

# EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

In the last issue of Discourse, we argued our belief that if modern humanity's fragile existence has any hope for survival in the face of current global crises, we must first seriously dedicate ourselves to a more engaged, civil, and reasoned public dialogue.

This truth is even more critical today.

While the spectrum of pundits declare with absolute certainty that the U.S. economy is destined for either amelioration or Armageddon, the one-time masters of the universe declare with absolute ambiguity that they have no idea what the future holds. What is certain is that the world is changing and the decisions that are made today will have long-lasting effects.

The multitude of crises we faced last year have not disappeared with the collapse of the global financial system, they have worsened and grown more urgent. This depression is not cause to take our attention away from the other problems we face but rather reason to finally address them sincerely.

In times of crisis it is easy to look inward and forget the crises that may not seem to be immediately at our doorstep. In times of anxiety it is easy to forego discussion and defer to power, but it would be our folly either to pretend the conditions of others do not affect our own or to blindly follow our new government without reflection of past mistakes and reasoned examination of potential future policy.

In this spirit I am confident that you will find this issue diverse and intellectually challenging. Much of the content of this issue examines the relationship between state and society, the latter's loss of trust and faith in the former, and the human impact of these issues. Austin Siadak's cover feature offers a thorough and gripping account of the global food crisis, followed by Ashraf Ghani's on concerns about how the security development complex operates. Hannah Flamm's essay on the challenges of development and having an open discussion about mining in El Salvador both builds on Dr. Ghani's and leads into Saskia Sassen's discussion

about the complexity of powerlessness. Jessica Herrmann's piece is a magnificent primer on the U.S. mortgage crisis, complementing one of Dr. Sassen's examples and offering an analysis of policy. Nichole Sobbecki's photo essay on Pakistan offers a visual window into the current challenge of Pakistan. Samuel James and Jessica Anderson's pieces on the aftermath of conflict in Northern Uganda, provide a diverse look at how communities begin to rebuild and reclaim their histories. Moving from transitional justice in Uganda, Nathaniel Teichman's piece looks at the juvenile justice system in the US. The issues concludes with two pieces of slam poetry on US urban issues by Jesse Welch.

I am confident you will be challenged and engaged by the contents of this issue. Its quality is owed to our talented contributors and to Heather Barry and Sherman Teichman at the Institute for Global Leadership, to the design of de.MO and Giorgio Baravalle and Megan Hall, and to the sponsorship of the Tufts Community Union Senate and the Merrin Family Fund.

Thank you for reading,

Padden Guy Murphy  
*Editor in Chief*