

## **Editorial: Graduate Research from Global Perspectives**

HEATHER R. KEENAN

George Mason University

What do you see when you look in your refrigerator door? Perhaps you have bottles of ketchup and mustard from a recent meal of grilled hamburgers and hot dogs. Maybe you have a half-empty bottle of Sriracha sauce from the last time you ate Pad Thai. Salsa for tonight's tacos?

My refrigerator door holds condiments from many countries. American ketchup, German creamy horseradish, Mexican salsa, Thai Sriracha, and Chinese hoisin sauce. I love to explore flavors outside my American Southwest comfort zone (think black beans and rice, beef burritos, chips and salsa). I use flavors from around the world in my cooking, but rarely do I mix those flavors. Occasionally I mix up Sriracha ketchup, but I do not combine Mexican and Chinese or German and Thai flavors. I'm not that adventurous.

So it is with globalization. The world has arrived at our front door in northern Virginia. Students at George Mason University (Mason) represent all regions of the United States and 150 different countries! As we move toward more developed levels of intercultural competence, we probably all start with small explorations of unfamiliar cultures. Perhaps tasting a country's cuisine at a local restaurant or trying a new condiment from the "international" section at the grocery store. Those initial explorations might lead to friendships with people from other cultures and eventually travel into the countries, states, or regions where our friends' families live.

But intercultural competence is more than just learning about the food, holidays, or language of "foreign" country. Globalization has made the world smaller. We must now learn to live in harmony with people who might speak a different language, practice a different religion, or view the world from a drastically different perspective.

The theme for Volume 3 is "Addressing Complex Global Issues." The characteristics and effects of globalization are prevalent in academic discussions. The leaders of our university have clearly embraced the positive side of globalization in their mission statement:

*Mason is committed to creating a more just, free and prosperous world. Located in one of the most important political, economic and intellectual hubs in the world, we accept our responsibility to serve others: to help our students succeed, enrich the life of our community, and contribute to solving some of the most complex global problems of our time.*

Articles included in this volume offer perspectives about a wide variety of issues, challenges, and problems in multiple geographic and cultural contexts. In Issue 1, Hennessey and Taibah remind us that the face of the military and education are changing in the United States. In light of globalization, the U.S. approaches to problem solving may need to adapt. Alsufyani offers an important analysis of obesity indicators for an understudied population, reminding us that traditional studies of the western European male many not be applicable to other population groups. Issue 2 includes studies focused on ecological and economic challenges. Kroner and Mahabir raise

important questions about changes to our environment and the controversies surrounding those changes. Norgaard's analysis of micro-loans in Mali suggests new ways to consider economic development in Africa. Our final issue touches on aspects of religious diversity. Brand and Solomon present two strands of the Islamic faith, addressing questions about religious dissent. Taking an historical approach, Delis describes an example of art challenging religion-based gender norms during the Baroque period.

Together, the articles in Volume 3 are the epitome of globalization in the Mason community. We are a graduate student community representing multiple ethnicities, languages, cultures, and faiths and these diverse perspectives are apparent in our research approaches. I hope you enjoy reading the articles in JGMR Volume 3 as much as I did!