

The Journal of International Relations, Peace Studies, and Development

Volume 5
Issue 1 *The Journal of International Relations,
Peace Studies, and Development*

Article 1

2019

The Journal of International Relations, Peace and Development Studies - 5th Edition Introduction

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Recommended Citation

Patrick Clairzier (2019) "The Journal of International Relations, Peace and Development Studies - 5th Edition Introduction," *The Journal of International Relations, Peace Studies, and Development*. Vol. 5 : Iss. 1 , Article 1.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.arcadia.edu/agsjournal/vol5/iss1/1>

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The Journal of International Relations, Peace and Development Studies 5th Edition Introduction

Patrick Clairzier

Identity politics is associated with the view that no single social theory or political movement can accurately speak to the conditions of all of the distinctive groups in society. Thus, it assumes that groups experience social, political and economic forces in different ways and to varying degrees based on the complexities of their identities. More specifically, proponents of identity politics from the “left” argue that traditionally marginalized groups such as racial minorities, women, LGBT people and others need a more particularized politics that challenges the complex nature of the coercive forces acting upon them. Nevertheless, some leftist critics reject this identity-focused discourse as merely a social construct that encourages these self-identified minority groups to aggressively reject more universalistic movements. In other words, they contend that identity politics undermines the broader struggle for socio-economic equality. Thus, it is directly responsible for the societal schisms associated with the global rise of populist movements from both the left and right based on the old adage of “Us vs. Them.” However, while the right's 'us' is itself invariably identity-based, the progressive left has attempted to respond to the rise of identity politics not with simple rejection, but by calling for all oppressed groups to express solidarity with all other oppressed groups.

Within this 5th annual issue *The Journal of International Relations, Peace Studies & Development*, we present three papers that approach this issue from different perspectives. Given the rise of authoritarian populism around the world, Andrew Johnson's article *Ur-Fascism and Neo-Fascism*, focuses on the resurgence of “21st century fascism” and its relation to American empire, global capitalism and liberal politics. Olga Thierbach-McLean's *Between Globalism and America First: The Ambiguous Resonance of Individualist Values in Current U.S. Foreign Policy* utilizes a cultural studies perspective arguing that the populist and nationalist movement that brought Trump to power is not an anomaly, but rooted in the prevailing culture. Steve McGiffen's *'Populism': an empty signifier used to discredit the movement for social change*, provides an historical overview of the application of the words 'populism' and 'populist' and their use by elite power structures as propaganda to questions and discredit movements for social change. Lastly, Chris Goldie reviews *Enzo Traverso's Left-Wing Melancholia: Marxism, History, Memory*, a study of the history of socialism and Marxism that calls for embracing “communist melancholy” in order to imagine a socialist future.

It is our goal that these works will help to expand the discourse on the political, economic and social implications of these issues.

Patrick Clairzier is a Professor at the American Graduate School, Université de Cergy-Pontoise, Université Panthéon-Assas PARIS II, and PhD candidate whose research focuses on issues of international political economy and sustainable development. He has worked as a consultant at the United Nations Environment Programme in Paris and has worked in the financial sector for many years. He has authored articles such as “Paths to Development through Trade: EU-Led Trade Liberalization vs South-South Cooperation” and “The Larger Context of Haiti's Earthquake.” He is also founder and editor-in-chief of The Journal of International Relations, Peace Studies, and Development.