

Editor's Note: Edges of the Map

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To say that we are surrounded by crises is perhaps a bit too cliché now. Time and time again over the past few years as an undergraduate, I have found myself wondering: what does it mean to be a student of politics amidst all this? We are halfway through 2026, and even in this relatively brief span of time, we have seen multiple new warfronts erupt, subside, and reignite. Our systems of governance are struggling, and quality of life remains as precarious as ever for everyday people. We are certainly far off from the ‘triumphalist’ days of the 90s we read about, even further from Francis Fukuyama’s much discussed and critiqued ‘end of history’ with its dreams of stability (even Fukuyama is apparently ‘playing defense’¹ these days). What stories do/should we write then, in times like these?

The essays in this twelfth volume of *Mapping Politics* do not claim definitive answers (and who could dare anyway?) on these questions. Instead, they share a common instinct: to begin at the margins. Spanning contexts from Brazil to Bangladesh, these essays shed light on changes unfolding at the edges of our maps. Globalization has come under intense scrutiny in the past few decades, some of it warranted and much of it less so. It is encouraging to see that, despite everything, my fellow young scholars of politics around Canada continue to dream globally.

A key recurring theme in the essays for this issue has been war, unsurprisingly enough. George Chakhunashvili’s essay “War and Expansion” offers an exploration of Russia’s foreign policy against the backdrop of the invasion of Ukraine. Employing a realist lens, Chakhunashvili looks at Russia’s efforts at blocking Ukraine’s NATO membership, as well as its relatively underexplored ambitions in the Arctic. “Glossing over the Great War” by Brooke Osmond analyzes and critiques Canadian methods of remembrance and commemoration of the First World War. Emily Bonia’s “GDP theory”

also touches on this theme of war, theorizing and mapping out the politics of sexual abuse in conflict zones.

Júlia Costa Cruvinel Barbosa's "Structural Litigation and Public Policy-making" offers a view of tensions developing within the Brazilian legal system. Her critique of Bill no. 3 of 2025 as a possible avenue for judicial overreach lays out the delicate balance of power in a complex democracy such as Brazil. "Colonial Legacies and the Politics of Skin Tone" by Quazi Mohammad Abrar Nafis explores the politics of colourism in Bangladesh as a gendered, colonial legacy, and highlights postcolonial feminist resistance against it.

We are also delighted to feature "Barriers to Understanding" by Cale Warren in this issue. Warren's essay critiques the currently centralized regime of disaster management and explores the feasibility of more localized solutions such as managed retreat. The importance of Newfoundland Studies for this province could not be overstated, and it is always a joy to see new scholars focusing on the problems this province faces.

We selected the cover from Muhammad Al-Idrisi's (b. 1100, d. 1165) *Tabula Rogeriana* (or *Nuṣṣaṭ al-muṣṭaq fī ikhtirāq al-āfāq*) in keeping with the theme of maps from our journal title. The cover, an inverted medieval map of the known world, produced by the Arab cartographer at the request of the Norman King Roger II, struck us as a fitting symbol of the changing ways of mapping our world, and curious encounters at its edges. Al-Idrisi's work itself reflected a shift in cartography, towards more empirical evidence, critical inquiry, and clarity. May our maps be clearer too, in his spirit.

A huge thank you to the Editorial Board: Precious, Ben, Josh, Sam, Madison, and James, for all the work put into this issue. Special thanks to Josh for designing a sleek, new typeset for this volume. The board would like to thank all the authors who submitted their work for consideration. For those who persevered through the peer review process, we appreciate your patience, and your

willingness to incorporate reviewer feedbacks. We are also incredibly grateful to all of the academics (both at Memorial and other institutions) who agreed to provide reviews for our student authors. Your exceptional care in reviewing the works of these young scholars, while maintaining academic rigour, was inspiring to see firsthand.

I am greatly indebted to Dr. Dimitrios Panagos, our faculty advisor, for all his advice and support in guiding this volume to completion. Over the past year or so, Dr. Panagos has supported us in learning the ropes of journal management, inviting reviewers, securing funding, and clarifying key issues whenever needed. We thank him for all his guidance and assistance. Mapping Politics is the student journal of the Department of Political Science, and I thank the department and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences for continuously supporting us as a venue for student scholarship on politics. Special thanks also to Juanita Lawrence and Fatima Mehdi, for their administrative support. Lastly, I must thank you, dear reader! Readers like you make this whole endeavour worthwhile, and I hope this issue helps enrich your understanding of our complex little world.

With regards,

Hasan Habib

Editor-in-Chief

¹ Varagur, Krithika. “Francis Fukuyama Plays Defense.” Under Review. *The New Yorker*, May 25, 2022. <https://www.newyorker.com/books/under-review/francis-fukuyama-plays-defense>.