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'No surprises' White Paper provides ASAA with policy opportunities

The White Paper on Australian in the Asian Century sets many objectives but is light on strategy.

By John Ingleson

I am told that there have been more than 60 reports since 1950 funded by governments or government agencies on Australia and Asia. *Australian in the Asian Century* is the latest. The crucial difference this time is that this is a White Paper: that is, it is a statement of government policy. As such it will focus the minds of Australians and will get attention from all arms of government as well as from the corporate sector.

However, nothing in it will surprise Asian Studies Association of Australia (ASAA) members, or indeed any Australian who is at all aware of the dramatic transformations taking place in many Asian countries in recent decades. What to make of it? The analysis of the *Sydney Morning Herald's* Ross Gittens was apt when he argued that one of the most important functions of this White Paper was to provide a narrative for

the government. If this is the case, then it is a pretty good narrative.

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John Ingleson new ASAA president. [See new ASAA Council.](#)



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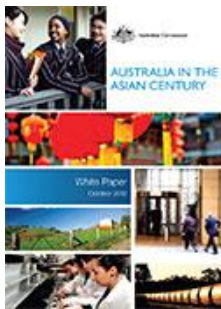
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White Paper policy opportunities

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Its strength lies in its comprehensive whole-of-government approach and in the formulation of a set of goals for Australia, to be achieved by 2025. Its weakness is that it reads more like an aspirational statement than a policy document. In covering almost every area of policy, from the tax system to regional security, the document necessarily has meta-level objectives but provides few real strategies to achieve them.



Nevertheless, it establishes a framework for testing future government policies and for basing arguments for change.

Like many members of the ASAA, I have spent much of my professional life arguing that Australia needs to understand the transformations occurring in Asia and to engage with the region with confidence. I well remember in the early 1980s organising ASAA lunchtime meetings in Sydney and Melbourne where senior executives were invited to discuss the opportunities for Australia in the region. I also remember how disappointed we were by the indifference of most.

At the last ASAA Conference, John Menadue spoke of Australian companies 'going smoko' on Asia over the last couple of decades. I think he was right. I particularly welcome those sections of the White Paper which focus on getting Australian companies to shift their mind sets. This will not be easy.

Australia in the Asian Century sees the education system as being extremely important if Australia is to engage successfully with the Asia region. A number of its

recommendations are eminently sensible: the importance of strengthening maths and science education at all levels; increasing the number of university students undertaking part of their degrees in Asia; developing 'Asia literacy' in the school system; and strengthening ties between Australian and Asian universities.

I am less sure about some of the educational objectives. Do we really believe that Australia will have 10 of the top 100 universities in the world by 2025? Leaving aside the question of how one measures this, given competing league tables, currently we have no more than four or five in this group. Ten is a nice round, politically sound, number: it could not be less than eight, otherwise the Group of Eight (Go8) would be irritated; nor could it be eight, otherwise every other university would be irritated.

Given the expenditure on universities occurring in China and other Asian countries, if Australia is to achieve this objective—or even keep four or five universities in the top 100—then it will have to increase public funding substantially. It is not enough for government to argue that it has increased public funding of universities in the last five years. This increase has barely covered the substantial growth in student enrolments.

Funding per student continues to decline in real terms. Government priorities can be seen when we compare public funding of public universities with public funding of private schools. The annual indexation for federal government funding of private schools has been around 6 per cent for the last two decades (in accordance with the 'index of education costs'), whereas the annual indexation for universities has been around 2–2.5 per cent. Ironically, one week before the White

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Paper was released the mid-year budget review reduced funding of research in universities by some \$800 million over four years. The reality is that successive Australian governments have been defunding Australian universities in real terms for nearly two decades.

The objective for universities set out in *Australia in the Asian Century* might be achievable if the government increases funding per student by at least 25 per cent (and then indexes at a minimum of 4 per cent annually), doubles research funding and substantially increases funding for infrastructure. I hope this happens, but remain sceptical.

The objective of having four Asian languages available across the schools system (all 10 000 schools!) and ensuring that all children have an opportunity to study one of them systematically from K-12 by 2025 is, shall we say, ambitious. The cost has been estimated at more than \$1 billion a year. But even if we could find the money, can we find the teachers? And even if we can find the money and the teachers, is this a sensible approach? Will it work? What exactly are we trying to achieve?

There has been no shortage of language policies over the last two to three decades. All have failed. In part this is because they have constantly changed under pressure from vested interests and governments losing interest. Those who create education policy at the meta-level seem to have little understanding that education changes take a decade or more to implement successfully.

But I think our language policies have failed for a more fundamental reason. We have not clearly articulated what we are trying to achieve at each level. It is not easy

The reality is that students are not going to devote the effort needed to achieve fluency unless they can see some advantage to them in their future careers.

to develop a coherent and successful language policy in an essentially English-speaking society—let alone one with such diverse multicultural immigration. Do we want to create greater 'Asia literacy' for all children? If so, what is the relative importance of language learning as opposed to greater understanding of cultures, histories etc at the primary school or the secondary school level? Do we want to create more people fluent in an Asian language? Real fluency is difficult to achieve—and costly.

The overriding issue is that education budgets are limited—as is space in the curriculum. What are the priorities? The place of second language learning in the primary and secondary school curricula in an English-speaking country is very complex. Before we rush to give every child a '... continuous course of study in an Asian language throughout their years of schooling', we need to think through the issues.

We need also to determine how many fluent speakers of any one Asian (or other) language we need. How many fluent speakers of Vietnamese or Korean do we need as well as fluent speaker of Chinese, Indonesian, Hindi and Japanese? We should also consider different options at the 'elite' level. Could we establish an 'Australian Institute of Languages' for elite-level language teaching? We do it for sport and for the dramatic arts—why not for languages? Such an institute could have a branch in each capital city and offer a range of languages in intensive 10-week modules, much as we teach English

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as a second language. There could be a HECS- type funding system for students, allied to fees for companies. Costs would be similar to the cost of running an English-language college—something in the order of \$6–8 million a year would fully fund an institute of languages for half a dozen languages taught in intensive mode at different levels to a few hundred students.

We might also fund one-year in-country scholarships for language students who have completed, say, two years of language study at university level. All costs paid together with substantial personal allowance. For four years in the early 1980s we had 100 of these scholarships annually at a cost of less than \$2 million. It was a great scheme.

The White Paper provides ASAA with an opportunity to craft policies that sit within its framework and to steer the government in directions that have the best chance of succeeding. Government will be looking for ways to achieve its goals. The incoming ASAA Council will have this on its agenda.

John Ingleson is the incoming president of the ASAA Council and an Emeritus Professor at the University of New South Wales and the University of Western Sydney. He is a historian with particular expertise on the 20th century political and social history of Indonesia.

See *National collection of Asian languages and studies resources*, [page 25](#).

Hindi after Henry

The White Paper on the Asian Century has acknowledged Hindi as a major Asian language. But what does this mean for the teaching of the language?

By Peter Friedlander

Where does the new Henry Report on the Asian Century put us? Hindi is now a priority language and included along with Chinese, Japanese and Indonesian as a language on the Australian Asia literacy agenda.

However, if Hindi is to be taught in schools, who will develop the curriculum and where are the teachers? Who will train Hindi teachers or certify that Hindi teachers from India are eligible to teach in Australia? What is to become of Hindi in universities? There are no readily forthcoming answers to any of these questions in the White Paper.

Hindi and Urdu are grammatically the same languages and share a common core vocabulary. The main differences are in higher lexicons; Urdu draws more on Persian and Arabic as a vocabulary source while Hindi draws more from Sanskrit.

हिन्दुस्तानी
ہندوستانی

There are probably over 600 million Hindi–Urdu speakers in the world today, including 550 million Hindi

speakers and 50 million Urdu speakers in India and around 13 million Urdu speakers in Pakistan. Hindi and Urdu are also widely spoken in the South Asian diaspora in countries such as Mauritius, Trinidad, Surinam, South Africa, Fiji, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Singapore, Malaysia and Australia, and Hindi–Urdu is the

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Indian link language of choice for many within the Indian community, both in South Asia and the diaspora. Hindi and Urdu school curricula around the world are divided along linguistic and cultural grounds and these curricula highlight the distinctive religious traditions of modern Hinduism and Islam.

Moreover, whatever the language background of students, the methodology that is adopted presumes basic competence in Hindi-Urdu and focuses on standardising existing usages and developing competence in Hindi or Urdu.

Hindi programs are often also used as vehicles for teaching cultural practices in relation to festivals, religious observances and customs. This leads to an important question: if Hindi is to be taught in Australian schools, how will the curricula be developed? Bodies like the Victorian School of Languages and the recently established Australian Hindi Shiksha Sangha (Federation of Hindi teaching) need time and resources to develop responses to how Hindi is to be taught in Australian schools.

Outside of South Asia, Hindi and Urdu are taught as foreign languages at a university level. The history of foreign-language teaching in universities spans several different styles of teaching such as academic, audiolingual, communicative and task-based learning.¹

During the 1950s the academic style dominated most university programs around the world, and in it small numbers of students were taught very rapidly, learning script in a few weeks, grammar in a year and translation-based studies from the second year. The first Hindi-Urdu program in Australia was established at the Australian National University (ANU) in the early 1970s and the teaching techniques used can be seen in Richard Barz and Yogendra Yadav's *Introduction to Hindi and* Asian Currents December 2012

It is unlikely in the current university operating climate that any new universities will pick up a subject like Hindi.

*Urdu*², which was first published in 1977.

In the 1960s the audiolingual style became popular and had a characteristic format of an audio dialogue followed by notes and drills that still typifies most Hindi-Urdu language teaching around the world and in Australia.

During the 1970s the communicative style became popular and shifted the focus on to how to communicate in particular contexts. During this era, Hindi began to be taught in Melbourne by Sudha Joshi, who taught Hindi there from around 1970 to 1997. Along with her protégé Richard Delacy, she adopted a teaching style blending elements from academic, audio-lingual and communicative styles.

In 1997, Australia saw the beginning of its first distance education program, which I taught from 1997 to 2012 from La Trobe University for Open Universities Australia. The program adapted the communicative style of teaching for distance education.

Since 2000, task-based learning has become popular as a teaching style, and in this the focus is on joint problem-solving, activities-based tasks. The importance of such task-based studies for Hindi-Urdu studies is that, in the case of non-Indian students, it allows them to determine the degree to which they will be studying about South Asia, or in the case of students who are in one way or another of South Asian origin, about what makes them South Asian. This is vital if Hindi-Urdu teaching is

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going to tap into what makes students want to study South Asia studies, rather than trying to force them to learn a set curriculum that reflects any one particular view of what constitutes South Asian identity.

It is unlikely in the current university operating climate that any new universities will pick up a subject like Hindi. At La Trobe University, Hindi and Sanskrit were taught by a team of South Asian scholars teaching on all aspects of Indian culture, society and politics. However, it now looks set to maintain a single position, combining Hindi and South Asian studies.

At ANU the situation is quite different: there is a growing team of South Asian studies specialists and new strategies are being developed for Hindi-Urdu, not only for on-campus and in-country teaching, but also for a new national distance education Hindi diploma to be launched in 2014. The critical problem for the ANU Hindi-Urdu program will be how to integrate the mixture of language and cultural studies-based activities that are essential for a modern Hindi-Urdu program.

So will the Henry report have more impact than its numerous predecessors? In one word, yes. Simply acknowledging Hindi as a major Asian language marks a major breakthrough in thinking about India and Asia in Australia. To borrow a phrase from common English usage, we can't go on ignoring the elephant in the room and carry on talking about Asia without talking about India as part of Asia.

How can Australians understand India without taking into account the world views of the more than half a billion Hindi-Urdu speakers? So while the Henry Report has provided no answers about how Hindi is be

studied, at least it has, at long last, firmly put Hindi on to the agenda as an item to consider in the debate about how Australia is to become not only Asia-literate but also India-literate.

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Dr Peter G. Friedlander is currently Senior Lecturer in Hindi and Buddhist Studies at La Trobe University. He will move to the ANU in January 2013 where he will be Senior Lecturer in Hindi-Urdu.

Intensive Mongolian language course at ANU

The Australian National University in Canberra is organising a three-week intensive Mongolian language course, beginning 10 January 2013.



The course is designed for beginners of the language and will provide a foundation to develop practical listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. By the end of the course, students should be able to demonstrate ability to communicate using basic sentence patterns and structures to introduce, count, identify, express courtesies and preferences.

The course will be taught by Ms Batzaya Gerelt-Od, an experienced Mongolian language teacher for foreigners at the Ulaanbaatar University.

The course involves eight hours a day between Monday and Friday. The fee is A\$350 (A\$180 for students). You can register online.

For more information, contact [Li Narangoa](#), or phone 02 6125 3201.

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Sino-Japanese relations stuck on dispute over barren rocks

The Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute poses a threat to regional peace and stability and could embroil the United States.

By Jingdong Yuan

Tensions over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands territorial dispute between China and Japan erupted in early September when the Japanese Government decided to purchase and nationalise three of the five islands for ¥2.05 billion (US\$26 million), ostensibly to ward off a similar attempt by the ultranationalist, then Tokyo governor, Shintaro Ishihara.

China's response was swift and unequivocal. Beijing denounced Tokyo's action and took specific measures to demonstrate its sovereign claims to the island group, including sending maritime enforcement vessels and submitting to the United Nations the coordinates table and chart of the base points and baselines of the territorial sea of the Diaoyu Islands.

Meanwhile, anti-Japanese demonstrations took place in major cities in China, with some turning into angry riots targeting Japanese-owned businesses. Emotions were boiling over, as the Japanese move was also close to the 81st anniversary of the Mukden incident, where Imperial Japan invaded Manchuria.

While the Chinese Government subsequently reined in these demonstrations, and bilateral talks have been held to address the issue, both sides have maintained their positions, and there are no signs of any compromise. The standoff over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands is a serious setback in bilateral relations as Asia's two largest economies mark their 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations.

With heightened frequency of maritime enforcement ships of both countries in the vicinity of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands—and, at times, in close encounters—this game of chicken risks escalation to further direct confrontation which, in theory, could drag the United States into the conflict. Clearly, regional peace and stability require that Beijing and Tokyo find ways to de-escalate the situation and seek diplomatic ways out of this impasse.

The curse of history

China and Japan both claim sovereignty over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands but hold different historical interpretations. Chinese records date back more than 600 years, to the Ming Dynasty, when the islands were used for fishing and navigation purposes. Japan's claim to Diaoyu/Senkaku can be traced to the post-Meiji Restoration period, in the late 19th century, when Tokyo considered annexation of the islands.



A cluster of the disputed islets.

After China's Qin Dynasty lost the 1894–95 war with Japan, it was forced to cede Taiwan and the adjacent islands to Japan, in

addition to huge reparations. The Diaoyu Islands were annexed in 1895 and subsequently named Senkaku in 1900.

Historical interpretations aside, the islands have always been uninhabited, and Japan, with the exception of 1945–71, has exercised administrative control. The 1943 Cairo Declaration referred to the

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return of territories, taken by Japan, to China, although Diaoyu was not specifically mentioned. When Japan surrendered to the Allies in 1945, Taiwan was returned to the Chinese Nationalist Government under Chiang Kai-shek. The 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty placed the administrative control of Okinawa and Diaoyu with the United States, which Beijing considered at the time as illegal occupation of Chinese territories.

The 1971 Okinawa Reversion Treaty between the United States and Japan led to the return of Okinawa and the administrative control of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands to Japan, although Washington stated that it took a neutral position on the competing claims over Diaoyu/Senkaku by China, Japan and Taiwan.¹

During the negotiation leading up to the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Japan in 1972, both sides were aware of the competing claims and the intractable nature of the territorial disputes over Diaoyu/Senkaku. They chose to shelve the issue and proceeded with normalisation.

This tacit understanding also allowed the two countries to sign the 1978 Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship. Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping famously quipped that the dispute should be left to future generations of leaders to resolve, while the two countries could contemplate joint development of resources. The overall geostrategic interests shared by Beijing and Tokyo at the time—concerns with, and opposition to, Soviet expansionism—allowed them to paper over, but not resolve, the territorial dispute.

Sino-Japanese relations developed rapidly after normalisation, in

particular in the economic sphere. Two-way trade grew from US\$1 billion in 1972 to \$340 billion in 2011. China became Japan's largest trading partner in 2007. Beginning in the 1980s, Japan provided more than \$30 billion in official development aid in the form of yen loans, which greatly assisted China's economic developments in infrastructure and environmental projects.



Two of the dispute islets: Kita-Kojima/Bao Xiaodao (left) and Minami-Kojima/Nan Xiadao. Image: Wikipedia.

makers have all set up factories in China. Bilateral exchanges at all levels have increased to around five million annually. Despite these positive developments and, from time to time, official commitments from both governments to maintain and promote peaceful and stable bilateral relationship, Beijing and Tokyo have, at best, only managed to contain, the territorial disputes over Diaoyu/Senkaku and the East China Sea.

In addition, controversies over historical issues such as Japanese high school history textbooks, visits by Japanese politicians to the Yasukuni Shrine, where 14 Class-A war criminals are also enshrined, and the Nanking Massacre, continue to cast a shadow over bilateral relations and remain principal obstacles to genuine Sino-Japanese reconciliation and normalisation. Major disruptions have flared up every time historical issues and territorial disputes are brought to the fore: in 1978, 1984–85, 2005, and 2010. The current standoff continues this pattern.

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The tip of the iceberg

Sino-Japanese territorial disputes reflect and reinforce deeply seated mutual distrust and growing rivalry and animosity between the two countries. During the Cold War, their common interests in opposing the Soviet Union, and efforts by the older generations of Chinese and Japanese leaders to develop and nurture peaceful and friendly relations, helped contain or push aside the unresolved historical and territorial issues.

The end of the Cold War and the changing geostrategic landscapes, coupled with the discovery of valuable resources in the disputed maritime territories in the East China Sea, as well as the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, have heightened tensions between China and Japan. The common threat that used to glue them together is no longer there.

With rising nationalism and growing appetites for resources to sustain economic development, contending for disputed territories and maritime resources has become a test of wills. Neither side is willing to compromise lest it be seen as weak and selling out national interests.

But the stalemate and confrontation are costing both countries economically and damaging the foundation of their relationship. As widely reported over the past two months, Japanese businesses in China have sustained sizeable losses. Japanese investments in and exports to China have also fallen compared to similar periods in previous years. Meanwhile, the uncertainty, and further animosity, could also impede their willingness to cooperate in promoting East Asian regionalism to expand trade, investment, and currency swap.

Beneath and underlining these disputes are fundamental undercurrents that are defining future Sino-Japanese relations.² China has overtaken Japan as the world's second-largest economic power and, with 7–8 per cent annual growth, remains a much more dynamic economy. Japan has yet to pull itself out of the economic stagnation that started in the 1990s.

Beijing remains resentful of Japan's lack of true repentance over its past and is suspicious of Japan's actions, which it sees as a prelude to remilitarisation. Tokyo, on the other hand, is concerned about China's growing military power and its assertiveness in territorial disputes, and seeks reassurance of US commitments under the bilateral security treaty.

The recent leadership transition in China and a possible leadership change in Japan at this month's elections could provide opportunities to negotiate a way out of the impasse. But the changes could equally—and perhaps more so—impose significant constraints on both capitals. Past experiences suggest Sino-Japanese negotiations on territorial issues are likely to yield some concrete, albeit limited, results only when the following conditions pertain:

- First, leaders in both countries are determined to prevent further free fall in bilateral relations after a period of estrangement and serious setback.
- Second, the principal goal in the negotiation is to manage rather than solve these disputes, with a view to reaching some consensus—either on maintaining the status quo and/or on joint developments, without prejudice, to either side's claims on sovereignty. Only then is it possible to reach some agreement.

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- Third, negotiations are conducted out of the limelight and without publicity, with neither party looking to score political points or appeal to domestic constituents.

It is not clear whether these conditions exist today. The new Chinese leadership, with Xi Jinping as the head, is still in transition and consolidating itself. In Japan, this month's elections could return the Liberal Democratic Party, with its leader, former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, advocating more conservative and hawkish positions on China and the territorial issues.

The US role

Washington has maintained a neutral position on the Diaoyu/Senkaku issue as far as sovereignty claims by China, Japan, and Taiwan are concerned. However, the 1960 US–Japan Security Treaty also stipulates (Article 5) that the United States is obligated to protect territories under Japanese administration, which includes Diaoyu/Senkaku. This position was reiterated by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton when she stated in 2010 that 'we have made it very clear that the islands are part of our mutual treaty obligations, and the obligation to defend Japan'.³

Indeed, Japan has actively sought this commitment, including changes to the treaty guidelines that would allow the two allies closer military coordination in response to scenarios involving Chinese use of force over Diaoyu/Senkaku. A recent Senate amendment to the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act reaffirms US treaty commitments to the territories under Japanese administration.

The United States is in a bind here. On the one hand, since the Obama

The 1960 US–Japan Security Treaty also stipulates (Article 5) that the United States is obligated to protect territories under Japanese administration.

administration announced its Asia pivot last year, largely in response to the growing Chinese power in the region and partly to reassure its allies and friends, Washington has sought to strengthen its alliances and publicly advocated multilateral and diplomatic solutions to the multiple territorial disputes in the East and South China Seas, even though it maintains a neutral position on sovereign claims. At the same time, US Administration officials remain uncommittal as to the US treaty obligations to the Philippines, despite Manila's call for such reassurance. In this context, Clinton's remarks become all the more interesting, as are US–Japanese military exercises in the East China Sea.

However, Washington is unlikely to embroil itself in a military conflict with China over a few barren rocks, given the risks and uncertain outcomes. The Obama administration may angle for broader strategic advantage over China, but not seek war, however critical its alliance with Japan is.

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Resolving tension in South Asia's emerging climate crisis

The intersection of climate change, population growth, poverty, economic development and demand for water is an emerging crisis in South Asia—especially for states dependent on Himalayan-sourced rivers.

By Paul E. McShane

Rapid climate change is well recognised as an emerging but, as yet, unaddressed challenge for human populations. The notion that global temperatures are increasing above long-term mean values is now well established and national governments have developed mitigation and adaptation strategies.

However, consensual views among climate scientists are generally not well synchronised to policy makers, who must weigh up the economic consequences of action (e.g. changes to clean energy generation) and associated political consequences (e.g. employment). This is amply exemplified in South Asia where the confluence of poverty, economic development and climate change interacts with geography, culture, politics and religion.

In South Asia, monsoonal climates are characterised by wet and dry seasons. Climate change is likely to modify rainfall patterns in South Asia, but this is complicated by the influence of the Himalayas. The orographic influence of the Hindu Kush Himalayan mountains is obvious. Forced mechanical lifting of air impinging on the mountains leads to cooling, condensation and precipitation (rain and snow).

However, under these circumstances, the dynamics of rainfall patterns and their relationship with broader atmospheric circulation are poorly understood.¹

In general, the windward side of the Himalayas will receive more precipitation than the leeward side, resulting in rain shadows (for example the dry interior of Tibet) and sharp transitions in climate.

However, strong monsoonal circulations affect the southern flank of the Himalayas. Thus, while we expect that snow and glacial melts will increase with temperature, and that this will increase flows in Himalayan-sourced rivers, downstream rainfall in lower catchments may have a greater contribution to river flows.



Howrah Bridge, Hooghly River, Kolkata, West Bengal.

The contribution of snow and glacial melts to major rivers ranges from <5% (Ganges) to >45% (Indus) of average flows. Changes to monsoonal climate systems resulting in westward shifts towards Pakistan include accretion of glaciers in the Karakoram (against the warming trend in eastern regions).

There is a need to develop more accurate forecasting of flow rates in Himalayan-sourced rivers. Regional climate models are complex and current models are unable to accurately forecast rainfall at basin-level scales. This frustrates planning for river basin management as changes to rainfall patterns, snow and glacial melts are expected from climate change. Some regions may

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receive more water and some less. This has consequences for agriculture, for crop-planting patterns and for crop yields (among other consequences, including water quality).

Climate change interacts with demography, particularly shifts in populations from rural to urban settings. This migratory pattern will increase demand for water, together with changing water consumption patterns in an emerging middle class in India; with increased irrigation with agricultural development; with increasing industrialisation; and, particularly, with rapid increase in hydroelectricity generation in the region.



Children working in brick making facilities, Buriganga River, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Planning is underway to build massive dams in the region. Nepal and Bhutan see economic opportunities for export of electricity to energy-

hungry India. Nepal and Bhutan also depend on primary production for livelihoods, whereas India and Pakistan are more industrialised.

Development priorities and constraints differ among countries. For Pakistan, dams provide sources of irrigation for agriculture, with energy secondary to their primary needs. Waterlogging and soil salinity have affected vast areas in Pakistan, presenting potential food security issues given its rapidly increasing population (>150 million).

Dams offer clean energy, economic benefits and therefore social wellbeing through poverty reduction. But they also create geopolitical conflict over water resource allocation.² Since signing the Indus

water treaty in 1960, India and Pakistan have successfully implemented the sharing of the Indus Basin river waters. However, a multilateral approach to regional water resource management is lacking to include all riparian states responsive to rivers sourced from the Himalayas. The biophysical changes outlined above co-occur with economic development and sociocultural issues that influence a political response to water resource management policy at state level.

Effective policies applicable to water resource allocation require a basin-wide approach and collaboration among riparian states. We are interested in linking research to policy that is influential in developing sustainable water resource management strategies in the context of climate change. We employ two approaches: knowledge management and systemic modelling.

Knowledge management is the collection and sharing of information (including traditional wisdom) to develop understanding of the consequences of various policy interventions. It draws on all disciplines important in understanding the consequences of climate change on river basin dynamics and of adaptive strategies (e.g. climate science, hydrology, agriculture, economics, law).

Knowledge management also recognises that information exchange occurs in a social setting, and that political and cultural factors (for example, religion) will influence decisions relating to natural resource management.³

We use Bayesian networks to link biophysical models (e.g. of a river basin) to socioeconomic models. This allows us to present a system (e.g. a river basin) in a way where we can examine the consequences of policy options and/or climate change.

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Bayesian networks link variables in a system. For example, if we are examining policies that influence water availability to meet human needs, we would start with rainfall and examine variables that influence run-off and river flows.⁴ Construction of dams, removal of water for irrigation, and pollution, will also influence water availability (quantity and quality) to humans. Bayesian networks allow for imperfect knowledge and can also include traditional wisdom. As more information comes to hand, the models can be improved and updated.

These two approaches avoid overuse of technical jargon and can provide simple visual representation of the consequences of climate change and/or policy interventions that affect water resource management (e.g. of Himalayan-sourced rivers). Thus they can assist in encouraging a multilateral approach to river basin management given the policy challenges presented above.

Solutions to policy conflict in water resource allocation lie in the identification and presentation of mutual benefits. For example, if dry season flows can be maintained to benefit dry season agriculture, then this is a benefit that would promote a cooperative approach to dam construction among states. Similarly, if dams were constructed on cascading rivers (e.g. the Brahmaputra or its tributaries), then dams could play an important role in flood mitigation for downstream states.

Knowledge management is useful in developing understanding of mutual benefits in river basin management among policy makers. It is also useful in aligning legal and regulatory frameworks that govern human behaviour and its consequences for river basins.

Asian Currents December 2012

Ecosystem services can be valued in terms that appeal to policy makers (i.e. monetary), but a consensual approach to metrics remains elusive.⁵ A dilemma is that longer-term strategies of restoring degraded ecosystems in river basins (to provide for improved water quality and other ecosystem services) tend to be less attractive to decision-makers than short-term provision of economic outcomes through, for example, electricity generation.

This is also complicated by poverty reduction strategies that may be inconsistent with sustainable environmental management (e.g. industrialisation and pollution of water bodies; land clearing and land degradation). The retention of forested lands in river basins is beneficial to water quality: deforestation promotes erosion and sedimentation of rivers.⁶

Here the conflict is between land use (e.g. forestry and the provision of clean water to sustain human wellbeing). Many logging activities are conducted in hills which are important water collectors for river basins.⁷



Riverside market, Buriganga River, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

The quantification and presentation of values associated with ecosystem services could encourage alternative land-use strategies. For example, it may be in India's interest to pay Nepal or Bhutan for catchment management practices (e.g. forest retention) that improve water quality in rivers that flow through India. Again, reality is more complex, but a shared understanding of valuation mechanisms and incorporation of ecosystem services in the evaluation required. Our systemic models and

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knowledge management approach can be used to develop this understanding among policy makers and help resolve current tensions.

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What Indian history teaches us about climate change legislation

Politicians implementing climate change legislation would do well to note the history and legacy of forestry in British India.

By Brett M. Bennett

The contested legacy of the first legislation attempting to slow human-induced climate change—and the implications of those legacies—provides insight into popular and political debates over climate legislation today.

Political leaders could learn from the controversial history and legacy of forestry in British India. This history has bearing on how climate change legislation will be judged and received by people around the world in the coming years.

Antiforest protests became a regular feature of Indian society, leading to the purposeful lighting of huge forests fires.

In 1855 Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General of British India, passed the 'Forest Charter', thereby making the British Indian Government the legal guardian of Burma's forests. The state takeover of forests was replicated throughout India during the 1860s and 1870s. By the early 20th century, the British Government laid claim to one-quarter of India's forests. The British carved up large forests into government reserves in order to protect and sustainably cut them.

Dalhousie and other European

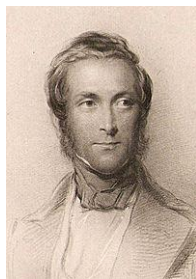
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foresters believed that it was scientifically proven that deforestation led to negative climate changes, including decreased rainfall and increased temperatures. Eventually, cut forests would turn into deserts. They drew from classics and the Bible to prove historically that climates and vegetation in the past were different from the present.



Lord Dalhousie.

To save India from destructive climate change, Dalhousie and India's British elite created a paternal system of forestry that regulated individual action in favour of the greater good. But despite using the best science of the day and acting in a relatively magnanimous though paternal manner, the establishment of forestry laws and reservations was widely unpopular among Indians, especially among people living in and near forests. What Indians disliked most was that they lacked a participatory structure, and though foresters and the government often provided for their timber needs, they felt locked out of the process of forest management.

Antiforest protests became a regular feature of Indian society, leading to the purposeful lighting of huge forests fires in the Himalaya during the 1920s to 1940s as part of the movement for Indian independence. Forest protests continued into postindependence India, with the Chipko Movement of the 1980s being the best known.

The problem of expertise, then and now, is how much power should be given to one group of experts. Foresters were broadly sympathetic to the people that they tried to

control, though foresters believed that individuals without coercion would act against the interest of the group. Thus foresters saw themselves as acting benevolently, but still governed paternally.

Foresters in India began to recognise in the early 1900s that forests played almost no role in climate, except potentially in the northwest of India (a view that is echoed by recent scientific research). Yet they did not relinquish their hold over the forests. Foresters dropped the climate narrative and emphasised the broader benefits of forests.

The problem with forestry laws during British rule was that they lacked legitimacy, though they were uniformly applied.

The legal basis of the British colonial system of forestry lasted until the 1980s and 1990s, although its effectiveness waned. Since 1947, the Indian foresters have started to slowly change their actions towards people living in and near forests. Whereas during British rule the foresters protected the forests by maintaining a firm rule of law, after 1947 the forests (and foresters) were relatively open to bribery, illegal logging, and state-sanctioned deforestation. Foresters often saw themselves as doing the 'right thing' by allowing villagers and local elites to have access to off-limits state forests.

To break the links between paternalism and deforestation, the Indian Government—like governments in developing countries around the world—now acknowledges that local people need to be given a powerful, meaningful participatory role. The individual, rather than being shunned, is being reincorporated into the system.

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The resistance to forestry laws in India reflects the global desire of humans to resist top-down environmental legislation that they feel disempowers local people and lowers the quality of their life and standards of living. To institute successful long-term climate change reforms, which in essence are



Antiforest protests became a regular feature of Indian society.

lifestyle changes similar to those imposed on forest peoples in India, requires individual participation as well as positive state intervention.

Top-down impositions, either in democracies or a colonial regime, rarely are popular or successful. Governments that seek to impose change without convincing the populous about the benefit of these changes may feel the heat. As we see from Indian history, people do not forget and forgive easily if they feel that they are not being heard, or have a way to participate. This is particularly true in developing countries, where grievances against colonial environmental legislative reforms still run deep. It is important to recognise that in countries like India, policies that limit development will be viewed as remnants of a colonial system that punishes late developers.

Yet at the same time, it is important that any legislation is effective and binding. The problem with forestry laws during British rule was that they lacked legitimacy, though they were uniformly applied. During Indian rule

forestry laws lacked legitimacy and were not properly implemented. To protect India's forests, and to provide the broadest benefits, legislation needs to be consensual and fair, but nonetheless firm.

If governments around the world today don't find a way to create a popular consensus on the need to tackle climate change, even the best science and most benevolent policies may fail to justify climate change policies— even if the majority of people do not feel connected or empowered. These policies also need to take into account different levels of economic development. We mustn't forget that for much of the world, poverty alleviation is a much stronger urge than stopping climate change, even if its threats are equal or more threatening.

The major challenge countries around the world face with tackling climate change is not getting the modelling right, but rather gaining the consensus of individuals and the community so that legislation works. That involves listening to them first, creating a consensus, and then devising policies to mitigate climate change.

There is no easy answer, but if history serves as a guide, top-down impositions—be they from a national or supranational government—will rarely be received gratefully.

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Violence, migrant women and the ostrich approach

Violence against Asian and other migrant women in Australia is too often being dismissed in the name of culture.

By Swati Parashar

Joumanah El Matrah is the Executive Director of the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights. In her article, *Misrepresenting migrant violence*, published by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation on its [website](#) on 29 October, 2012, she argued how cases of violence against women were being represented in the Australian media as cultural problems in migrant communities, or as 'spectacular' violence happening in some distant non-Western locations.

El Matrah cited feminist theorising around violence to talk about the exotic/erotic nature of violence and pointed out how media reports in Australia often seem to convey that 'violence and oppression are core to minority migrant cultures. It is something they import with them when they migrate, and it is the dirty little secret they keep as they settle into Australia'.

As someone who teaches feminist international relations and researches on global patterns of political violence, I have bad news for El Matrah. I don't necessarily bring up my own ethnic migrant positionality (of Indian origin) in my writings. In this case, however, it might lend more authenticity to my arguments. Many feminists seem more concerned about positionality and authenticity than the strength of the argument itself.

And as someone who has been a witness to the suffering of a friend exposed to domestic violence by her ethnic migrant partner, I would like to argue that being an apologist for

one culture or another and speaking from our perceived moral high ground from where we preach 'human rights' of minorities and migrants is not going to help the situation much.

The fact is that, in Australia, the level of violence faced by migrant women from South Asia, Africa and the Middle East is proportionately much higher than domestic violence faced by white Australian women.

A careful study of the antiviolence orders (AVO) sought by migrant women will reveal a dismal picture. The cultural factor becomes more significant because many of these women are unable to seek help, even when laws are in place to protect them.



In many cases, as even El Matrah agrees, governments and law enforcement turn a blind eye to abuses faced by migrant women. In the high-profile case of an

Indian Sikh couple who made news recently in Victoria, the woman had sought an AVO against her husband, who repeatedly committed breaches, but the police failed to act on her complaints.

El Matrah contradicts herself as she advocates specific policies targeted at protecting migrant women from abusive partners. That is, of course, pertinent. But it cannot happen unless it is acknowledged in the first place that these women face unprecedented levels of violence coming from cultures in which beating and bashing women is a commonplace offence. Violence against women is not taken seriously by their families or by the law

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enforcement agencies in their 'home' countries. Many migrant women are vulnerable, first-time foreign travellers who have no support systems in place and carry with them their cultural baggage in which speaking out against their partners or husbands is not an acceptable, approved course of action. In the case of my friend, a highly educated medical professional, the violence came from a husband who thought intimidation and abuse was the 'normal' thing to do.



Violence does not discriminate. It targets the professional and the homemaker alike. Those who speak against it, like the Sikh woman Sargun Ragi, pay the price

with their lives. Turning a blind eye to crimes being committed within migrant communities is not going to help the cause of human rights or gender equality. Respecting minority cultures cannot imply living in denial and ignoring (dis)honour killings, emotional and physical abuse, domestic violence, female foeticide and genital mutilation practised within certain communities, all in the name of one culture or another.

Female foeticide in Australia is practised by migrant women, especially from South Asia. Ultrasound doctors are approached by families to determine the sex of the foetus, and organise the medical termination of pregnancy of female fetuses. Similar cases of foeticide, and declining sex ratio of girls born to women of Indian origin, have been noted in a recent study by the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. An ABC report claimed in 2010 that cases of female circumcisions are increasing in

Australia, with the Melbourne Royal Women's Hospital saying that it was attending to 600 to 700 women each year who have experienced circumcision in some form. In a recent development (September 2012) two couples, including a retired nurse and a sheik, were charged by NSW police with the genital mutilation of two girls aged six and seven.

A UN Women report, widely cited by the media, confirms that 'a growing number of women and girls among immigrant communities have been subjected to, or are at risk of, female genital mutilation in Australia and New Zealand, as well as in countries in Europe and North America'.

Female foeticide in Australia is practised by migrant women, especially from South Asia.

We cannot pretend that 'cultures' have nothing to do with these cases.

All other cases of violence El Matrah mentions about non-Western women—beheadings, gang rapes, acid throwing, public executions and stonings—are, unfortunately, true and the cultural relativism argument cannot obfuscate the reality, irrespective of what one chooses or wishes to read in the Western media.

The media in some countries does not have time for issues like these, especially where all violence against women has been normalised and accepted. 'Never in the reporting of violence against migrant women do we read that violence is always about the application of men's power over women, irrespective of the cultural context in which it occurs,' writes El Matrah. The point that violence is

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always about the application of men's power over women is widely understood, but the cultural context is more significant in how violence is legitimised

and gender roles and relationships are determined. El Matrah dismisses the Western media's portrayal of Pakistani girl Malala Yousufzai's shooting by the Taliban, and of the brutal murder of a young Afghani girl who refused to be coerced into sex work, as cases of 'spectacular' violence. As someone associated with a Centre for Women's Rights, she should know better.

These cases are neither spectacular nor exceptional. Many girls and women in conflict zones in Pakistan and Afghanistan are subjected to violence of this kind daily. Reporting on these events does not imply that there should be a disclaimer published every time that 'violence happens in Western societies too!'



Recognising violence among ethnic communities does not mean denying the violence against women in Western societies. The cases mentioned above got

the media attention they deserved because of the resistance these girls put up against the dictates of their own culture and tradition. El Matrah, instead, could have worried more about why a ridiculous film on the Prophet Mohammed (not even seen by many people), made by a racist bigot, caused so much protest worldwide and also spiralled into violence, while not much was heard when a teenage girl (guilty of wanting education!) was shot by the Taliban all in the name of religion.

Recognising violence among ethnic communities does not mean denying the violence against women in Western societies.

If the shooting of one girl and the brutal murder of another are not worthy enough for people to galvanise protests against their own societies and cultures, it is a more worrying trend surely.

Yes, certainly migrant women are entitled to citizenship, residency rights and protection against violence under Australian law. But adopting the ostrich approach and burying our head in the sand is not going to help the situation.

What is so fundamentally radical or problematic about claiming that cultures, traditions and religions can be violent towards women? My appeal to El Matrah and others who may think like her is: let us decide who we want to protect and defend...women or cultures?

Dr Swati Parashar is a lecturer in International Studies at the Faculty of Arts, University of Wollongong. Her research, publications and teaching focus on terrorism and security studies, feminist international relations and women, gender and political violence.

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Getting to the 'truth' of violence in eastern Indonesia

Journalists reporting on communal violence have a duty to look beyond 'surface branding'.

By Steve Sharp

As recently as February this year, a dispute in the village of Pelauw on Haruku Island, Central Maluku in eastern Indonesia, left five dead and sent thousands fleeing.

The local press gave clues to the nature of the fight and who it was between. No sign of ethnic or religious divides here; two groups within the one clan had disagreed on the date to mark the inauguration of a traditional longhouse. In other words, a fight about correct ritual process most auspicious to the clan.

Over the same period, on the neighbouring island of Saparua, just west of Ambon, more deaths resulted from intervillage disputes over village boundaries. A human rights official accused the police of allowing the violence to continue on both islands.

From 1999 to 2002 'rumour-instigated clashes' left thousands dead across the eastern Maluku archipelago, a region clearly prone to such outbreaks. Behind the recent intraclan hostility in Pelauw village is a community governed by both local *adat* (traditional law) and its wider membership of the *ummat* (Islamic community).

The integrity and survival of *adat* communities across Indonesia have often resulted from the incorporation of larger encroachments: Dutch conquest followed by Christianity, Islamic proselytisers seeking to purify and modernise the faith, Javanese bureaucrats coopting elders into a centralised patronage system based in Jakarta. But could the disturbances in Pelauw and elsewhere express the unstable tensions that define the co-mingling

of custom and Islamic religious expression? Having survived centuries of attempts to overturn their belief systems, might not the belief in the correct observance of ritual be something worth fighting for?



Burnt-out mosque, Ambon, 2000. Image: Ben Bohane

And so the role of culture and its supporting belief systems is at the centre of *Journalism and conflict in Indonesia: from reporting violence to promoting peace*.¹ A kind

of anthropology of the media, the book asks how media—in this case Indonesia's capital city print organs—handle the cultural dimensions of violent phenomena.

The question that sustained my research over many years refused to go away: is there a correspondence between the unfolding of media narratives about conflict and how that conflict plays out on the ground?

The Maluku wars were fought between groups professing the Christian and Muslim faiths. Almost a decade after the subsidence of full-scale war from south to north, there is still no agreement on how such a conflict should have been represented.

I followed a cultural studies approach to determine, through analysing media discourses, not so much 'what the "truth" about the violence in Maluku is', but rather how a particular truth about "the violence in Maluku" was established', to quote one anthropologist.

The savagery that claimed up to

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9000 lives before subsiding in 2002 became less impenetrable as one moved closer to the detail of conflict on the ground and cross-matched it with political developments in Jakarta. Plumbing historical time was critical to tracing violence as part of the modernisation project and the peculiarly non-liberal national culture that emerged from it.

There are five or six high-quality studies on the history of violence in Indonesia, mainly of United States, Dutch and German origin. But I wanted to use this scholarship to show that 'communication' and its various modes of expression were at the heart of how culture and collective identity reproduced themselves over time. It also turned out to reveal how communication networks and their media created the mass ceremonies that hardened group solidarities towards often aggressive ends. The control and manipulation of these communicative processes were key to paramilitary mobilisation and the prolongation of war across vast terrain.

As a journalist who's relied on a sense of professionalism to get through the long days, I had to ask myself whether we, in our privileged and strategic position as communicators of conflict, were passive purveyors of unproblematic truths or whether we were complicit in the circulation of images and storylines that drove conflicts towards their violent endgame. Happily, I came upon a paradigm called 'peace journalism', which puts all the pieces into place. Well, not quite. Peace journalism—which is counterposed with 'war journalism'—places heavy demands on journalists and media workers to 'know' a conflict, thus driving a professional demand for reporters who can do conflict analysis. Peace journalism is not an excuse for advocacy. It is a

professional ethic that recognises that those principles we hold dear—like freedom of expression, democracy—need to be extended to the subjects of our reportage. Otherwise, they are simply self-serving. Understanding how our professional work (the crafting and timing of our storylines) can disrupt the escalation of violence expresses a duty of care to the potential and actual victims of violence, who, while their worlds disintegrate, cannot properly enjoy democratic freedoms themselves.

In practice, conflict analysis discourages journalists from reporting conflict in simplistic, formulaic terms. The war in the south centred around Ambon Island; but seven months later, in August 1999, a new theatre emerged in the north, on Halmahera Island. The metropolitan Indonesian-language media (and no doubt many others) treated the outbreak as an extension of religious hostilities, having observed the polarisation of Christian and Muslim communities in the south. However, the dispute on Halmahera began when indigenous tribes of mixed faith reacted to the redrawing of administrative boundaries that left them a minority on their own ancestral land.

Similar intrigues led the (Islamic king) Sultan of Ternate—a Golkar politician—to manoeuvre against those aligned with the resurgence of modernist (Islamic) political contenders following the fall of Suharto. It was in this political vacuum, when centralised control weakened, that provincial politicians used their supporters in Christian and Muslim communities as foot soldiers to win the battle for key political postings and revenue streams post-Suharto. The Sultan of Ternate even revived his traditional army against his historical rival, the Sultan of Tidore, whose troops fought pitched battles—a proxy war

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for reorganising political alliances between Jakarta and North Maluku power holders. These battles between rival *pasukan adat* (traditional troops) were a case of Muslim-on-Muslim violence, hardly religious war. And thus much of the surface branding of religious war in Maluku was misleading—the Machiavellian politics, the black operations and partisanship of security forces and the escalation and prolongation of the conflict with the entry of Islamist paramilitaries (*Laskar Jihad*) in May 2000, enabled by nationalist generals hostile to the president.

If groups are united by their ethnicity or religion and they move to war with each other, it's easy to apply the ethnic or religious tag as the *cause* of the fighting. If it is prolonged or resurfaces often, it's just as facile to explain away the event as a peculiar expression of ethnic or religious identity—of who they really are. Over time, these readings reappear in media discourses and reinforce the idea that these antagonisms are inevitable and irredeemable. Where political calculations depend on the support of home fronts, media operations reproducing the rhetorical logic of war making (war journalism) can tip the balance.

In *Journalism and conflict in Indonesia*, I describe this kind of media [framing of religious conflict](#) as 'primordialism writ large'. My sympathies are, for the most part, with the Indonesian reporters. Those based in Jakarta were kept away from the battlefield and independent sources of information and had to endure the anodyne descriptions of military and civilian officials mouthing body counts. Malukan journalists, while closer to the heat of battle, were prevented from popularising their more detailed

accounts for fear of retaliation against them by rival communities. While Indonesia is a much more peaceful place than it was in 1999, more recent data on violence suggests that the political transition that destabilised the republic at the turn of this century is still ongoing and there is yet the need to consolidate a democratic peace. Research by the Habibie Centre shows that in the first four months of this year violent deaths increased by 13 per cent compared to the average data for the period 2004–08, and there was a 115 per cent increase in property destruction.² In Maluku, villages of the same and different religions continue to do battle. Peace treaties continue to fail. Most disputes are over land tenure: indigenous land claims and conflict over indigenous and administrative territorial boundaries.

Challenged to scale the height of 'conflict analysis', journalists need not stand idly by as groups choose combat over mediated dialogue. But the best insurance against these disintegrative forces is for peace communication principles to be applied in the hinterlands through community-controlled media. Such an approach cannot only inform communication policy in the Indonesian provinces but also be productively applied to staunch and avert communal breakdown in places as varied as Pakistan, Nigeria, Myanmar, Northern Mali, Papua New Guinea and Fiji.

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Dr Steve Sharp runs a media consultancy firm, Telinga Media, and owns and edits a related multimedia website, telingamedia.com, covering the history, politics, arts and culture of the southwest Pacific.

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Reclaiming lost or marginalised histories

By Annette Van den Bosch

Postmemory can be defined as secondary memory that is constructed by the next generation rather than by primary witnesses. In the work of the postwar generation of Vietnamese artists, postmemory is the inheritance of past events or experiences that are still being worked through.

Nguyen Thai Tuan's painting at the [Asia-Pacific Triennial 7](#) (Gallery of Modern Art and Queensland Art Gallery, 8 December 2012–14 April 2013) shows the influence of photographic theory in the artist's use of traces that are connected to themes of death, loss and absence. The smooth finish and the black or darkened context create sites of memory, in which memories and

histories are refigured.



Black painting No.45. 2008. oil on canvas, 130x100 cm. Collection of Queensland Art Gallery.

Black Painting 45 (2008) shows the rear view of an old man squatting, probably a veteran with his topee discarded, as he sits and contemplates his past. Old soldiers have many memories of hardship in jungle trails and camps,

dangerous encounters or bombings, loss of comrades, and personal and family life cut short. The extended conflicts from the First Indo-China War against the French, the bloody American and bitter civil war between the north and the south, and the Third Indo-China War against China and the Khmer Rouge determined Vietnamese life for 30 years from 1945 to 1975. While most war memorials such as those in Hanoi, and museums such as the War Remnants Museum in Saigon,

would not seem to be connected to postmemory, the ways in which some memorials are depicted by Nguyen Thai Tuan in the Black Painting Series could be interpreted as antimonuments. Many of his paintings featuring aircraft, Black Hawk helicopters, and other monuments, include seated solitary veterans, or groups of disinterested youth passing by that suggest a refusal of the hegemony of the state war memorial. In this context, *Black painting 45*, showing a veteran's reminiscence, becomes an encounter between the old veteran and the artist who is able to do the work of critical representation of memory.

Relational aesthetics is a term used to describe the tendency of an artist, such as Nguyen Thai Tuan, to personalise the engagement of the viewer of with their artwork. *Black Painting 50* (2008) showing an old woman sitting on her doorstep to the street, lost in contemplation, invites the viewer to imagine a narrative for the figure. In the



Black painting No.50. 2008. Oil on canvas, 116x81 cm. Collection of Queensland Art Gallery.

artist's life, the old woman who began the Black Painting series was his loved grandmother, who lost her memory in old age. The old woman wearing an all-white *ao ba bais* propped half-seated at the base and to the side of a black void, or doorway. The void and the small figure are

framed by a white square enclosing her interior life, which is left to the viewer to imagine. At the side of her upswept hair is a textile end that is strangely flesh coloured.

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Nguyen Thai Tuan

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Black Painting 50 is art that aims to produce moments of discussion, or suggest exchanges of thoughts and memories in the audience. It is artwork that takes its place in the structures of feeling that imply emergent social or political tendencies, taking place in the community or neighborhood. The audience for the series is the urbanised, educated, comfortable postwar generation who experienced rapid social and economic change.

The artist emphasises knowledge and memories that are held and retrieved subjectively, rejecting 'official versions' of history. The people, especially the old people who lived through the traumatic and socially fractured times, are depicted by Nguyen Thai Tuan as recognisable but ordinary people, shaped by human roles rather than stereotypes. The kind of memory work in Nguyen's paintings can be recognised as Freud's dream work. The black spaces enclosing the characters and selected objects, props and settings, and the realist photographic flat finish of the painting method all suggest dreams, film and cinema, forms of narrative that bring the past to contemporary consciousness.



Room of the prince. 2010. oil on canvas. 130x150cm. Collection of Queensland Art Gallery.

The painting, *Room of the prince* (2010) is from the more recent Heritage series. This series began with a photograph of an abandoned ancestors' altar in a ruined house. It includes ruins of European-style Catholic churches and villas as well as traditional Vietnamese buildings. Nguyen Thai

Tuan lives in Dalat, at the southern end of Tay Nguyen, the Central Highlands where the Summer Palace of Bao Dai, the prince, is preserved for visitors. Dalat was the cool hill

station for both French colonialists and the Nguyen lords during the summer. It is now a honeymoon retreat and a tourist site. The room is in a dated western-style, the figure of the seated man is anonymous, and all personal objects have been removed. The date and time depicted in *Room of the prince* are ambiguous. The historical Bao Dai, at the time of his accession in 1925, was 12-years old and at school in France. He was the last emperor in power from 1925–45. The Imperial Court in Hue over which he ruled, although corrupt, was the centre of nationalist feeling during French colonialism, a circumstance actively manipulated by the French.

In the Heritage paintings Nguyen Thai Tuan explores memories that occupy threshold or liminal positions between objectivity and subjectivity, forgetting and remembering. In his artwork Tuan is using material heritage and intangible cultural heritage in the form of practices, for their associative value rather than their authenticity. The Heritage series can be compared to the work of other contemporary Vietnamese artists, such as the satirical scenes depicted on traditional blue-and-white vases by Bui Cong Khan in Asia Pacific Triennial 6 (2009).

The contemporary context of *Room of the Prince* is an acquisitive and materialist society in which earlier allegiances to emperor, ruling regimes or political ideologies, religious or spiritual practices, such as Buddhism and Catholicism, were eroded by conflict and censorship, trauma and grief. The overwhelming majority of the population are young, the result of a postwar baby boom. Vietnam's economic growth is similar to China's. The 'new prince' is the young man born into economic security who seeks to exhibit status through his occupation of the room with all its associative power.

Dr Annette Van den Bosch is an adjunct research fellow at the Monash Asia Institute. Her articles on Asian artists are available on her [website](#). [Back to contents](#)

National collection of Asian languages and studies resources

By Michelle Harvey

An extensive national collection of resources for teaching and learning Asian languages and studies has been added to the [National Digital Learning Resources Network](#) (NDLRN). The new collection will increase knowledge in this essential subject area as we move further into the Asian Century.

The NDLRN, owned by all Australian school education jurisdictions, comprises a resource collection, delivery infrastructure and metadata standards. The NDLRN is a network of infrastructure and processes that enables management and distribution of the digital repository of resources to education authorities.

The Asian languages and studies resources comprising the national collection have been harvested from the [National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program](#) (NALSSP), an Australian Government-funded initiative designed to increase opportunities for school students to become familiar with the languages and cultures of Australia's key regional neighbours, namely China, Indonesia, Japan and Korea.



Women qu wan, hao ma?: getting around.

The goal of these resources is to equip students of today with the skills to excel in the careers of tomorrow. The resources are freely available and are ideal for schools and educators that teach Korean, Japanese, Indonesian and Chinese languages and have been carefully sourced from across the nation to engage students in learning these languages.



Zhongguo zhi xing: A trip to China

The timely collection draws together practitioner-developed resources

mapped to the [Shape of the Australian](#)

[Curriculum: Languages](#) and relevant to the cross-curriculum priority of Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia. The resources take a variety of forms, including:

- immersive interactives for students
- primary source film, image and sound materials suitable for teachers to adapt when developing their own learning sequences
- lesson plans, video examples of languages lessons and footage featuring the use of information and communication technology in Languages Other Than English settings.

The NDLRN contains more than 13 000 digital resources that are free for use in all Australian schools and are accessible through jurisdictional portals and [Scootle](#).

Michelle Harvey is the Promotions Officer for the National Digital Learning Resources Network.

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New ASAA Council

Historian new ASAA president



A distinguished historian with particular expertise in 20th-century political and social history of Indonesia is the incoming president of the Asian Studies

Association of Australia (ASAA) Council in 2013.

John Ingleson is an Emeritus Professor at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) and the University of Western Sydney (UWS). He is a graduate of the University of Western Australia, and from Monash University, where he obtained his PhD in 1974.

He has been Professor of History, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Deputy Vice-Chancellor at UNSW, before joining UWS as Deputy Vice-Chancellor in 2007. He retired in September 2011 to once again take up a life as a scholar. Professor Ingleson is currently completing a book (tentatively titled) 'Workers, unions and politics. Indonesian labour unions in the 1930s'.

Other office holders

Immediate past president

Professor Purnendra Jain



Purnendra Jain is Professor in Asian Studies at the University of Adelaide and the author, co-author and editor of 14 books and numerous academic articles on Japanese politics, foreign policy, international relations of the Asia-Pacific and Australia-Asia relations. He is also former President of the Japanese Studies Association of Australia.

Vice President

Professor Kent Anderson



Professor Anderson is a comparative lawyer specialising in Asia. He joined the University of Adelaide in 2012 as pro Vice-Chancellor

(International) and Professor of Law in the Adelaide Law School. He has an eclectic background doing his tertiary studies in Japan, US, and UK in Law, Politics, Economics, and Asian Studies.

For the decade before joining the University of Adelaide, he was a joint appointment at the Australian National University College of Law and Faculty of Asian Studies, where he was Director from 2007–11.

His research and teaching are focused on insolvency, private international law, and recently the introduction of Japan's new quasi-jury system (*saiban-in seido*).

Professor Anderson has been a visiting professor at Waseda, Nagoya, Kyushu, Doshisha, Ritsumeikan and Chuo universities in Japan.

Treasurer

Ross McLeod



Ross McLeod is Adjunct Associate Professor with the Indonesia Project at ANU. An economist, he has worked in and on Indonesia in various capacities—postgraduate student, consultant and academic researcher—since 1978, with particular emphasis on issues relating to financial markets, money and banking, governance, and decentralisation.

From October 1998 through August 2011 he was editor of the ANU's

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New ASAA Council

Ross McLeod

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Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies, a journal that has provided continuous commentary on the Indonesian economy since 1965 through its regular *Surveys of recent developments*.

He is the joint editor, with Professor Ross Garnaut, of one of the first major studies of the Asian financial crisis to be published: *East Asia in crisis: from being a miracle to needing one?* and joint editor, with Professor Andrew MacIntyre, of *Indonesia: democracy and the promise of good governance*.

General counsellor

Dr Amrita Malhi



Dr Malhi is a research fellow in the Hawke Research Institute at the University of South Australia, and concurrently holds a Social Science Research Council Science Research Council postdoctoral fellowship for transregional research in inter-Asian contexts and connections for 2013. She is interested in histories and geographies of the global and local processes of enclosure and circulation that have shaped subaltern spaces and subjectivities under colonial rule.

Dr Malhi is working towards a monograph on the production of 'Muslim' as a planetary solidarity in an anticolonial uprising in 1920s Malaya. She is also interested in forests and borderlands, and locations beyond the urban and agrarian sites in which processes of colonial and national identity production have been concentrated. Her PhD thesis was awarded the 2010 JG Crawford Prize for best graduate work in the humanities and social sciences at ANU.

Regional counsellor (Japan)

Dr William Spencer Armour



Dr Armour has been involved with Japan and learning the Japanese language since the early 1970s. He has taught in secondary schools and currently is a senior

lecturer in Japanese Studies at the University of NSW. He has taught a variety of Japanese language courses using innovative methods and blended technologies.

Over the past decade, he has specialised in teaching Japanese cultural studies focusing on contemporary Japan and representations of Japan in popular culture. His research concentrates on investigating issues concerning Japanese language pedagogy in higher education as well as aspects of Japanese popular culture, including manga, anime, nation branding, and ethics.

Regional counsellor (China)

Dr Gerry Groot



Dr Groot is Head of Discipline and senior lecturer in Chinese Studies at the Centre for Asian Studies, University of Adelaide where he teaches Asian

studies and Chinese politics.

His doctoral research, book, and many of his writing are about the Chinese Communist Party's United Front Work Department, particularly the roles of the so-called democratic parties, but also other aspects of united front work, including religious believers, overseas Chinese, ethnic minorities and new professional groups such as lawyers. Dr Groot's

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New ASAA Council

Dr Gerry Groot

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other research interests include soft power, social change, Chinese folk religion and ghosts. He is an active member of the Chinese Studies Association and is involved in organising academic conferences, including the 2010 18th Biennial ASAA Conference. Dr Groot is also a board member of the Centre for China in the World at ANU.

Regional counsellor (Southeast Asia)

Dr Katherine McGregor



Dr McGregor is a senior lecturer in Southeast Asian History at the University of Melbourne. Her first book, *History in uniform: military*

ideology and the construction of the Indonesian past (NUS Press, 2007), explored the historical orthodoxy of the military-dominated Suharto regime. She has many publications resulting from her ARC Discovery Project grant on 'Islam and the politics of memory in Indonesia', including the co-edited book, with Kammen, *The contours of mass violence in Indonesia 1965–68* (NUS Press, 2012).

Dr McGregor has held a senior visiting research fellowship at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore (2008) and at the Institute of Social Research, Swinburne University (2010), where she helped Professor Klaus Neumann set up the Historical Justice and Memory Research Network.

Regional Councillor (South Asia)

Dr Sukhmani Khorana



Dr Khorana is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Centre for Critical and Cultural Studies, University of Queensland. She holds a critical-creative PhD

in diasporic cinema from the University of Adelaide and has a forthcoming Routledge anthology on 'crossover cinema'.

Dr Khorana's current research looks at the middle class–news media nexus in India, and she has an ongoing interest in diversity and representation in film, television, new media and literature.

She will take up a lecturing position at the University of Wollongong from January 2013.

Publications Officer

Dr Mina Roces



Dr Roces is an associate professor in the School of Humanities at the University of New South Wales. She is the author of three

monographs: *Women's movements and the Filipina, 1986–2008* (the University of Hawaii press, 2012), *Kinship politics in post war Philippines, the Lopez family, 1946–2000* (de la Salle University press, 2001) and *Women, power and kinship politics: female power in post-war Philippines* (Praeger 1998).

Together with Louise Edwards she has co-edited five books on women in Asia. The most recent include: *Women's movements in Asia: feminisms and transnational activism* (Routledge, 2010), and *The politics of dress in Asia and the Americas*.

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New ASAA Council

Dr Mina Roces

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(Sussex Academic Press, 2007). Her current research project is on a history of Filipino migration and identity over the 20th century. Dr Roces is book series editor of the Sussex Library of Asian Studies series and regional editor for Southeast Asia for the *Asian Studies Review*.

Postgraduate representative

Elisabeth Kramer



After working in the public service and the development sector, Elisabeth Kramer's interests have settled firmly upon studying Asia—specifically

Indonesia—and the political issue of corruption and the anticorruption movement. She began her PhD in 2011 at the University of Sydney, researching how anticorruption discourse influences political campaigning in Indonesia.

As part of a Prime Minister's Asia-Australia Endeavour Award, she lived in Indonesia, undertaking fieldwork until September 2012.

Over the years, Elisabeth has nurtured her love for Asia by living in a number of South and Southeast Asian countries, and in 2011 she taught Southeast Asian politics at the University of Sydney.

Editor, Asian Studies Review editor (ex officio)

Dr Michael Barr



Dr Barr is a senior lecturer in International Relations at Flinders University, having done his PhD in History at the University of Queensland. He writes

mostly on Singapore politics and history, with particular focus on issues of elitism, ethnicity, governance, education and health policy. He has also published on Malaysian politics, and religious and ethnic nationalism more generally.

His books thus far are: *Lee Kuan Yew: the beliefs behind the man* (Curzon, 2000, 2009), *Cultural politics and Asian values: the tepid war* (Routledge, 2002, 2004), *Constructing Singapore: elitism, ethnicity and the nation-building project* (NIAS, with Zlatko Skrbiš, 2008), and *Paths not taken: political pluralism in post-war Singapore* (NUS, co-edited with Carl Trocki).

His forthcoming book, *The ruling elite of Singapore: networks of power and influence*, is being published in 2013 by IB Tauris.

Library representative

Michelle Hall



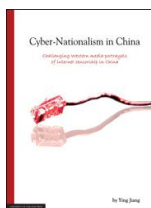
Michelle Hall is the Japanese Studies Librarian in the East Asian Collection of the Baillieu Library at the University of Melbourne.

She has qualifications in Asian studies, applied linguistics and information management, and has convened research skills panels and workshops at the Japanese Studies Association of Australia (JSAA) and ASAA.

A member of the East Asian Research Libraries Group of Australia—most recently as editor of the newsletter—she was instrumental in establishing the Japanese Research Libraries Group of Australia in 1997. She has also served on the JSAA executive committee as both treasurer and website maintainer. Michelle is keen to improve access to and utilisation of resources of all types in Asian Studies research.

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Books on Asia



Cyber-nationalism in China: challenging Western media portrayals of internet censorship in China.

By Ying Jiang. Paperback, 156 pp

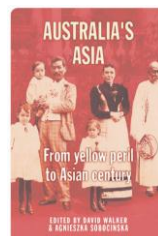
University of Adelaide Press, \$33.

The prevailing consumerism in Chinese cyberspace is a growing element of Chinese culture and an important aspect of this book. Chinese bloggers have strongly embraced consumerism but tend to be apathetic about politics. Nonetheless, they have demonstrated political passion over issues such as the Western media's negative coverage of China.

Jiang focuses on this passion—the angry reactions of Chinese bloggers to the Western media's coverage of censorship issues in current China—to examine the country's current potential for political reform. A central focus is the specific issue of censorship and how to interpret its Chinese characteristics as a mechanism to maintain state control.

While *Cyber-nationalism in China* examines fundamental questions surrounding the political implications of the internet in China, it avoids simply predicting that the internet will or will not lead to democratisation. The book builds on current scholarship and attempts to move beyond examining the dynamics of the sociocultural and political use of new media technologies. Its more intricate theoretical approach not only accommodates the kind of liberal (apolitical or political) use observed on the internet in China, but indicates that desires for political change—such as they are—are implicitly embedded in the relationship between China's online communities and state apparatus—noting, however, that the latter claims total governance over the internet in the name of the people.

Australia's Asia. From Yellow Peril to Asian Century. David Walker and Agnieszka Sobocinska (eds), Paperback, 344pp, UWA Publishing, \$39.95.



Australia's Asia is the first sustained collection of writings on Australian perceptions of Asia in over 20 years. It provides an original, compelling and often

surprising account of Australia's multiple responses to Asia over the last 150 years.

Asia has long been at or near the centre of Australian thinking. For many, Australia's much-discussed proximity to Asia appeared as a threat. Shadowy Asian figures seemed to lurk around the edge of the continent, biding their time. Yet proximity also offered new opportunities for trade, travel and cultural exchange. Many Australians were fascinated by Asian societies and cultures, relishing the opportunities they offered for new ways of seeing and comprehending the world. From the late 19th century, competing visions of Australia's relations with its region have jostled for attention on the national stage and in private lives.

[More books on Asia page 30](#)

New books from the ASAA series

Southeast Asia Series: cutting-edge research on all countries and peoples of Southeast Asia.

Women in Asia Series: promoting scholarship for women in Asia.

The East Asia Series: principally concerned with any part of the East Asian region (China, Japan, North and South Korea and Taiwan).

South Asia Series: research on the countries and peoples of South Asia across a wide range of disciplines.

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Books on Asia

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Re-reading the salaryman in Japan: crafting masculinities.
By Romit Dasgupta.
Hardback, 204pp,
Routledge: Asian
Studies Association of
Australia (East Asian Series).
\$135

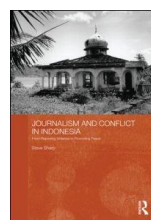
In Japan, the figure of the suited, white-collar office worker or business executive 'salaryman' (or, *sarariiman*), came to be associated with Japan's economic transformation following the Second World War. The ubiquitous salaryman came to signify both Japanese masculinity, and Japanese corporate culture, and in this sense, the salaryman embodied 'the archetypal citizen'.

Using the figure of the salaryman to explore masculinity in Japan, the book examines the salaryman as a gendered construct. While there is a considerable body of literature on Japanese corporate culture and a growing acknowledgement of the role of gender, until now the focus has been almost exclusively on women in the workplace.

In contrast, this book is one of the first to focus on the men within Japanese corporate culture through a gendered lens. Not only does this add to the emerging literature on masculinity in Japan, but given the important role Japanese corporate culture has played in Japan's emergence as an industrial power, Dasgupta's research offers a new way of looking both at Japanese business culture and more generally at important changes in Japanese society in recent years.

Based on intensive interviews with young, male, private-sector employees in Japan, this book makes an important contribution to the study of masculinity and Japanese corporate culture, and provides an

insight into Japanese culture more generally.



Journalism and conflict in Indonesia: from reporting violence to promoting peace. By Steve Sharp. Hardcover, 272pp, Routledge
Contemporary Southeast Asia Series, \$145.

This book examines, through the case study of Indonesia over recent decades, how the reporting of violence can drive the escalation of violence, and how journalists can change their reporting practices to promote peace.

Sharp discusses the nature of press freedom in Indonesia from 1966 onwards, considers the relationship between the press and politicians, and explores journalists' working methods. The book details the communal wars in eastern Indonesia in 1999–2000, arguing that communication as much as physical preparations for violence were key to bringing about the wars, with journalists' rigid professional routines and newswriting conventions causing them to reproduce and enlarge the battle cries of those at war. Sharp concludes by advocating a 'development communication' approach to journalism in transitional settings to help journalists counter the disintegrative tendencies of failing states and the communal strife that can result.

About the ASAA

The Asian Studies Association of Australia was founded in 1976 to promote and support the study of Asia in Australia. Its membership is drawn mainly from academic staff and students at Australian universities, but it also takes a strong interest in Asian Studies and the use of Asia-related materials in schools and in Australian attitudes to and policies towards Asia. Asian Currents is edited by Allan Sharp.

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