



EDITOR'S NOTE

John Vianne B. Murcia

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Jose Maria College Foundation, Inc.

It is a quiet conceit of every generation that the global order within which it lives is uniquely precarious, uniquely transitional, and uniquely in need of fresh articulation. That conceit, however, is not always mistaken. The present moment—marked by the accelerated fragmentation of post-Cold War institutional arrangements, the simultaneous rise of competing technological and economic poles, and the deepening entanglement of climate, health, and digital vulnerabilities—does indeed present the global order as a problem rather than a given. It is less a settled architecture than a contested horizon, one that scholars from every disciplinary vantage are summoned to interrogate.

This special edition of the *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies* arrives precisely at such a juncture. The papers gathered here originated from the January 2025 research conference jointly convened by Jose Maria College Foundation, Inc. (JMCFI) in the Philippines and Kalinga University in India. That collaboration itself is noteworthy: a scholarly bridge between Southeast Asia and South Asia, between private higher education institutions committed to context-sensitive research and a broader aspiration to contribute to global knowledge conversations. The conference theme invited participants to reflect on how innovation, technology, mobility, and human development intersect with the emergent contours of our shared institutional and social order. The present collection represents a selection of those reflections, revised and peer-reviewed for publication under the journal's standard editorial processes.

What unites the contributions in this issue, despite their disciplinary diversity, is a shared recognition that the global order is no longer—if it ever was—a domain reserved for diplomats, trade negotiators, or international lawyers alone. It is constituted daily in the partial differential equations that model cardiovascular health across borders, in the remittance corridors through which migrant workers rewire economic geographies, in the self-efficacy of teachers navigating online classrooms that dissolve national instructional boundaries, in the quality standards that digital technologies impose on education systems worldwide, in the sporting practices that mediate work-life balance across very different labour regimes, and in the search algorithms that shape mobile commerce in cities like Monrovia. In other words, the global order is not merely *out there*, in the formal institutions of multilateral governance; it is *in here*, in the technical, pedagogical, financial, and cultural practices that increasingly travel across jurisdictions and condition everyday life.

A multidisciplinary journal with an international mandate carries a peculiar responsibility in such a context. It is not to adjudicate between competing grand theories of world order—realism, liberalism, constructivism, postcolonialism—though those debates have their place. Rather, it is to



provide a platform where the granular, empirically grounded, methodologically diverse studies of specific phenomena can accumulate into something that resembles a collective diagnosis. The single-authored paper on PDEs, the conjoint analysis of OFW remittance preferences, the mixed-methods study of online teacher performance, the survey-based investigation of digital education standards, the systematic review of sports and work-life balance, the mixed-methods inquiry into m-commerce in Monrovia—each, on its own, speaks to a particular slice of contemporary experience. Taken together, they suggest a global order that is technologically dense, asymmetrically connected, and stubbornly resistant to simple narratives of either utopian integration or dystopian disintegration. It is an order in which the most powerful forces are often not treaties but algorithms, not summits but smartphone screens, not declarations of intent but the quiet, repetitive decisions of millions of individuals navigating systems they did not design.

As editor, I am acutely aware of the risks that accompany such a framing. One might reasonably ask: Is any collection of multidisciplinary studies, however competent, *about* the global order simply because it touches on phenomena that happen to cross borders? The objection has force. What distinguishes this special edition is not merely the geographical and disciplinary range of its contributions—though that range is considerable—but the editorial commitment to reading these contributions as mutually illuminating fragments of a larger puzzle. The puzzle, to put it directly, is this: In an era when the old certainties of Westphalian sovereignty, Bretton Woods finance, and Cold War alliance systems have eroded without being replaced by any coherent new architecture, how do we understand the *de facto* order that is emerging from the bottom up? The answer, these papers suggest, is that we understand it through its operational details—through the equations engineers use to model blood flow, through the utility weights migrant workers assign to transaction speed versus exchange rate, through the variance in instructional performance that online self-efficacy explains, through the trade-offs teachers perceive between engagement and face-to-face interaction, through the mental health asymmetries between leisure and elite sports, and through the inconsistent adoption of SEO in urban African mobile markets.

None of this is to claim that the formal institutions of global governance have become irrelevant. Far from it. But the papers in this issue direct our attention to a different scale of analysis, one that has historically been underserved by international relations scholarship and, for that matter, by the more macro-oriented social sciences. They ask us to consider that the global order is not simply imposed from above but is also co-produced from below, in the everyday decisions of teachers, workers, consumers, engineers, and athletes whose aggregated activities generate patterns that no single actor designed or fully controls.

For the *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, this special edition represents both a continuation and an experiment. The continuation lies in our longstanding commitment to publishing research that crosses disciplinary boundaries without sacrificing methodological rigour. The experiment lies in the deliberate juxtaposition of papers whose thematic and geographical specificities might, in a more conventional arrangement, have been segregated into separate issues or even separate journals. By holding them together, we invite readers to practise a form of integrative reading—to ask, as they move from partial differential equations to remittance preferences to online teacher performance, what threads of connection might be discerned. I suspect that readers will find those threads in the domain of technology, which recurs across nearly every contribution; in the theme of mobility, whether of fluids, of money, of labour, or of



knowledge; and in the question of what constitutes *quality* in human systems, whether educational, financial, or clinical.

I extend my deepest gratitude to the leadership and faculty of Jose Maria College Foundation, Inc. for their vision in hosting and co-organizing the January 2025 research conference, and to our partners at Kalinga University for demonstrating that meaningful scholarly collaboration can flourish across national boundaries. The authors have shown remarkable patience and responsiveness through the peer-review process, and the reviewers—drawn from multiple countries and disciplines—have performed an indispensable service in ensuring the quality of the work presented here. Finally, I thank the journal's editorial board and production team for supporting the special edition format and for recognizing that multidisciplinary research, when thoughtfully curated, can speak to questions that no single discipline can adequately address on its own.

The global order, as the papers in this issue collectively demonstrate, is not waiting to be discovered. It is being made, unmade, and remade in sites and practices that scholarship has only begun to map. This special edition is an attempt to contribute to that mapping—not as a final chart, but as an invitation to continue the work. ■