990–2005), B) the post-2005 transition following the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon (2005–2019), and C) the post-October 17 2019 transition to maintain that the lack of national resources will most likely make Lebanese elites more eager to play a larger role in the informal sector, thus surviving on the resources of individuals.

The last article by Josephine Therese Emily G. Teves (2023) presents a study on the role of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in financing infrastructural projects and rural development programmes. It focuses on assistance by the Japanese government in the Philippines to demonstrate how Japanese and Filipino aid authorities facilitate a Japanese-ODA-funded Farm-to-Market Road (FMR) subproject as a solution aiming to achieve overall poverty reduction and rural economic growth in the Philippines. By doing this, it argues that while the FMR fostered mutual understanding and beneficial relationships among aid authorities, more significant advantages were accrued by the non-poor sector.

The issue is complemented by reviews of recent publications. In line with our previous policy and intention to keep science affordable and accessible, we continue to review only books that sell at 35 euros or less.

In the first book review, Atifa Amiri (2023) explains the merits of *Settling for Less* by Lachlan McNamee and its crucial role especially for readers interested in colonialism, ethnic conflict and secessionism, as well as their theoretical formulation and ontological embeddedness across the globe. In the second review, Ankita Sharma offers an interesting critique of *Carbon Colonialism: How Rich Countries Export Climate Breakdown* (2023) by Laurie Parsons and explains that, even if the planet might have enough resources for our needs, there is not enough for our desires. The review accurately notices that, inasmuch as we are ultimately all accountable for our unsustainable overuse of natural resources and climate change, the book is indeed of interest not only to those with a specific interest but virtually everyone.

References

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