

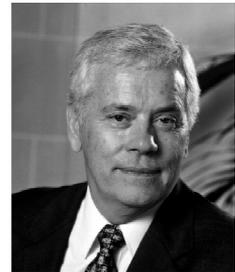
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## President's Report

The Academy has a broad membership but many Fellows currently work in universities where research productivity is under increased internal and external scrutiny. Productivity is judged largely in terms of impact, which, for the most part, is viewed narrowly in terms of impact within the research community. The prime indicator of success is publication in the journals that are most highly regarded by peers as established by ratings of reputation or, for those fields for which there are citation indices, frequency of citation.



There is much talk of academics having three responsibilities, *viz* research, teaching and connection with the broader community. The title of the third varies but generally reflects involvement in applied research, engagement with public policy development and so on. An important question is whether work in fulfilling this third responsibility could be counted as evidence of research productivity.

The recent HASS (humanities, arts and social sciences) on the Hill organised by the Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences on 22-23 March 2011, addressed this third responsibility directly. It brought together researchers and policy makers and, by being held in the Australian Parliament during a sitting week, sought to attract politicians as well. Much of the discussion was about matters of interest to the researchers and policy makers but some of it was about the process of engagement. There was interesting and helpful discussion of communication issues, including the potential contribution of knowledge brokers who could facilitate exchange and engagement from both sides.

There was also consideration of ways in which the criteria used for academic career advancement in many cases worked as disincentives for researchers to engage with public policy and other potential applications of their work. Lomas presented findings from Planeuf shown in the accompanying graph, on the relative importance of various activities in the consideration of deans and promotion committee members in Canadian universities. The ratings (5=highest, 1=lowest) make clear that the highest priorities were attached to publications in high-impact journals and research grants from peer-review funding agencies. Much lower ratings were attached to work with policy-makers.

It would be interesting to compare this Canadian evidence with current Australian evidence. It would be even more interesting to examine changes in Australia over time. Universities have been actively seeking to elevate the relative importance of criteria to do with teaching and engagement while, at the same time, government reviews of universities and funding for research infrastructure have raised the relative importance of competitive research grants and publication in high-impact journals.

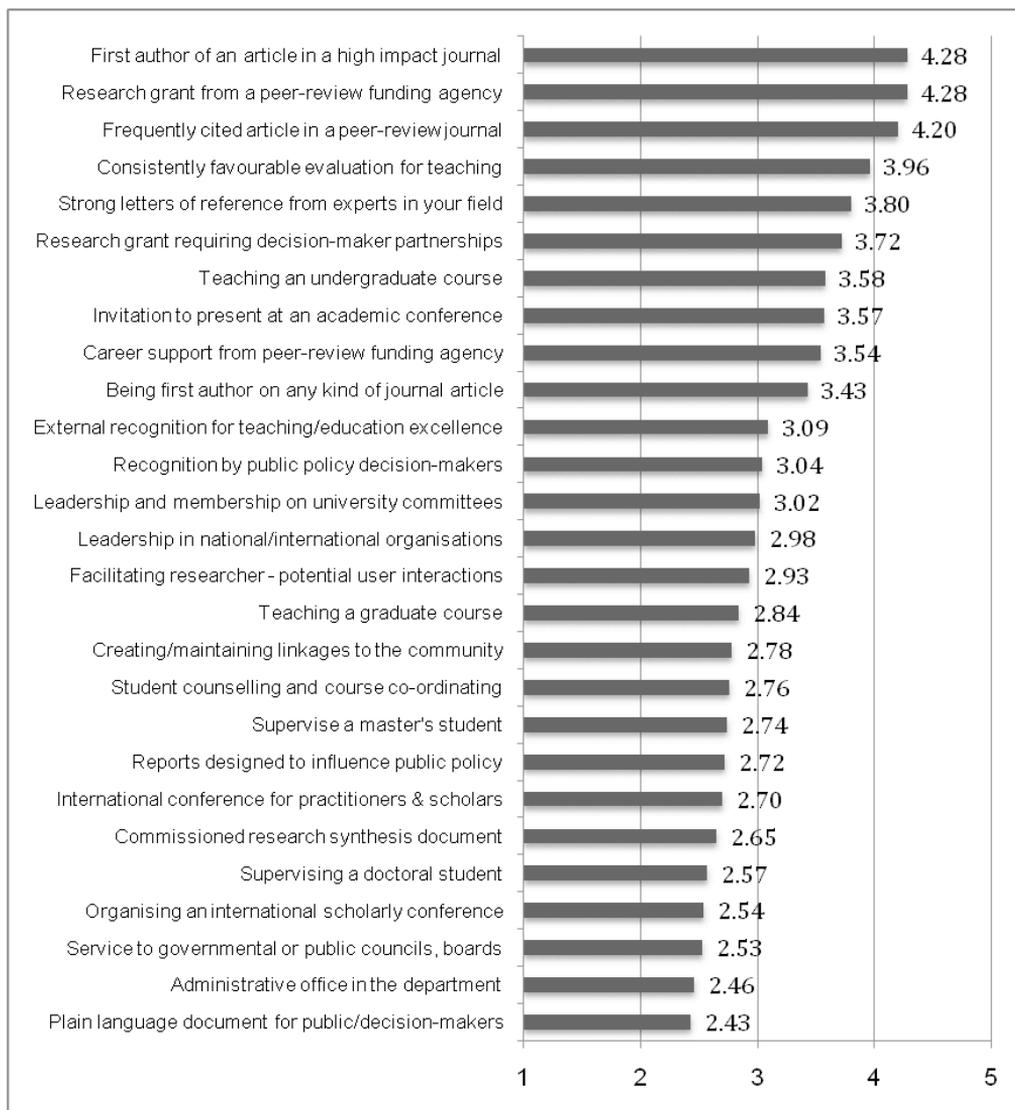
That is a longstanding discussion in universities but there is a further concern for some areas of research in the social sciences, explored by the Excellence for Research in Australia (ERA) initiative. Several Fellows have raised this issue and the Academy Executive will consider what action might be taken.

The concern is not about the relative positions of research and engagement but rather about the position of research for which context is important. Some research in the social sciences is independent of national context and can readily compete for publication in international journals or in other countries' domestic journals, which are taken to be international. Other research depends crucially on the Australian context.

Publication in Australian journals would be most relevant and, in some cases, the only option since the work is likely to be of less interest in other places.

The rating of journals under ERA has tended to give low status to Australian journals. Senior academics are said to be advising new researchers not to publish in Australian journals and not to do research for which the only viable outlet would be an Australian journal. If that tendency were to become strong, the result would be that social science research relevant to much social policy analysis and development in Australia would no longer be done in Australian universities.

**Figure 1. Importance of activities in university promotion**



Source: Planeuf cited in Lomas, J (2011). 'Knowledge brokers and brokering'. Paper presented at HASS on the Hill, Canberra.

There is no argument that the highest ratings should be given to high-quality research. The concern is that defining quality by rating journals in a way that devalues domestic publications will reduce the research effort addressing national social issues. That would be a perverse consequence of the attempt to raise research quality. There would be no debate then about the manner in which, and the extent to which, researchers should seek to connect their research to policy analysis and development.

*Barry McGaw.*



## Dialogue Note

With this issue of *Dialogue* the Academy welcomes Catherine Armitage to the editorial chair. Catherine brings extensive experience as a journalist covering higher education, and we are fortunate to be able to draw on her expertise.

To assist her an editorial committee has been formed. We see our role as strengthening links between *Dialogue* and the Fellowship, and we are keen to explore new ways in which the work of social scientists can be put before a wider readership. We would welcome suggestions as to how this can be done.

This issue features a number of papers presented at the 2010 Symposium on Families and the Global Financial Crisis. The collapse of the US 'housing bubble' exposed profound flaws in the international financial system, with economic consequences that are still with us. The social consequences, especially for Australian families, have received less attention and the articles here draw attention to their significance.

We also have a discussion of the results of the research assessment exercise, Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) from Andrew Wells, an Executive Director of the Australian Research Council, which conducted the exercise. Stuart Macintyre's 2010 Keith Hancock Lecture, delivered before the ERA results were available, provides a context. Simon Marginson reflects on the public purposes of universities, in the wake of the December 2010 fiscal decision by the UK government to abandon public subsidies for teaching in the social sciences and humanities.

This issue also contains an account of her work by Christy Newman, who was awarded the 2010 Paul Bourke Award for Early Career Research; a response by Don Aitkin to the 2010 Cunningham Lecture on climate change, and news of Academy activities.

We hope in the following issues to feature more of the work of social scientists that bears on questions of public importance, and repeat our invitation for suggestions.

Congratulations go to ASSA Fellow Professor Kevin Wheldall who was made a Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia in the 2011 Australia Day honours list, for service to education as an academic and researcher, particularly in the areas of learning and behavioural difficulties, and through the design and implementation of innovative literacy programs.

*Meredith Edwards, Murray Goot, Stuart Macintyre (chair) and Simon Marginson.*

## **Challenges for the Social Sciences in Australia**

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### **Measuring Excellence in Australian Research**

**Andrew Wells**

#### **Introducing ERA**

**T**he Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) process was designed to produce a cost effective, reliable and accurate measure of the quality of research produced by Australian universities. The evaluation period was retrospective and varied in length and period depending on various data collected: for the most significant data, the research outputs, the length of time was six years (1 January 2003 to 31 December 2008). The citation data period was similar in length and date, while the periods for research income, applied measures and esteem measures were over three years (1 January 2006 to 31 December 2008), and the staffing census date was 31 March 2009. These varying periods and dates immediately suggest caution in interpreting the data. It is reasonable to assume, however, that the research outputs collected over a six-year period are the essential element in shaping the ERA rating system.

The rating system was devised to evaluate disciplinary fields and these fields have been based on the Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification codes published in 2008. This taxonomic exercise divides research activity and assigns outputs into 22 two-digit Fields of Research (FoR) at the highest level of generality. In turn these are broken down into 157 four-digit fields of research across all disciplines and even greater granularity at the six-digit level. For the purposes of evaluating these FoR the ERA process has followed the general pattern applied by the Australian Research Council (ARC) in some of its funding schemes of grouping or clustering disciplines. The single most significant exception to this generalisation is the Medical and Dental Sciences that are typically (but not uniformly) outside the ARC funding clusters.

There are other variations that may repay close attention. The Social, Behavioural and Economics Science cluster (SBE, Cluster Four) used by ERA groups the disciplines of Education (13), Economics (14), Commerce, Management, Tourism and Services (15), Studies in Human Society (16), and Psychology (17). Because of principles underpinning the FoR system, a number of disciplines that might be seen as distinct are sometimes grouped under a single two-digit coding, on the grounds that they employ broadly similar methodologies — Political Science, Sociology and Demography for example — while some disciplines that might be commonly identified as social sciences (Urban and Regional Planning and Linguistics for example) are placed within the Humanities and Creative Arts (HCA) cluster.

Social sciences in the ERA analysis revolve around the hierarchy of the five two-digit clusters already noted and the 28 four-digit clusters designed to accommodate what are conventionally described as disciplinary specialisations. So while ERA grouped the 157 four-digit fields into 8 two-digit fields, there is a higher than average number of four-digit fields in both the SBE and HCA clusters. Despite these two-digit clusters, and their use in evaluation by disciplinary cluster panels (Research Evaluation Committees), consultation with the most representative and informed organisational bodies, including the Academy of the Social Sciences and disciplinary professional

associations, resulted in diverse evaluation processes both within and between disciplinary clusters. In the case of the social sciences the discipline of Psychology was evaluated differently from the other disciplines in Cluster Four.

There has already been considerable media and public commentary on the two distinct modes of evaluation — a metrical approach evaluating outputs by citation indices, and a peer review process identifying a proportion of typical outputs. It has been claimed that the peer review method used for most of the social sciences and humanities has more subjectivity and/or less generosity than a metric approach, and was commonly employed in the social sciences, in four of the five four-digit disciplinary groupings. A further and related point stresses the inherently interdisciplinary nature of the social sciences (and the humanities) and then goes on to argue that a discipline-based methodology is problematic. We shall return to these matters below.

ERA was designed, however, to focus on disciplinary performance, evaluating the quality of typical outputs (even where these were heterogeneous, or even unique) at the national level, as well as within institutions. It makes no claims at all relating to individual research performance or the performance of conventional organisational structures within universities. The possibility arises that a significant proportion of an institution's disciplinary output is generated outside the 'apparently obvious' disciplinary home (conventionally a department, school or faculty) in a specific university. Furthermore, quality of research is the basis of evaluation not its quantity. Larger organisational units do not necessarily outperform smaller ones: and this may be as true for bigger universities as a whole, just as it might be for larger departments, schools and faculties.

At some level it would be reasonable to assume that larger organisations, and with greater caveats larger organisational units, are better placed to translate quantity into quality, but exceptions can also be easily identified. A final point is that ERA established minimum threshold requirements before institutions could be evaluated at either the two or four-digit level. They needed to cross the output threshold of 50 journal articles for citation analysis, and a threshold of 30 outputs for peer review. Institutions had some flexibility in their assignment of outputs into what they believed were appropriate and optimal classificatory fields.

Before turning to specific SBE disciplines a quick recapitulation is necessary. The ERA analysis is a quality (not quantity), discipline-based, retrospective (2003-08), national and institutional, output-driven 'stock-take' employing a dual (citation and/or peer review) though consistently rigorous evaluation methodology. It was not designed to create national disciplinary or institutional league tables (though it would provide data for those so inclined), nor to provide a productivity measure of individual, institutional or disciplinary output, nor a comparative research productivity analysis that would enable policy makers to assess investment in people, facilities and research activity relative to published output.

Consequently ERA does not readily enhance our evaluation of the economic return on research investment, or the volume of social goods generated by public support, let alone the long-term intellectual consequences of high quality publications. It is, however, an invaluable tool that, combined with a larger group of other data, could assist in our capacity to address and analyse some of these questions.

### **Looking at the social sciences**

As we have already noted, there are five disciplinary clusters in SBE all sitting under two-digit FoR cluster, number four. The first of the discipline clusters is Education, which is further divided into five distinct four-digit specialisations: Education Systems (1301), Curriculum and Pedagogy (1302), Specialist Studies in Education (1303), and Other Education (1399). According to the audited information provided by the universities this field employed nearly 3,000 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) staff and generated around five per cent of the national research outputs, which were concentrated in journal and conference papers. These activities and outputs were supported by about one per cent of the competitive (category one) research income. This is a relatively large disciplinary cluster, much larger than Mathematical Sciences (01), the Physical Sciences (02), or Chemical Sciences (03): indeed it has about the same number of FTE as these three disciplines combined. It was able to attract about one-quarter of the research income of these three discipline clusters combined.

The overall rating for the entire discipline at the two-digit level was 2.2 but with considerable variation; only 12 units of evaluation rated 4 and one at 5. To get another comparative perspective Earth Sciences (04) with around one-quarter of the FTE, generated about one-half of the research outputs and received twice the competitive research income of Education as a whole. Compared with Psychology in the same disciplinary cluster, with its significantly higher overall assessment, the findings show an overall FTE count less than half of Education, but the outputs were significantly higher on a per capita basis and the Category One research income was nearly double. But the broad picture does not tell the full story.

Looked at more closely, the largest area of Education outputs — in 1302 (Curriculum and Pedagogy) closely followed by 1303 (Specialist Studies in Education) — the results were much closer to world standard than for the two-digit field as a whole. It is also interesting to note that there are different publishing practices in the four sub-fields, and diverse patterns of research income. The contrast between 1303 (the strongest area in education) and 1399 (Other Education, the weakest area) in these two areas is quite striking.

The discipline of Economics (14 at the two-digit level) is smaller by FTE than Education by about 35 per cent, with a slightly higher per capita output but twice the research income. The publishing profile is somewhat different, there being a greater concentration of refereed journal articles and significantly fewer conference papers. The variation in performance in the sub-disciplines was, however, even more pronounced than was the case in Education. Applied Economics (1402) accounted for more than half of the FTEs, and more than three-quarters of the research income (and significant consultation income) and a high percentage of research outputs. Despite these advantages the process of evaluation based on peer review resulted in a relatively disappointing 2.1 rating, less than Education as a whole.

The two smaller sub-disciplines of Economic Theory (1401) and Econometrics (1403), however, produced much higher quality work with a smaller percentage of research income. Economic Theory had a very impressive rating distribution of outputs, even allowing for low levels of research income. It would appear that the impressive research commercialisation and overall public support for Applied Economics has not been translated into high quality outputs. This is not easily explained by its staffing

profile, which is relatively similar to Economic Theory and Econometrics, nor is research income simply related to high quality outputs.

Within the fields of Commerce, Management, Tourism and Services (grouped under the 15 two-digit FoR), the eight four-digit divisions are not so easily typified as subdivisions of a single disciplinary area (as might be argued for Education and Economics). It could be argued that both the objects of investigation and the methods of inquiry used across these fields are quite heterogeneous. Of the 3,137 FTEs in this group, roughly half were in 1503 Business and Management, a bit less than 20 per cent were in Accountancy, Auditing and Accountability (1501), with only 10 per cent in Banking, Finance and Investment (1502), over 10 per cent in Marketing (1505), seven per cent in Tourism (1506) and less than five per cent in Commercial Services (1504). The performance of these research areas had a notable consistency with two exceptions: Transportation and Freight Services (1507) a small component with only 23 of the 3,137 FTE for the two-digit field, produced an impressive rating scale of 4 for its entire output; while the more than 10 per cent of total outputs in 1599 (Other Commerce, Management, Tourism and Services) managed a uniform rating of one, with a negligible research income.

Studies in Human Society (16 as a FoR) represents an even more diverse group than 15. It groups nine four-digit fields of research, and includes at least seven different disciplines that, in a number of cases (such as Sociology, Political Science and Public Policy, and Anthropology), are often quite separate in many university settings. This grouping is further complicated in that some of these 'disciplinary' descriptions mask very diverse theoretical and methodological differences. Before trying to understand such a diverse group a quick description of its various elements might be useful. If we combine the SBE disciplines by FTEs (Codes 13-17) we have a total of about 10,500 FTE. Of this group some 2,200 are designated as belonging to Studies in Human Society.

Only a few disciplines within Studies in Human Society have more than 220 FTE, which is 10 per cent of FoR 16, but only around two per cent of the entire SBE disciplinary cluster. Even the largest of the disciplines – Sociology with 466, Political Science with 456 and Policy and Administration with 308 – are less than five per cent of the SBE discipline cluster and a bit over 20 per cent of the Studies in Human Society disciplinary cluster. If we look at per capita research income and research outputs there are some interesting variations: Policy and Administration has a higher income but lower publication outputs than say Political Science, while Sociology has much greater research income than Political Science (nearly \$59m compared with about \$36.5m) and significantly more publications (4,300 compared with around 3,500) with quite similar staffing levels.

To get a rather different perspective Atomic, Molecular, Particle and Plasma Physics (0202) the lowest performing grouping under the Physical Sciences two-digit (FoR 02) has about the same FTE as Anthropology (a high performing SBE and FoR 16 discipline), but well over twice the outputs and getting on for twice the research income. If we compare a high performing physical science such as Astronomical and Space Science (0201) with a low performing and larger SBE discipline (in this case Social Work 1607) we see nearly three times the publications for 0201 and 50 per cent more research income than 1607.

With the same two-digit FoR there are also some curious anomalies. Criminology (1602), Anthropology (1601) and Human Geography all have similar staff numbers, comparable research outputs and similar research incomes and ratings between 2.5 and 3.1 that are not too dissimilar. On the other hand the discipline of Demography, about one-third the size of these three disciplines, produces significantly higher per capita outputs and attracts a very much larger per capita research income, but has the second lowest national rating in the entire cluster. No Unit of Assessment in Demography attracted a four or a five rating. There would be much to be gained by trying to explain the meaning of these very different ERA assessments. What does seem reasonably clear is that those social sciences that were peer reviewed present a very mixed picture, both when looked at within the SBE disciplines and compared with similarly peer reviewed Humanities and Creative Arts disciplines.

The last two-digit social science discipline, Psychology (17), presents a large and relatively homogeneous disciplinary grouping. It has three sub-disciplinary groupings; Psychology (1701), Cognitive Sciences (1702), and Other Psychology and Cognitive Sciences (1799). Most of the research and about 80 per cent of the FTE and publications was concentrated in the first two four-digit fields. Cognitive Sciences (1701) attracted a slightly higher proportion of the research income and achieved a higher rating. With 73 per cent of its Units of Evaluation at or above world standard, it was the fourth best performer in the SBE discipline cluster as a whole (after Transportation, Econometrics and Anthropology). As the sole discipline in SBE using a metric-based evaluation system it's hard to see how this translated into a quite different and superior ratings outcome.

This quick survey of the social sciences does not reveal any easily interpreted patterns. Compared to the humanities area the social sciences seem to be relatively better funded with a similar disciplinary profile but lower ERA ratings and a significantly lower number of Units of Evaluation at or above world standard. Many of the humanities disciplines (History and Philosophy for example) show that low ratings are simply the result of peer reviewing. Compared to the natural sciences the social sciences are often bigger, with lower funding, publications and ratings. If the argument then shifts to the vagaries of peer review compared with metrics then the use of metrics in the large Psychology discipline within SBE should have been more disadvantageous to HCA but this is not what the data seems to indicate.

A different line of inquiry and analysis to explain the SBE results might be worth pursuing. The ERA data does not provide a comprehensive analysis of the research opportunities of Australian social scientists, their overall work load and demographic context. To understand this wider context we would need a parallel picture of student loads and the distribution of academic positions not so much by academic level, but by conditions of employment and workload obligations. Furthermore the demographics of these highly segmented disciplinary work forces would need to be better described. Once the actual opportunities of undertaking research were better understood, then the consequences of the different research funding opportunities could be assessed. It does seem clear that the likelihood of research funding in the social sciences is considerably lower than in the natural sciences (but higher than in the humanities). And the opportunities to spend time researching rather than teaching might be better explained by the impact of the Relative Funding Model on different disciplines and the consequences of student loads and class sizes which are felt very differently across academia.

## **Metrics and peer review**

In the development of ERA there was a long phase of consultation. From the academies and discipline-based associations emerged considerable pressure to amend a largely metric-based system and add peer-review as an alternative to the employment of a uniform methodology. Without reviewing all the contributions to the consultation process, two issues emerged as decisive in this discussion. First was a view strongly articulated by representatives of the humanities, creative arts and many of the social sciences that no clear consensus existed within their research communities about the hierarchy of national and international publishing outlets. Moreover it was argued that the use of citation indices was necessarily problematic when publication outlets were diffused so the competing merits of books, book chapters and journal articles were highly contested.

A second line of argument that frequently followed the first asserted that peer review was an inherently superior method for evaluating the quality of research. The ERA consultation responded to these and related concerns and devised a robust peer review alternative for those disciplines that requested it, and allowed some variations in the outputs that might be peer reviewed. It might seem an over-reaction for those who argued for peer review to subsequently identify it as the basis for their disappointing results. There is, however, an additional point that requires consideration.

Many of the physical, biological and medical sciences are long established, international in their method, publishing conventions, reception and application. In these disciplinary fields the hierarchy of publications (essentially refereed journals) is well understood by researchers. Furthermore the metrics that calculate the quality and significance of the science by using an agreed proxy of the frequency of citation in other quality publications have high credibility. It is not a methodologically complicated matter to extrapolate from these parameters the quality of the average or typical publications for an entire discipline across Australia, or the institutional publications of such a discipline. This in turn can be compared with an international quality benchmark and a global and comparative ranking can thereby be established. There is some room for arguing about the precision of this method of quality evaluation, but it has close congruency with scientific practice and considerable credibility within most of those research communities.

In the social and cultural 'sciences' the assumptions underpinning the natural sciences are less persuasive to most researchers. There is no clear consensus amongst these scholars about what constitutes appropriate research theories and methods; their practices are deeply saturated with historical, social and ideological assumptions; and they frequently speak to unique national, regional and social identities. Thus the significance of theories, methods and ultimately their publishing traditions and readers are varied, and passionately contested.

Thus the key building blocks of a metric and internationally comparable system of analysis are not so obviously present in the social sciences. Using an alternative system of peer evaluation makes considerable sense, and the ERA team embraced this challenge with care. But no matter how rigorous the peer review system thus devised, no matter how representative the publications that were peer reviewed, and no matter how carefully these publications were evaluated, the results would be vulnerable to the claim of subjectivity. But the difficulty of translating this fundamental difference of method into an argument about systemic disadvantage is that it assumes

(without making the case) that the differences between quality of research in most disciplines (and between the natural and cultural sciences) nationally and thus their international rankings *should* be reasonably small. As we have already noted these differences may be large for a variety of reasons, which may have nothing or little to do with diverse assessment methodologies.

### **Concluding observations**

The social sciences as analysed by ERA have generated a quite diverse pattern of research activity. As a whole they appear (by the criteria and methodology that ERA has employed) to be one of the less successful research disciplinary clusters. It might be possible to sheet home some of the responsibility for this outcome on the ERA methodology — the FoRs have been both too small and without sufficient granularity in some areas, the journals might have been somewhat differently ranked, peer review was too subjective, etc — but these might explain marginal rather than systemic problems.

A different perspective that I have briefly explored here relates to the impact of the staffing cohort and the relative distribution of Category One research income on a roughly per capita basis. Superficially there seems to be some evidence that long-term patterns of research income might explain something of the quantity and quality of research publications. But even here the critic would need to move carefully: the census data for staff does not give us trends but simply registers a static point in time, and the research income is for only three years. So to make a stronger argument rather than an educated guess, a thorough analysis would be required. Then we would be better able to make a comparative analysis of research opportunity. But to do this in a rigorous way would require the employment conditions, workloads and student numbers discussed above to be part of the analysis.

Once comprehensive data sets could be marshalled and carefully analysed it might be possible to demonstrate what research has been produced, to measure its quantity and quality, to better understand the human and financial resources required to construct it and thereby show how the quality of the outcome is related to that investment. So while much attention has been focused on the reliability of the ERA method of assessment (which is likely to withstand most of the superficial criticisms), the more interesting question (which ERA does not pretend to answer) is why and how this pattern of research outputs (quantity and quality) has occurred in Australia and developed over time. Is the result simply a consequence of resources invested, and if so how should resources be deployed in the future to get a scientific, technological, socially, culturally and economically desirable mix? These are necessarily political choices that ERA and other forms of analysis can inform, but not determine.

**Professor Andrew Wells** joined the Australian Research Council in February 2009 in the position of Executive Director, Humanities and Creative Arts. Before that he was Dean of Arts at the University of Wollongong for five years. Professor Wells is published widely on Australian economics, and labour and intellectual history. His current research interests concern comparative studies of Australian and South East Asian labour history, most recently focusing on imperial hegemony and colonial labour — a major, multi-authored study on the commodification of colonial labour is close to completion.



**The Keith Hancock Lecture, 2010**  
**The Poor Relation**  
**Stuart Macintyre**

Faced by an intractable budgetary crisis, Louis XVI of France bowed to necessity in 1788 and summoned the Estates-General. Since this would be the first meeting of the national assembly in a century and a half, his finance minister invited suggestions how the three estates of the *ancien regime*, the clergy, nobility and commons, should be organised. Emmanuel Joseph de Sieyès, a priest infected by the rationalism of the Enlightenment, seized the opportunity to publish a pamphlet uncompromisingly titled, *Qu'est-ce que le tiers état*. 'What is the third estate?' he asked. 'Everything. What has it been hitherto in the political order? Nothing? What does it desire? To be something?'

The question 'What are the social sciences?' invites a similar response. The natural sciences, well endowed, conscious of their lineage and dignity, unquestionably comprise the temporal nobility. The humanities, esteemed for their less worldly vocation and pastoral role, might be seen as the spiritual estate, albeit reduced to mendicant status. The social sciences, at once more numerous and more disparate, constitute the third estate.

Within its ranks are professional disciplines such as education and law, prominent guilds such as economics and psychology, and the artisanal trades of anthropology and sociology, geography and political science. Some of the more entrepreneurial social sciences have spun off lucrative subsidiaries such as business studies and public administration; others have contributed to new fields of interest such as gender, environmental, indigenous and development studies. Both durable and protean, the social sciences enter into many other areas of teaching and research, though their contribution is seldom recognised. In statements of national innovation policy and the arrangements made to support it, the social sciences are nothing. Yet for sixty years they have aspired to be something.

My purpose here is to explore this neglect. I am interested in the persistent status of the social sciences as the poor relation of our knowledge system. How was it that their claims for recognition and support were unavailing? What was their place in the Australian university as it grew to meet new expectations of higher education? Was it by design or inadvertence that they were marginalised as the university acquired a research function? Or should we look instead to the failure of the social sciences to persuade decision-makers of their value?

In seeking answers to these questions I draw on the history of higher education and research policy. The Australian history stretches from the Murray and Martin reports in an era of expansive confidence when education was a public good and our universities were nation-building institutions. It takes in the green and white papers of John Dawkins that bent the universities to new purposes and constrained them within a National Unified System. It extends to the plethora of reviews and initiatives over the past twenty years, whose substance and quality has been of inverse proportion to their frequency.

The paradoxical effect has been to insist that the university must take charge of its fortunes and to impose forms of organisation, management and accountability that prevent it from doing so. Research policy, similarly, seeks returns on investment in

science and technology that are seldom realised but invariably generate still grander schemes. The pleas and remonstrances of the social sciences play little part in the dialogue between government, universities and the research community, so my final purpose is to suggest how they might be better served.

### **Disciplinary development: growth to stagnation**

Back in 1939 there were just six universities in this country with an enrolment of 14,000. Wartime measures and the Post-War Reconstruction Training Scheme doubled student numbers, and the increase in academic staff was even greater. By my count there were 452 appointments in the social sciences in 1949.

### **Academic staff in the social sciences 1949<sup>1</sup>**

Economics	155
Law	95
Education	57
Psychology	51
History	39
Philosophy	35
Political Science	12
Geography	11
Anthropology	7

The predominance of the vocational social sciences is marked, albeit overstated, in these figures by the heavy reliance of faculties of economics and commerce, law and education on professional practitioners holding part-time appointments. Even so, economics clearly led the field. Psychology, only recently separated from philosophy, was growing rapidly. History and philosophy, both established disciplines, enjoyed an advantage over the newcomers, political science and geography. Anthropology was confined to Sydney, sociology absent.

Here already some formative patterns are evident. The Australian university began as a device for liberal higher education and then added professional courses, which it located in separate faculties. Except at the new Australian National University, where two of the four original research schools brought social scientists together, the post-war expansion built on existing organisational lines, in keeping with the teaching function. Hence education and law were taught as separate and largely self-sufficient courses, with a strong practical orientation. Economics created a more academic curriculum leading to a fourth, honours year. Arts faculties followed the same path, with new appointments allowing greater specialisation, extension into new areas of teaching and research, and the development of honours programs that fed postgraduate research activity. Since the disciplinary department was confirmed as the organisational unit, established disciplines inhibited the introduction of new ones, and the distinctive character of each discipline became more pronounced.

Fast-forward another decade to 1959 when the bounty of the Murray report was becoming evident. Pressed by the vice-chancellors, Robert Menzies instructed this committee of inquiry in 1956 'to investigate how best the universities may serve Australia at a time of great social and economic development'. He arranged for Keith Murray, the chairman of the University Grants Committee in the United Kingdom, to

lead the review and it resulted in the establishment of a similar body here, the Australian Universities Commission, as the Commonwealth assumed financial responsibility. Menzies also appointed the chair of the CSIRO, Ian Clunies Ross, as a member of the Murray committee, for science and industry were uppermost in the government's concern. Keith Murray and Ian Clunies Ross were scientists committed to a particular kind of university. The teaching, they said in terms redolent of the 1950s, should provide not 'merely a technical or specialist training, but a full and true education, befitting a free man and the citizen of a free country'. The research should not be dictated by industrial concerns, for the exploitation of discoveries was best left to separate institutes of technology, and university researchers should determine the balance between what Murray described as 'the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake' and research that was 'indispensable to the welfare of the nation'.

The Murray report set in train a flurry of new universities. After the Sydney Technical College became the University of New South Wales in 1949, and the University College of New England achieved autonomy in 1954, there was the creation of Monash in 1958, the lifting of Canberra University College to university status as part of the ANU in 1960 and of Newcastle in 1961, the creation of university colleges at Townsville (1961) and Wollongong (1962), and preparations under way for Macquarie and La Trobe (both 1964) and Flinders (1966).

The last three were the most adventurous. They concentrated on general studies in the social sciences, humanities and sciences, rejected the disciplinary department as the unit of organisation in favour of schools that spanned disciplinary boundaries. The rationale of the social science degrees designed at Flinders by the young economist Keith Hancock — that they recognised 'the complexity and interdependence of human affairs' — might be taken as the basis of all three.

A second Commonwealth inquiry five years later, this one conducted by the physicist Leslie Martin, confirmed the binary divide between universities and other bodies of tertiary education, the one combining teaching and research in academic disciplines, the other teaching applied and vocational courses. Perhaps paradoxically, the social sciences benefited disproportionately from this arrangement, for by 1969 they were teaching 40 per cent of the 108,000 university enrolments.

#### **Academic staff in the social sciences 1969<sup>2</sup>**

Economics	556
Law	169
Education	132
History	291
Psychology	203
Political Science	149
Philosophy	132
Geography	120
Anthropology	59
Sociology	47

The figures for academic staff in 1969 reveal that the principal beneficiaries were the social science departments in Arts faculties. More active in research, they enjoyed

better staff: student ratios than the professional faculties, and grew rapidly. The universities would benefit further from the largesse of the Whitlam government and then feel the effects of the sharp downturn that followed the OPEC oil crisis of 1973-4. From 1.62 per cent of the Gross National Product in 1950-51, expenditure on education rose to 3.15 per cent in 1960-61 and 4.62 per cent in 1970-71 to reach 6.46 per cent by 1976-7, of which the government contribution was 6.13 per cent. That level has never since been regained.

Becalmed after thirty years of favourable conditions, the universities took some time to realise that theirs was not a temporary misfortune. They waited in vain as the Fraser government failed to find a way out of the economic doldrums. In 1985 values, the Commonwealth provided the universities with \$1335m in 1975 and \$1374m in 1985. As a proportion of Gross National Product, expenditure on higher education fell from 1.5 to 1.0 per cent.

### **Big science and the poor relation**

At the beginning of the post-war era research was more an aspiration than a regular practice. Urged on by some influential social scientists in the public service, to whom I shall return, Ben Chifley accepted that Australia needed its own capacity for research and research training. It was to be provided by an institute of advanced studies in the nation's capital free of all teaching responsibilities and with a separate appropriation. The established teaching universities refused to accept this division of labour, but throughout the 1950s they relied for their research endeavours on internal economies. After the Murray report, the Commonwealth grant included a component to assist research, but it was not until Leslie Martin completed his inquiry in 1964, and the subsequent creation of the Australian Research Grants Committee (ARGC), that there was an external source of support.

In its first three years the ARGC distributed \$9.5 million to academic researchers. Those in the social sciences submitted 16 per cent of applications and were awarded 15 per cent of the grants worth 9 per cent of funding. Since the other source of public support for university research, the National Health and Medical Research Council, had a similar budget, the proportion of national competitive grant income directed to the social sciences was no more than 5 per cent.

That is an incomplete measure of research activity. Higher degree candidates in the social sciences made up 16 per cent of all candidates in the late 1960s, and expenditure on social science research amounted to a little over 10 per cent of all university research expenditure. But from the outset the machinery for public support of university research was dominated by natural scientists. The first chair of the ARGC was a president of the Academy of Science, and the head of the department that administered it was a former treasurer of the same academy. The department was a new one, designated the Department of Education and Science.

Australia was not alone in this orientation for science acquired an aura of unrivalled authority in the post-war period. Its claims were set out compellingly by Vannevar Bush, a New England electrical engineer who was the architect of wartime science in the United States and in 1945 submitted a report to President Truman on post-war arrangements: 'Science: The Endless Frontier'. The nub of Bush's argument was that the major advances made recently in aeronautics, electronics, synthetic materials, pharmaceuticals and above all nuclear fission all came from discoveries in the purest realms of science. The best way of organising research was thus to encourage 'the

free play of free intellects, working on subjects of their own choice in the manner dictated by their curiosity’.

This was the policy that guided the National Science Foundation in the United States and similar funding bodies elsewhere, including the ARGC, until the 1970s, when faltering economic performance cast doubt on its efficacy as well as its growing expense. By then it seemed that the leading industrial economies were falling behind new competitors such as Japan, where government directed the research effort towards specific industries and products, driving technological innovation at the industry and enterprise level. Along with other members of the OECD, Australia looked to arrangements that would produce similar outcomes.

Taking guidance from changes introduced overseas, the Commonwealth created a Science and Technology Council to co-ordinate activity. In a series of reviews and reports ASTEC set out plans whereby research would be linked to commercial development and technological innovation would create new industries to restore economic growth. In universities, where most basic research was conducted, there would be concentration of effort through the identification of priorities and greater involvement of end-users.

All of this took research as synonymous with scientific invention, and development as its translation into new products. ASTEC paid lip service to basic research in the social sciences and humanities, without any acknowledgement that they might work with different paradigms. ASTEC’s strategy, moreover, was premised on greater business investment in research and development, as was occurring in countries where growth resumed in the 1980s, but did not occur here. In Australia, where the government remained the patron of academic research, efforts to consummate industrial partnerships went unrequited.

From the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, the Australian university was at a standstill. Then John Dawkins broke the deadlock. With his abolition of the binary divide in 1988 came an expansion of student numbers, a much greater emphasis on work skills and a proliferation of vocational courses. Through the introduction of deferred tuition charges and full fees for international students, the government freed itself of the cost constraints of increased participation. By encouraging mergers, it created larger, more entrepreneurial institutions. By forcing changes to university governance and imposing a new regimen of efficiency and accountability, it replaced collegial decision-making with a corporate style of management. This was how Australia made the transition from the elite university to the mass system of higher education.

Introducing these changes, Dawkins stated that there should be a greater concentration on science, engineering and technology, yet their effect was to increase the social sciences to over 50 per cent of all enrolments by the 1990s. A further effect was a shift from disciplinary departments and faculties to the scale and flexibility of multidisciplinary schools and divisions at a time when funding per student was steadily falling. Effective full time enrolments in the social sciences rose from 150,000 in 1988 when the Unified National System began to 220,000 in 1996, but teaching staff barely increased from 8900 to 9400.

The higher education statistics no longer distinguished disciplines, but it can be seen that education suffered significant attrition. After the merger of the colleges of education, social sciences in Arts faculties experienced modest growth (but a sharp deterioration of the staff: student ratio) and the conglomerate of business studies and

law expanded significantly. Within these portmanteau categories, moreover, there was an expansion of applied studies at the expense of core disciplines, one that has continued ever since — by 2007 there would be five times as many students enrolled in business and management studies as in economics.

**Academic staff in the social sciences, 1988 and 1996<sup>3</sup>**

	<b>1988</b>	<b>1996</b>
Education	2877	2344
Arts social sciences	2596	2752
Administration, business, economics and law	3577	4305

The changes to academic research were less dramatic, more an amplification of earlier trends. Dawkins' Green Paper stated that research should restore economic competitiveness, but that had been said many times before. He turned the Research Grants Committee into a Research Council, and augmented its budget with a 'clawback' from the research component of the universities' block funding, but that only adjusted the proportions of Australia's dual system of research funding. He increased provision for research centres, promulgated research priorities and required universities to do the same, but these too had limited effect.

Indeed, the creation of a Unified National System in which all universities were eligible to conduct research and undertake research training across the full range of their academic activity contradicted the avowed intention of concentrating effort. The increase in the ARC's budget was outstripped by the increase in applications, so that the success rate dropped below 20 per cent in the early 1990s. The social science share of ARC funding ranged between 11 and 16 per cent, but the ARC was upstaged as a source of advice by a new body, the Prime Minister's Science Council, which devised the new scheme of Cooperative Research Centres, from which the humanities and social sciences were excluded.

The more recent history is too fresh to require retelling. In higher education the Howard government increased the operation of the market, contained fiscal costs, increased student charges and wrung all possible benefit out of international student revenue — with increasing strains that the recent Bradley review documented. In research it did little more than recalibrate the funding formulas until the turn of the century when 'Backing Australia's Ability' injected a large additional sum for science and technology. It was here, in the Chief Scientist's determination of a separate provision for science and the application of four circumscribed research priorities to the ARC's support of basic research, that the status of social science as the poor relation was formalised.

Australia is not alone in privileging big science as the engine of innovation, nor in the belief — despite all evidence to the contrary — that you can identify frontier technologies, assemble large research teams in expensive facilities, manage their progress and commercialise their discoveries. Australia differs in its reliance on a single funding body as the only source of funds for basic research.

With the exception of medical research, we lack both the private foundations that support such work in the United States and the range of funding bodies that operate in Europe. There is an increasing quantity of commissioned, applied and developmental work, but it bears an inverse relationship to basic research: hence commerce, management, tourism and services are the largest social science fields of university

research and development with an expenditure of \$193m in 2004 — yet they attracted just \$3.8m in Discovery grants in that year. The mismatch of piecemeal taskwork and core knowledge is acute.

### **Obstinately vulnerable to popular judgements**

**Why** are the social sciences so regularly excluded from Australian research policy? From the original Department of Education and Science to the present Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, they are invisible in the governmental machinery. From the Science and Technology Council to the Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council, they are shut out of deliberations.

Back in the 1940s there had been an effort to give the social sciences recognition. It was instigated by a group of academics drawn into the wartime administration to guide planning and management of the national effort. They were supported by a group of economists occupying senior government posts: 'Nugget' Coombs, Douglas Copland, John Crawford, Ronald Walker and Roland Wilson. The idea was that social scientists would assist the government in its ambitious tasks of post-war reconstruction by undertaking research into a wide range of matters of national concern. A new organisation, the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), would act as a source of advice and allocate government funds to academic researchers.

This proposal failed for a variety of reasons — principally government reluctance to fund such an arrangement and the fierce opposition of the vice-chancellors to anyone coming between them and the public purse. It took a generous grant from the Carnegie Corporation to prise a matching amount from the Commonwealth for an attenuated Social Science Research Council to continue.

The SSRC used these funds to undertake a number of foundational activities as the social sciences were constituted as research disciplines in Australia. It compiled bibliographies, assisted academic journals, subsidised monographs, organised seminars, provided research and travel grants, and fostered relations with international counterparts. Subsequently it raised additional funds for some major projects: on women in Australia, improvements to the income tax system, the circumstances of Aboriginal Australians and migrants, and an environmental study of Botany Bay.

The Aboriginal and migrant projects had substantial consequences for public policy, laying intellectual foundations for Aboriginal self-determination and multiculturalism, though the investigations aroused official suspicion. The Commonwealth continued to support the SSRC, but always at a lower level than the grant it provided to the Academy of Science. Nor was the government impressed when the SSRC turned itself into the Academy of the Social Sciences in 1971 since this seemed to confirm its academic orientation. For that matter, the Academy was no more effective in advocacy than its predecessor. It often grumbled about the neglect of the social sciences in higher education and research, but failed to present persuasive alternatives.

A mutual misunderstanding persisted throughout the post-war decades. Social scientists repeatedly claimed that they could improve policy if only they were given the means to apply their insights. For its part, government repeatedly found such advice to be ill-informed and impractical. It also noted that most of the money it provided for social science research in universities went into intramural activity. Every branch of social science seemed to want its own professional association and journal, its own disciplinary infrastructure. The claim that these academic entrepreneurs could serve practical purposes seemed a thin disguise for their empire building.

The problem was exacerbated by the failure of social scientists to distinguish their forms of knowledge from that of the natural scientists. We have seen that the social sciences were configured in Australia as separate disciplines in an organisational structure that restricted opportunities for interaction. By the time they were established here, earlier attempts in Europe and America to build a unifying epistemology for the study of society had collapsed. Australian social scientists, moreover, were remarkably inattentive to the theoretical foundations of their enterprise. Insofar as they reflected on intellectual practice, they spoke for their own disciplines. These disciplines were conceived as social sciences in the plural without any sustained effort to define them or map their boundaries. The paradox of the social sciences is that they constitute essential bodies of knowledge but function as a representative device.

The social sciences operated at a further disadvantage. If scientists worked with broadly accepted methods of explanation applicable across the natural world, social scientists dealt with human activity in time and place. They invoked the authority of science to distinguish their knowledge from popular understandings used in everyday life, for they laid claim to an exclusive expertise that qualified them to undertake specialised and systematic inquiry. But much of what these social scientists found remained obstinately vulnerable to popular judgements of its validity and utility, for it lacked the powerful mystique attached — at least until the recent efforts to discredit climate change — to natural science. Besides, social scientists made no transformative discoveries, invented no breakthrough technologies.

They were served even more poorly by the new research paradigm that took hold in the 1980s. The object of government now was to capture the intellectual creativity of academic researchers, to take knowledge production out of the hands of self-directed disciplinary groups and put it at the disposal of business and government. At first this involved exhortation and encouragement, but when that failed there was increasing recourse to prescription. Initially the universities were offered incentives to co-operate but then came the batteries of accountability, evaluation and audit that turned them into knowledge managers.

Successive reviews in the 1980s and 1990s drew attention to the disappointing results of such policies, and the solution that each one of them proposed was to go further. If Australia still lagged in innovation and the universities were failing to serve it, then it was necessary for government to press them harder. If academics persisted in their hermetic attachment to disciplines, then they needed to be assembled in larger, multi-disciplinary teams following designated tasks. If too many of them were producing work of little merit or significance, evaluation should lead to greater concentration of activity. The constant search for improvement found expression in increasingly elaborate schemes for the management of research but the efficacy of research management itself was never questioned.

### **Defend the disciplines, reclaim the inheritance**

The new paradigm has particular significance for the social sciences. From the early advice of the Science and Technology Council to the most recent provision for Super Science, social scientists have been expected to follow arrangements devised by scientists for science. The circumstances of big science — advanced technologies that generate rapid discovery, a concentration of effort in large-scale institutes and centres with management systems that facilitate interaction with government and industry and

produce outcomes that can be commercialised as intellectual property — do not apply to social science. One of our disadvantages is that we do not cost enough.

Nor is there a congruence of methods. Scientists work cumulatively in paradigms that are relatively stable, and with experimental procedures that allow for consensus. Social scientists work in a multiplicity of directions, quantitative, experimental, ethnographic, archival. The disciplines overlap and contest each other, with little resolution of differences. They conduct border raids and plunder each other's attractive ideas. They provide alternative perspectives — it has been suggested that economics and sociology correct each other's absurdities — but with limited effect on their separate practices. This lack of agreement is frequently taken as a sign of backwardness and an impediment to the interdisciplinary collaboration that is enshrined in research policy.

It is not for want of trying that the disciplines have not converged. The Social Science Research Council of the United States began in the 1920s with the intention of bringing them together and failed to do so. The principal American foundations sponsored similar endeavours after the Second World War, again with disappointing results.

There are many examples of collaborative research on social problems, but problems have shorter lifecycles and don't create the same enduring, self-reproducing research communities. Given the incentives for interdisciplinary research, the failure to integrate the social science disciplines suggests that something other than obstinacy is at work.

Those who manage research regard disciplines as obstacles to collaboration. Disciplines are seen as constraints on creativity, congeries of self-interest. On the contrary, they are powerfully durable ways of organising and advancing knowledge. The social science disciplines provide models of society, each one with its own conceptual map that defines what it is possible to know and how it can be known. It is the partial, specialised character of these disciplines that gives them their force and coherence as disciplined forms of inquiry. It also means that interdisciplinary collaboration in the social sciences is more than a pooling of knowledge; it is made possible and fruitful by exploration of the grounds of that knowledge.

Social science research resists the rapid discoveries of the sciences with their advanced research technologies. Social scientists might use computers to store and analyse large bodies of data, but first they have to collect it. The subjects of their research are people, who are self-reflective and self-interpreting, as indeed are the researchers. They might provide explanations but their capacity to predict is limited: if economists could do so with certainty, the stock exchange would be a sure bet.

The social science disciplines are therefore best served by making their distinctive qualities clear. They need to articulate what they do, how they do it and why it matters. For too long they have responded to their neglect in research policy with arguments couched in the terms of that policy. The persistent claim 'we do that too' has failed to alter the imbalance. Better that the social sciences stop imitating their rich relation and be true to themselves. By doing so they can indeed contribute to public policy, serve national objectives with a better understanding of what they have to offer.

Advocacy of the social sciences is a necessary strategy for gaining the attention of those who determine the fortunes of the Australian university. Once inside the minister's office, my concern is to argue for the disciplines. The argument begins with the extensive and detailed knowledge that Australia needs to conduct its affairs and deal with other countries. The disciplines are repositories of this specialist knowledge, yet they also provide modes of investigation and bridges to work done elsewhere.

Disciplines are complex organisms that draw their sustenance from a combination of method and content. Their maintenance requires a rich undergraduate major, a full honours program and broad opportunities for research training. Thin out the branches of a discipline (so that in philosophy you concentrate on ethics and no longer offer logic and metaphysics), reduce the options (so that in history you teach the modern world but not earlier periods), tailor the curriculum to applied studies (so that anthropologists are too busy with development studies to cover kinship or social structure), strip out the more speculative components (so that policy studies displace political theory) and the discipline withers. It also loses its capacity to interact with other disciplines.

If social science disciplines are to be sustained, there needs to be attention to their configuration. If their potential is to be realised and brought to bear on important tasks of social inquiry, they need to be freed from the straitjacket of current research policy. The social sciences have been treated as the poor relation of the research enterprise for so long that they have come to accept their lowly status. They need to claim their inheritance.



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*The Keith Hancock Lecture honours Professor Keith J Hancock, an eminent labour economist and valuable contributor to the social sciences in Australia. Professor Hancock has been a Fellow of the Academy since 1968 and served as President for the period 1981-1984. This Keith Hancock lecture, delivered in 2010, is the second in a series. The first, given by Thomas Lemieux in 2009 on 'Wage Inequality, a Comparative Perspective' is available in full on the ASSA website:*  
[http://www.assa.edu.au/programs/forums/keith\\_hancock\\_lectures/2009KHL.php](http://www.assa.edu.au/programs/forums/keith_hancock_lectures/2009KHL.php)

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- <sup>1</sup> *A Brief Guide to Australian Universities* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press for the Australian Council of Educational Research, second edition (1951), Table III.
  - <sup>2</sup> Calculated from *Commonwealth Universities Yearbook* 1970
  - <sup>3</sup> *Selected Higher Education Statistics 1988* (Canberra: CTEC, 1988), Table 26; *Selected Higher Education Staff Statistics, 1996* (Canberra: DETYA, 1996), Table 8.



## Higher Education and Global Public Good(s)<sup>1</sup> Simon Marginson

In 1529 the great monasteries of England and the nearly 400 parallel but smaller religious establishments had never looked so good. They were doubly protected, by universal belief and by their many material connections into English society, the economy, politics and the court. Monasteries were centres of farming and craft production, the source of community welfare, way-stations for travellers. They provided valued careers for younger sons. Cathedrals loomed large over the landscape. Holders of vast wealth and power, the monasteries could not be touched.

Ten years later in 1539 the bill for the confiscation of the large monasteries passed the parliament. They were already gone, their plate and jewellery seized by the Crown, their personnel forcibly expelled, furniture and hangings left for pillage or rot, and much of the massive stonework dismantled for local building. The smaller establishments had been dissolved by statute three years earlier. And surprise surprise, after the death of the monasteries life went on. The fires of hell did not swallow up Thomas Cromwell and Henry VIII's Inquest into the monasteries. The King soon squandered his new wealth in an unsuccessful war in France. Other countries maintained their cathedrals and religious houses. But the hard-headed English never brought them back. They found more modest ways to worship and believe. They created other forms of charity. They became cynical about other kinds of corrupt local authority. Somebody new made the wine.

But this had all happened before, in more university-like settings. At the end of the fourth century CE a fanatical Christian mob with a head full of slogans of the apocalypse, and a style of public reasoning that would be instantly familiar to observers of politics in this country, stormed the temple of the Serapeum. It has been reported that the scrolls were burned. The mob swept aside or murdered the scholars who defended their right to worship the old gods — and their right to a solipsistic lifestyle in which they could ignore the growing poverty and insecurity of the city, in the dog days of the Roman Empire.

Meanwhile, at the same time, Buddhism was moving from India via Central Asia to China. It flourished under the Tang Dynasty that began in the sixth century. Buddhism was *the* moderniser in East Asia. It triggered an amazing flourishing of science and technology, philosophy, scholarship and the arts. In effect it became the state religion of China. Then it turned inward, contemplating itself; and asked the immortal question — why don't we grab more power, more status, more resources, for ourselves? The Buddhist churches accumulated vast wealth and property and held a monopoly of metals. In 842 AD the impossible happened. All foreign religions were proscribed. China went xenophobic. The Buddhist churches were closed, the priests and nuns defrocked and the wealth was seized<sup>2</sup>. And the learning stopped.

The moral of the story is that no human institutions, no social systems, last forever. Every so often nation-states and societies discover that they can live without the institutions they have inherited. When institutions stand for nothing more, nothing deeper or more collective, no greater public good, than the aggregation of self-interest — like the monasteries in China and England, that accumulated vast social resources but came to exist only for themselves and those who used them — then the institutions

are vulnerable. Self-interest can be channelled in a thousand other ways. The institutions disappear and their functions are picked up elsewhere.

Universities are not monasteries, not exactly. Monasteries save your soul, or say they will. Universities promise to save your mortgage. They give your head a new coat of paint and send you into the job market clutching a piece of paper. But other agencies can issue certificates for work, for a fee. Research can be run from corporate or government labs. Scholars and humanists can be sent back to private life to finance their activities themselves. Students who want real knowledge can buy e-books and read them. New ideas can be sourced from civil society, the business world and the communicative space, as they were in seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe, and as they are from the Internet today. What greater good would be lost if universities closed tomorrow? If higher education is emptied out of its public purposes we can no longer justify its survival. So it all turns on the question of public good and public goods.

### **Public purposes of universities**

Higher education institutions need a larger purpose that underpins their existence. They need a purpose that is more than a marketing slogan; a purpose that is something more than the survival of the university, or knowledge, or learning, for its own sake.

Since their beginnings universities have rested on an antinomy of two heterogeneous elements. Both elements are essential to them. The first element is place-bound identity. Universities are embedded in communities, cities and nations; and in Europe, a global region. The second element is universal and mobile knowledge. Universities are soaked in the transmission, study and creation of knowledge, and part of a larger network of institutions that do this, a network that has always been international. Knowledge is the unique claim of higher education. It is at the core of every public and private good that universities create. But the knowledge functions in themselves are not enough to embed the institutions in places. Higher education needs a rationale that grounds its continuing knowledge-related functions in real locality — that connects the two parts of its foundational antinomy. This rationale must embody deeply felt common values.

Today there are two versions of such a collective rationale on offer. One is the Confucian ethic in East Asia. This runs deeper than the commitment to education in Western societies — it is as deep as classical civilization or the Judeo-Christian tradition in the West. In the Confucian world the project of self-cultivation via education is joined to filial duty and the honour of the ancestral line. Success in and through education lodges the family more securely in space and time. There is no greater familial ambition than that. At the same time Confucian education institutions are integral to social harmony and the managing of competition and mobility. Many East Asian families invest as much in their children's education as Americans do in housing. Education is also basic to the social projects of East Asian nation-states, and their global ambitions. The new flourishing of higher education — sustained by public and private investment, manifest in both teaching and research — is in China, Taiwan, Korea and Singapore.

The other rationale is the Western tradition of education as opportunity, social improvement, modernisation and economic enrichment. When we talk about higher education for public good, we normally draw from this constellation of values. This is

more recent than Confucianism, and runs less deep, but it too has been a powerful tradition. In the last century it has driven the growth of mass higher education systems across the globe. But the Western tradition of education as modernisation, improvement, opportunity and enrichment contains ambiguities. In the neo-liberal era it has become more exclusively focused on modernisation as economic enrichment. This reflects the partial capture of Western polities — especially in the English speaking world — by corporate ideologies, which foreground individual private goods and empty out collective improvement and Rawlsian justice, evacuating the public good.

This malaise goes deeper than corporate capture or even neo-liberalism. The Western democratic tradition is primarily a liberal tradition, but all forms of liberalism struggle to understand the common and collective aspects of the public good except as the sum of realised individual benefits, or as a spillover from individualised transactions. Confined by methodological individualism in which the individual is prior to the social, liberalism fails to value the collective imagination as an end in itself. The liberal individual grasps only those aspects of the social that stray within the circle of his/her autarkic worldview. Despite F A Hayek's claim<sup>3</sup> it is impossible to derive from liberal theory an understanding of 'public', and the contributions of universities to democracy, without unduly restricting the scope of freedoms. From time to time liberal cultures incubate modes of 'public', as Habermas notes in relation to the eighteenth century public sphere<sup>4</sup>, but only up to a point. At best such forms are a preparation for something better. The strength of liberalism is its promise to give each person dignity and the freedom to create. The promise does not always work out. The mutuality of freedom, its relational social condition, remains hidden.

Western democratic modernisation in education, which was expressed above all by John Dewey (who was much interested in China)<sup>5</sup>, is less specifically grounded in scholarship and research than is the Confucian tradition. In that respect the slide into credentialism — 'just a piece of paper' — may be easier in the West. Nevertheless, the all-powerful Confucian examination systems assert the selection role of education against its contents so that credentialism has come to dog both traditions. In many respects the debates about the university in China and the West have converged. Both traditions, the Confucian ethic and democratic education as modernisation, are undermined by state-driven economic instrumentalism, by a neo-liberal modernisation<sup>6</sup> that has been simply reduced to enrichment. In both China and the West it is said the university has lost its soul. On the one hand instrumentalism tends to empty out the knowledge contents. On the other hand it has evacuated all collective rationales for education and research except economic enrichment. So there is trouble at both ends of the antinomy of higher education. Both its claim to universal knowledge and its embeddedness in a broad public realm are in question. In the neo-liberal imaginary that has a hold in both East and West, even the notion of collective enrichment dissolves quickly. Only private economic goods are left. And that, as has been argued, is not nearly enough.

What tools are there with which to imagine something more 'public'? There are two main ideas to draw from. The first derives from economics and is objectivist and empirical in nature. This is Paul Samuelson's notion of public goods and private goods (goods, plural)<sup>7</sup>. Public goods are non-rivalrous and non-excludable. Goods with neither quality are classified as fully private goods. Public and part-public goods — which can be individual goods or collective jointly consumed goods — are under-provided in markets, as it is unprofitable to pay for goods that can be acquired free as

the result of someone else's purchase, and unprofitable to make goods available for no cost. Knowledge is almost a pure public good, as Joseph Stiglitz pointed out<sup>8</sup>. Once released into the world it is non-rivalrous. Thus basic research everywhere is government funded. It is also a global public good. The mathematical theorem retains its value all over the world no matter how many times it is used. Teaching can be provided either as a predominantly public good or a predominantly private good, because it combines public good aspects (the knowledge students learn, general education unrewarded in labour markets, education as a citizen entitlement to common culture and social opportunity) with private good aspects (scarce credentials, from exclusive higher education institutions, providing entry to income-generating professions).

The second idea is that of 'the public good' (singular). This is more normative and open-ended. It tends to emphasise joint or collective activities and benefits, or a resource that is used by all, like the medieval commons. In the social democratic tradition the common public good is associated with openness, transparency, popular sovereignty and grass-roots democratic agency. There are other variants. The neo-liberal version of the public good is the creation of economic prosperity by the invisible hand of the market.

There is also a third idea, the more specialised 'public sphere' discussed by Jurgen Habermas<sup>9</sup>. Habermas referred to the civil and communicative space of informal public criticism, discussion and debate about affairs of state in eighteenth century England. Networked communications have expanded the scope for something like the public sphere and taken it to the global level.

### **Conditions of public good(s)**

**How** are public good or public goods created in higher education? They do not emerge in a vacuum. They appear only under the existing conditions of higher education, that enable and limit what can be achieved. Two of these conditions will be discussed.

First, the practice of global public good or goods in higher education has to be slotted into a landscape already occupied by established ways of imagining and practising higher education. There are three powerful imaginaries at work in the higher education sector, that are widely known inside and outside higher education. The three imaginaries are associated with differing concepts, and differing political, economic and social interests. There are tensions between them. They also have a long history of co-existence. Together they shape our sense of the possible in this sector.

The first imaginary is the idea of higher education as an economic market: education and research as products, higher education as national economic competition, universities as business firms, the WTO-GATS vision of a one-world free trade zone in learning and intellectual property. Global capitalism provides the dominant modernising imaginary of the last two centuries and neo-liberalism is its potent contemporary form. This imaginary is strong in higher education both in the capitalist West and socialist-capitalist China and everywhere dominates state blueprints for higher education reform.

The second imaginary has older roots. This is higher education as a field of status ranking and competition<sup>10</sup>: universities as makers of graduate status; universities as bearers of institutional status; the higher education hierarchy regulated by word of mouth and national and global rankings. Inside research universities the status imaginary is generally the strongest of the three<sup>11</sup>. The bottom line for the university is

its own prestige. Its revenues are only a means to that end. Everyone in research universities feels the tug of the claims of status. It seems they are irresistible in both East and West. A career at Seoul National University in Korea is so valued that the employees selected to work there pay large sums of money at the point of entry.

The third imaginary is the networked and potentially more egalitarian university world patterned by communications, collegiality, linkages, partnerships and global consortia. This imaginary was always part of higher education but has gained ground in the last twenty years, in the era of global communications.

The other condition of public goods in higher education is that higher education is saturated by politics. Like the monasteries (until their dissolution), higher education is both valued and contested. People use it to secure private or group advantage. Politics continually shapes the production of both public and private goods. The way public goods are organised, recognised and disseminated becomes part of their contents — and the organisation of public goods is shaped by the constituencies and coalitions with a stake in them. The political process is essential to public goods. But it is an imperfect instrument for realising them. It does not always recognise the collective benefits created in higher education, such as the dissemination of advanced scientific literacy. When such benefits are not embedded in active constituencies they remain invisible, undefended and underfunded.

In political debate there is much confusion about the nature of public goods and the distinction between public and private goods. One example is the politics of access. Data on social group inequality in participation measure higher education's contribution to equitable opportunity. This function is broadly, though not universally, seen as a public good mission. But the driver of the intense focus on social access, selection and affirmative action is *not* primarily the common interest in equitable opportunity. What makes most people excited is that selection and access shape the distribution of private goods, in the form of scarce places in sought-after universities. Here the policy goal that reconciles the public good (singular) of equitable opportunity with desires for private goods (plural) can be summed up as 'the fair allocation of private goods'. Note that this assumes social competition for entry can be so organised as to function in the collective interest.

In *The Idea of Justice*, Amartya Sen<sup>12</sup> identifies two distinct approaches to social justice. One focuses on fairness. The other is concerned with inclusion. Prescriptions based on fairness generate a different student mix to prescriptions based on inclusion. Under some circumstances the two are compatible. During a period of rapid growth in student numbers both are readily advanced, as it becomes unnecessary to displace the already included. But the history of access in OECD countries suggests that while universities readily advance the inclusion of under-represented groups, it is much more difficult to make permanent gains in their proportional share of places (though countries have been more successful with gender). As Pierre Bourdieu points out<sup>13</sup>, competitive systems always favour persons from socio-economic status groups with the best individual and collective resources with which to compete. 'The fair allocation of private goods' in higher education is a chimera, a fiction. It is unachievable. Unless — as often happens — fairness is watered down so as to judge as fair whatever unequal result is thrown up by competition. In the same manner we judge the outcome of a sporting contest post hoc as 'fair', when we really mean 'an accomplished fact'.

This brutish notion of fairness mostly prevails in higher education. No doubt it confers on competition for entry into higher education, and the university rankings paraphernalia attached to competition, a public good veneer they would otherwise lack. But this merely legitimates the unequal allocation of private goods. The public good created here is not social equity — it is social order and stability of a conservative kind. The consent given to the illusion of fairness in educational competition avoids an open violent struggle for social position in the manner of, say, the late Roman Republic. The price of social peace is that unequal access to both public and private goods in higher education is made acceptable, and on a vast scale.

Competition is better at creating private goods than public goods. Adam Smith never argued the invisible hand of the market created an optimal society. His point was that it created another common good, economic prosperity. This had to be modified by factoring in sociability and justice. Hence *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*<sup>14</sup> explained the affective ties between persons, and *The Wealth of Nations*<sup>15</sup> advocated state intervention in education. Arguably, advocates of equity in higher education spend too much energy trying to create the chimera of a fair competition over private goods. It is the competitive order itself that should be tackled, particularly the way status differentials in higher education undermine the commons. The neighbourhood becomes fairer in higher education when the main game is not winner-take-all, but shared and collective benefits.

### **The global dimension**

But nor is it enough to confine the public good to the immediate neighbourhood. So far this paper has discussed 'public'. Let us bring in 'global'. And here we run headlong into the key problem of global politics. In the absence of a whole of society tradition like Confucianism, 'public' in higher education and elsewhere becomes located in an imaginary space regulated by the nation-state. Collective democratic forms are aligned to the legal boundaries of sovereign nations. Hence the use of terms such as 'public sector', 'public interest', the 'public service', 'democratic public education' and so on. When the term 'public' is used here what is meant is not only the collective interest, but the nation. The public good is what the nation is expected to do, on a good day at least.

But 'good' does not stop at the border. Though the Westphalian system of international relations remains formally blind to it, the world is interdependent. Everybody knows this. Problems of ecology, food, water, energy and epidemic disease, not to mention financial flows and global inequality, ram home the message on a daily basis. Knowledge, the stock in trade of the universities, moves freely shared across national borders to the ends of the Earth without regard for states. The Internet incubates an emerging global civil society, millions of conversations that are one conversation. The difficulty is this. It is necessary to define, discuss and regulate the common and collective *global public good* — in higher education and other sectors. But the inherited idea of 'public' needs to be fastened onto a state. And there is no global state.

Nor do many people right now want a global state. If one was created tomorrow it would reflect the interests of one or another imperial nation, not a common interest. Conditions for global governance are yet to appear. The European experience in higher education shows that meta-national governance is possible, that it takes time, and it can only happen when there is the political will to do it. The European experience also suggests that convergence in higher education can contribute to a

larger process of global convergence<sup>16</sup>. But global public goods, in and through higher education, cannot wait.

The key move here is to break the imagined dependence on states as the source of the collective, of global public goods. Because knowledge lends itself to global flows, in a knowledge-intensive age, research universities have already become important creators of global goods — though this is under-recognised. For example collaborative research on global problems: climate change, water, food, epidemic disease. The flow of cross-border faculty and students contributes to intercultural and cross-national relations. Universities in this country make a marked contribution to capacity building of higher education in Asia and Africa, which quickens modernisation worldwide. The absence of a global state is a problem. But it is also an opportunity. When the collective global good finds itself forced out into the domain beyond states — a domain where, to repeat, higher education and research are especially active — this opens up possible new strategies.

### **Strategies for global creation**

**What moves could be made to advance the creation of global public goods in and through higher education?** This is a collective project — and a global collective project. There is no road-map here. Deng Xiaoping referred to ‘crossing the river by feeling the stones’<sup>17</sup>. This paper concludes with three points about strategy.

The first point is about the three imaginaries. This point may surprise. The larger enemy of the public good and public sphere is not the economic market, but the status hierarchy. The public character of United States’ higher education is stymied by the annual *US News and World Report* exercise. The play of university self-interest weakens public good mechanisms such as needs-based aid. Now, global rankings have caught all universities, all over the world, in the same status incentive trap. Status competition plays out not only between universities but also between national systems, ranking them vertically on the world scale and confirming the dominance of the comprehensive Anglo-American science university. This guarantees the favoured nations more than their share of the private goods on offer. It also narrows the diversity of knowledge that secures global value, through which public goods are created. Global public knowledge goods in English rate very well. Global public knowledge goods in Hungarian are off the page.

Despite neo-liberalism, the economic market has not taken over the sector. This is because of the public good nature of knowledge, and also the natural limit to growth of high value student places, which cuts off capitalist expansion. But status competition — which conditions partial commodification, restricts the flow of public benefits and splinters the common interest — has moved in everywhere.

The second point is that the antidote to status competition — one that creates space for the global public good to evolve — is the third imaginary, the communicative world of flat networks and collegial relations. There is already a vast traffic of shared messages, ideas and knowledge. This subverts status hierarchies by fostering ‘flat’ social relations and giving authority to knowledge from anywhere. Communicative technologies, and the knowledge running through them, lend themselves to open, democratic collaborative forms. Global networks are not always used this way. But they work best with open source expansion models.

The third point is that a new imaginary of higher education is needed, alongside the economic market, status competition, and networks and flows. This is the global public

goods imaginary. If so it must be rendered robust enough to secure purchase in a setting bristling with other imaginaries and the play of contest and interest. Global public good must be grounded in an imaginary which secures consent, shapes mentalities and governs practices. It needs to be an imaginary that spans the two parts of the antinomy that is higher education; an imaginary that connects to the knowledge-bearing functions, especially research and public information, while grounded in local, national and cross-border constituencies. Here advocates of global public good have an advantage. Their platform is attractive. It speaks to things that are important to many, like sustainability, and common protection from epidemic disease. It lends itself to coalition building.

This suggests a post-national approach to creating global public goods. The global public space lies mostly outside direct governance, in collaborative networks, NGOs, cyber-space. Here higher education is helping to build global society (and as part of that, build a sympathetic engagement between China and the West, another global public good).

We need to break out of the ironbound national-level struggles over public good and private interest in higher education. The economic market and status competition have locked down the common good. It is difficult to move on 'public'. Global public good(s) is the wild card with deep and wide political appeal that trumps these limitations. If it builds momentum it can cut across the growing capture of the sector by private interests. It is the game changer.

We need a new university imaginary in which we by-pass the competition game. Universities should go global, which is something they are already good at. This is the high ground. It is also where the common interest lies. It means not abandoning the nation, but positioning it in something larger. If nations and their cultures want to shape global society, they must become global to do it. And that means being part of the global commons. You have to be in it to win it.

Yes, it is a tall order to expect universities to behave this way, at a time they seem determined to function as solely self-referenced firms. But that is a symptom of the malaise, not a sign that it is impossible to overcome. Universities have lost rationale, and need to re-ground themselves in the social. They will need to find the way to visibly create global public goods, if they are not to follow the Tudor monasteries into oblivion.



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## Families and the Global Financial Crisis

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### Social Sciences and the Study of Family Fortunes in the Global Financial Crisis

**Michael Bittman**

This issue of *Dialogue* includes selected contributions from the 2010 ASSA Annual Symposium on 'Family Fortunes and the Global Financial Crisis: The consequences of an economic downturn for work, families and children'. This symposium was part of a wider ASSA project on the social consequences of the global financial crisis, which began in 2010 and will run until 2012. The project is cross-national in scope and hopes to uncover the human experience of this global recession in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The project will endeavour to trace the different course of events taken in these countries and explore the reasons behind these divergences. This article serves as an introduction to the project and to the material presented at the symposium.

#### Keynes and the great depression

Leading economic commentators have called the Global Financial Crisis of 2007-2010 the 'worst financial crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s'<sup>1</sup>. All signs of another catastrophic depression were there – trillions of dollars wiped off the value of stocks, sudden losses of wealth, as though some peoples' savings had evaporated overnight, runs on banks, foreclosures on housing mortgages, and a rise in the most lagging indicator of all – the rate of unemployment.

When the Great Depression hit, social science was in its infancy. So the study of the causes, course and effects of this event has been largely retrospective. The human meaning of these events was anecdotal and the most vivid representations took the form of novels, films, and perhaps the songs of Woody Guthrie. In this crisis social science is well established and is able to deploy a vastly expanded inventory of investigative aids.

Although many schoolchildren can tell you that, technically, a recession is two quarters of negative growth and depression is something deeper than that, during the Great Depression there was no yardstick for the measurement of economic growth. In fact economists were highly sceptical of the idea that a measure of total aggregate of national income could ever be developed<sup>2</sup>. Similarly, while employment statistics have been gathered for over a hundred years they were relatively infrequent and often compiled from administrative sources. Regular quarterly or more frequent household surveys began only a few decades ago. Australia has had monthly Labour Surveys since 1978<sup>3</sup>. There were only four Commonwealth censuses in the first half of the twentieth century and the 1931 census was delayed by the Great Depression<sup>4</sup>.

It took some decades before it became accepted that there were economic theories capable of understanding and, more importantly, reversing or forestalling economic slumps like the Great Depression. So until 40 years ago it was believed in the theories of John Maynard Keynes that advanced societies now held the key to preventing a recurrence of another economic catastrophe. At the heart of Keynes' theory was the idea of the circular flow of money – that one person's spending goes towards another's earnings, and when that person spends her earnings she is, in effect, supporting

another's earnings. This circle continues on and helps support a normal functioning economy. When the Great Depression hit, people became wary of spending or investing and hoarded their money, causing a slump. Keynes' solution was to 'prime the pump' of aggregate demand by increasing spending, either by increasing the money supply or by actually buying things on the market itself, especially infrastructure. A corollary to the acceptance of Keynes' ideas was that the governments, implicitly, became responsible for maintaining the economic settings that managed aggregate demand. Indeed this belief in the possibility of macroeconomic development was the very stimulus that led to development of the statistical tools for monitoring the state of the economy described above.

Since the 1970s, however, Keynesian theory has been less well accepted. The award of Nobel Prizes that went to economists who believed Keynes ideas had been superseded is an indicator of its weakened academic legitimisation<sup>5</sup>. Governments in the OECD countries began undoing what had come to be known as the 'mixed economy' – where both market and government provided goods and services. During the 1980s and subsequent decades governments discovered outsourcing, corporatised and then privatised government assets and encouraged private, rather than public, investment in emblematic infrastructure projects. Whereas in the 1950s and 1960s Australians got large public investments like the Snowy Mountains hydro-electric scheme, after 1980 Australians got toll roads, privatised commonwealth and state banks, corporate ownership of airports and detention facilities operated by private security firms.

### **A brief return to Keynesianism**

Yet, curiously, shortly after the collapse of Lehmann Brothers many countries swiftly reverted to these apparently abandoned Keynesian precepts in response to the mounting Global Financial Crisis. The Rudd government announced an archetypal 'economic stimulus package' in two installments. The first \$10 billion installment was implemented in October 2008 with the support of the Senate crossbench. The package included cash transfers to put money into the hands of low and middle income households; increased government investment in training places; support for first home buyers and; an allocation of funds towards investment in 'shovel ready' nation-building projects. The cash transfers were accompanied by official urgings to go out and spend money. And in any case these measures deliberately targeted households with little prospect of hoarding this unexpected bonus in the form of savings. The strong Christmas retail figures for 2008-09 indicated that delivering the cash stimulus might be interpreted as having forestalled a slump in consumer spending. It seemed that the cash handouts helped the Australia economy narrowly avoid a technical recession with growth in the March quarter at 0.4 per cent.

The second, larger installment (\$42 billion), once again implemented with the support of the Senate crossbench, came in February 2009, almost a third in the form of one-off cash transfers to working Australians, families with school-age children, farmers, single income families and for those undergoing training. The other big ticket items were \$14.7 billion to be invested in school and training infrastructure (later known as Building the Education Revolution); \$6.6 billion to increase the stock of public housing by about 20,000; \$3.9 billion to provide solar hot water rebates and free insulation to 2.7 million homes; \$2.7 billion in business tax deductions for some equipment purchases before the end of 2009-10; and \$890 million to fix regional roads, noted blackspots, railway boom gates and for regional and local government infrastructure.

The other arm of the Keynesian strategy, fiscal policy, was also deployed by the Reserve Bank of Australia at this time. As in other slumps, the general climate of instability following the failures of some of the most renowned financial institutions caused banks to become so fearful they were reluctant to lend to their customers. What was worse was that banks were too frightened even to lend to one another. Central banks intervened to boost the supply of money dramatically to fill the gap. Before the first evidence of contraction in real gross domestic product (GDP) in March 2009, the Reserve Bank had already cut the cash rate by four percentage points to 4.25 per cent and before the release of following June quarter GDP figure, the cash rate had fallen to a 49-year low of 3.00 per cent.

In part, the attempt to increase the supply of credit by lowering official interest rates was a coordinated international response. The financial crisis had begun in the US in 2007 but spread rapidly to Europe and other parts of the world. The slump was also impacting on world trade. In late 2008, the central bank chiefs and finance ministers of the G20, including the United States, Europe's biggest economies, China, India and Russia, held a special crisis meeting in Washington and agreed to use 'all financial and economic tools' to stabilise the system. Within days the chairman and managing director of the International Monetary Fund, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, in an official speech, reminded his audience of the Great Depression and argued that policy inaction had contributed to the failure of two out of every five banks in the US, where unemployment reached 25-30 per cent. 'We must act quickly,' he said, 'action in the financial markets is essential, but it is not sufficient... We also need to deploy all of the instruments of modern macroeconomic policy to limit the damage to the real economy.' Central banks in the US, Canada, the UK, Europe and Japan all cut interest rates as dramatically as in Australia, often to almost zero per cent.

In an effort to forestall the bank runs that occurred elsewhere (most famously in the US, the UK and Iceland), on 13 October 2008, the then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd also announced that all borrowing by Australian banks and other deposit-taking institutions from overseas would be guaranteed. This action copied governments in the United States and Europe. In the US and Europe the instability of some banks and financial institutions was so severe and the consequences of their failure likely to be so profound that governments bought 'toxic assets' (high risk, poorly collateralised debts), in effect 'nationalising' some institutions but also transferring these damaging liabilities to the budgets of national states and creating a crisis of 'sovereign debt', which is especially severe in Europe.

It is interesting to note that the Wikipedia entry on the Global Financial Crisis dates it '2007 – present', replacing the earlier, more assured of '2007-2010'. This is a symptom that there is no clear evidence of a certain recovery and that the advanced economies are still suffering from the aftermath of a near total financial collapse as we approach the second quarter of 2011. Real economic growth in US GDP is weak (estimated at around 2.7 per cent in 2010), unemployment is still close to 10 per cent and there has been a significant loss of wealth (many home owners now have mortgages larger than the current value of their houses). If anything, real economic growth in Europe is generally worse than in the US. The overall rate of growth for the European Union (EU) in 2010 was 1.8 per cent. A large number of European countries are still in the grip of the slump, recording negative growth (notably Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Spain, Romania and Latvia) while key EU states (UK, France, Italy and Netherlands) recorded growth below the weak 1.8 per cent EU average. Similarly the average unemployment

rate across the EU (9.5 per cent) is barely below that of the US. Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Slovenia, Latvia, Hungary all had unemployment rates in 2010 above 10 per cent and Spain had a staggering 20 per cent of its labour force unemployed.

### **How Australia escaped the worst of the crisis**

Of course, all this seems rather remote in Australia. Against all odds, during the current crisis there has been only one quarter of negative growth in Australia (GDP growth was -0.9 per cent during the final quarter of 2008) and the unemployment rate, despite gloomy government forecasts, stayed below 6 per cent, a long way below the 11 per cent peak of the previous recession. So what does social science have to say about how Australia escaped so lightly from a crisis that has caused severe damage elsewhere? And has the crisis changed the lives of Australians in any particular way?

Let us turn our attention to the first question – how did Australia escape so lightly? It seems there are a number of competing explanations – (a) role of Asia, particularly China, in maintaining advantageous trading relationship or (b) superior Australian financial regulation of the financial sector; or even (c) the recession was moderated by the stimulus package and the impact of underwriting the package, in turn, was moderated by the presence of a large accumulated budgetary surplus.

The first explanation is equivalent to saying Australia escaped by good fortune rather than by design. Recently Australian prosperity has been linked to China's appetite for raw materials to sustain its impressively rapid economic growth. At the height of the crisis China countered the loss of export markets in North America and Europe by boosting domestic demand through a stimulus package. Through deftly maintaining demand in this way China quickly returned to its pattern of high levels of growth with the by-product of continued eagerness for raw materials from Australia.

As is evident from the actions of the Chinese government, Australia was not the only country to deliberately attempt to stimulate demand. Nor was this policy a guarantee of avoiding a nasty aftermath to the Global Financial Crisis as the indicators in Europe confirm. However, the European experience may help us understand what role the budgetary surplus may have played in ensuring what began as a crisis of finance did not become a crisis of sovereign debt, though doubtless the low exposure to toxic debt was equally important.

It is widely believed that this highly contagious crisis began with risky lending practices in the US, generally known as 'sub-prime mortgages'. These loans offered the socially excluded the American dream of owning their own home, reducing the barriers to ownership by lending 100 per cent of the current market value of the house and requiring no documentation of the capacity to repay. As long as housing prices kept rising this did not create problems for the lenders. Moreover, the very process of extending loans to the 'sub-prime' population contributed to rising demand for houses and escalating housing prices, fuelling a speculative bubble. To make matters worse these sub-prime mortgages were bundled together and sold off as complicated financial derivatives promising some hedge against defaults. These derivatives yielded high returns to investors as long as the bubble kept growing. They gave the illusion of control and allowed lenders to believe that they had passed the risk on to someone else. The relationship between these paper instruments and the assets (housing mortgages) that were supposed to act as collateral became so remote that trades became naked speculation. Nevertheless the volume of these trades multiplied rapidly. At the same time homeowners started using equity in housing to raise cash for

investments and consumer purchases. US household debt, as a percentage of annual disposable personal income, was 127 per cent at the end of 2007, versus 77 per cent in 1990.

While the housing and credit bubbles grew, US government policy from the 1970s onward had emphasised deregulation to encourage business. This reduced oversight of activities and disclosure of information about new activities undertaken by banks and by financial institutions such as investment banks and hedge funds. Under these conditions investment banks and hedge funds became a kind of shadow banking system, as important as conventional (savings) banks in providing credit to the US economy, but not subject to the same regulations. Both the conventional and the shadow banking systems had also acquired significant burdens of debt and did not have a financial cushion sufficient to absorb large loan defaults or losses on mortgage-backed securities. When the bubble burst, many of the key financial institutions faced collapse. The threat of insolvency triggered government bailouts of key financial institutions. Together with economic stimulus programs this left governments themselves assuming significant additional financial commitments (sovereign debt). In 2011 the US Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission reported that the crisis was 'avoidable' and was caused by 'widespread failures in financial regulation'.

It is true that Australian banks were better regulated, and were, relatively speaking, well capitalised, having a greater cushion against credit defaults than their US counterparts in 2008. It also transpired that the exposure of Australian financial institutions to toxic debt via financial derivatives was low, unlike much of Europe. But it is also the case that some respected commentators believe that there is an Australian housing bubble. Based on an historical gauge of home prices to rents, between 1975 and 2010, *The Economist* estimates that Australian residences are 56 per cent overvalued. The International Monetary Fund's so-called 'house price gap', based on the extent to which house prices can't be explained by economic fundamentals, suggests house prices in Australia have been overvalued by 25 per cent over the past decade. The same IMF analysis is accompanied by a recommendation that authorities should remain vigilant to emerging risks, given that the level of Australian household debt is relatively high at over 150 per cent of household disposable income<sup>6</sup>. In this context it is worth noting that while the expansion of the first home owner's scheme in the first Rudd government stimulus package achieved its intention by stimulating demand for new homes and reversing a slowdown in building starts, it also served to make existing homes more expensive.

The dangers signaled by an Australian housing price bubble are a theme taken up by Steve Keen, a contributor to the ASSA symposium and the project workshop. His research focuses on modeling Hyman Minsky's Financial Instability Hypothesis and Irving Fisher's debt deflation. The key idea is that the ratio of private debt to GDP charts the growth of unsustainable levels of debt, which is the underlying engine of cyclical crises. If Keen is correct Australia has not yet escaped the inevitable economic slump that will accompany the bursting of the housing bubble.

A striking aspect of the crisis in the US is the significant proportion of the population with low to middle incomes who have suffered foreclosures or are now saddled with very large debts, greater than the value of their homes, turning home ownership from the American dream to the American nightmare. In a sluggish housing market, foreclosed homes accounted for nearly 26 per cent of all residential home sales in the United States during 2010. During 2010, roughly 832,000 thousand homes were sold

that were in 'some stage of foreclosure', down from 1,089,920 in 2009 and 948,480 in 2008<sup>7</sup>. In other words, in the years when the 'green shoots' of recovery are supposed to be becoming evident almost three million homeowners have lost their housing assets through foreclosure. Since investment funds are often linked to real estate, people whose income is derived from pension investments now have a significantly lower standard of living. The human costs of these events are profound and while the costs in lives lost may not compare with the worst natural disasters, the numbers damaged by the disruption are probably much greater.

### **The social consequences of economic crises**

In her contribution to this issue, Janet McCalman provides a rich picture of the disrupted lives of the Australian generations that lived through the economic crises of 1890s and the 1930s. Making innovative use of information about the age of marriage, family formation, childlessness and life expectancy she argues that long term effects of the 1890 crisis lingered on in damaged prospects, low skills, unfulfilled aspirations and a conservatism born of insecurity. In the 1930s better education infrastructure, some elemental social security measures and family pooling of a single person's wage made it possible to get through the crisis. Those born in the depression were fortunate, too young to serve in the war but just the right age to take advantage of the post-war recovery.

Conventionally family income is used as the measure of economic security at a particular point in time but it also makes sense to think of economic security based on family assets, especially over time. Assets such as home ownership and savings provide a cushion for families in case of job loss, illness, death of a parent, or even natural disaster. Moreover, recent research shows parental financial assets are positively associated with the cognitive development of school-age children<sup>8</sup> and the odds of completing high school are increased by homeownership<sup>9</sup>. More than half of American families with children are asset poor<sup>10</sup>. Fifty percent of families with incomes below the austere US poverty line do not have a bank account and suffer from debt hardship<sup>11</sup>. Debt hardship is strongly associated with poorer mental health, and family debts can have a potentially negative impact on children's emotional wellbeing<sup>12</sup>. The Global Financial Crisis continues to annihilate the assets of the most vulnerable.

The theme of social disadvantage in Australia and its association with poorer outcomes for children was taken up in the symposium by Jan Nicholson and Lyndall Strazdins. Using evidence from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children they showed that the lower the socio-economic status, the higher the probability that children would suffer from poorer health and socio-emotional and cognitive development. Children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds were three and a half times more likely than those from the most advantaged backgrounds to have exhibited a problem in at least one of these domains by the age of eight years. While it would seem to follow that the income that parents derive in the labour market would be protective, Nicholson and Strazdins argue that not every parent's job promotes health and wellbeing in their children. While low and middle-income dual earner families somehow reconfigure their time to protect developmentally important activities with children, this is not the case when a parent works very long hours. Poor quality jobs are associated with higher parental psychological distress (depression and anxiety) and with poorer parenting practices, and poorer socio-emotional adjustment in children by age 4-5 years.

There is a relationship between economic crises and social inequality. Economic slumps ruin some industries and destroy some specialised occupations associated with them. Economy recovery is typically led by newly important industries and associated occupations. As a consequence crises generally have some effect on the patterns of social stratification and on the dispersal of income. John Buchanan and Gillian Whitehouse's contribution to the Symposium covered aspects of the immediate industrial and occupational changes provoked by the global financial crisis.

Using a unique longitudinal dataset, 'Australia at Work', John Buchanan and Sally Wright's tracking of the labour market transitions of 8,000 working Australians since March 2006 challenged the conventional wisdom that the pain of this recession has been more fairly shared through cuts in hours worked rather than jobs. They argued that the key 'shock absorbers' are to be found among casuals who changed jobs and new entrants to the labour market who could not find work. Against all expectations the proportion of full-timers reducing their hours actually fell during the GFC.

Gillian Whitehouse addressed one of the industries that continued to grow during the global financial crisis – the caring professions. The female-dominated 'caring' occupations employ amongst the most vulnerable workers in the Australian labour market – their skills are undervalued and they are usually without family-friendly work conditions to compensate for their low pay. Whitehouse argues that economic downturns produce insecurity and inhibit industrial bargaining, making it difficult to press for award increases and other measures that might redress undervaluation.

Deborah Brennan's contribution to the Symposium was also concerned with the market provision of care. Within the OECD, English-speaking countries stand out for their support of market-based childcare. Her presentation described the distinctive regulatory and funding arrangements that encouraged listed childcare companies to flourish in Australia and that ultimately enabled ABC Learning to become the world's largest childcare provider before it collapsed into receivership in the midst of the GFC.

In contrast, Duncan Ironmonger's article in this issue studies the effect of the business cycle on the non-market provision of goods and services, like childcare. There has been speculation that the relationship between the market and non-market economies is countercyclical; i.e., as the market economy contracts and aggregate earnings fall, there is compensatory growth in non-market production. Janet McCalman's argument that producing eggs in the backyard helped people to better survive the Great Depression is an example of this proposition. Ray Pahl<sup>13</sup> challenged this idea on the basis of a study of a small community in Kent. He argued that the non-market economy shrank in a recession, because lack of monetary income denied people access to the raw materials and equipment necessary for non-market production. Ironmonger exploits the fact the American Time Use Survey is the only time use survey in the world that is continuously in the field and can be used to produce a quarterly time series. He uses this to conduct the world's first strong test of these competing hypotheses.

Gavin Mooney's contribution to the Symposium was to argue that the positive value that neo-liberalism places on individualism, and its propensity to foster inequalities, is bad for public health. He outlined some of the social arrangements he thought could result in better public health.

Sven Silburn provided the Symposium audience with a detailed description of the impact of the global economy and Federal and State policies on Indigenous affairs on remote communities in the Northern Territory. His wide-ranging presentation covered

many indicators of health and wellbeing among the first Australians and the unanticipated consequences of many of the policies adopted.

Peter Saunders article (in this issue) focuses directly on inequality and crisis. He analyses two closely related data sets, collected in 2006 and 2010, to examine the changes in the experience of deprivation, people's perceptions of inequality and their attitudes towards it. In the last few decades the gap between those with high incomes and those with low incomes has increased across the OECD. The gap between those in the middle of the income distribution and those at the top has been growing the fastest<sup>14</sup>. In February 2008 the BBC released the result of a poll, which suggested that about two-thirds of the population in 34 countries think that 'the economic development of the last few years' has not been shared fairly<sup>15</sup>.

### **Neo-liberalism's resilience**

There is some dispute about whether recessions widen the income distribution or compress it slightly<sup>16</sup> but there is much public anger in the US and in Europe about the multi-million dollar bonuses paid to top executives of financial institutions. The frequently expressed opinion is that these same individuals were responsible for the accumulation of toxic debt that endangered the economy and required the government to go into deficit to save them from insolvency. Why should low and middle-income taxpayers carry the financial responsibility for these reckless executives and why are they allowed to continue to pay themselves these gigantic bonuses? Despite much rhetoric about capping executive salaries no government has been bold enough to do this and few bankers have denied themselves these bonuses.

In Europe the crisis of sovereign debt is beginning to bite. The scale of the cuts in the UK is large and the speed of their implementation is swift. They have been undertaken with the explicit aim of achieving the approval of the credit rating agencies, ironically the very same firms that gave their endorsement to paper assets that turned toxic. A good credit rating reduces the interest bill on financing government debt. The UK plans to cut £81bn from public spending over four years, including an average of 19 per cent for government departments. While this seems like just another number, it translates into seriously reduced services. For example, police grants are to be trimmed by up to 20 per cent over the next four years as the Home Office budget is squeezed by more than £2bn. Ministers have insisted savings can be achieved by improved efficiency and the police pay freeze, but experts have forecast numbers of officers could fall by 18,000 by 2015. University students will no longer receive any grants (with the exception of students in sciences and medicine) and the funds to universities will be cut by 12 per cent on average.

The social wage is also to be reduced, with cuts to incapacity allowances, housing benefits, tax credits and other expenditure forecast to save the government £7bn. Public sector pension employee contributions will increase by £3.5b. A rise in age of pension eligibility has been brought forward. There will be a permanent bank levy and rail fares to rise 3 per cent above inflation from 2012. A 7 per cent cut for local councils which will begin in April in 2011 has already seen libraries and other facilities forced to close in anticipation of reduced council revenue. And we are only at the beginning of this program of planned cuts.

Stuart Macintyre uses the platform of a world survey of inequality and health outcomes to remind social sciences of the importance of exceptions and the history of man-made institutions, importance which is concealed by confining attention to the single

dimension of dispersal, that is, the question of how wide are the inequalities. His contribution is reproduced in this issue.

Carol Johnson's contribution to the closing panel of the Symposium considered the fate of social democracy in the aftermath of the crisis. Just when you might think the neo-liberal vision had been discredited by events it is proving resilient. In contrast, social democracy whose intellectual legacy has been vindicated does not seem able to engage with the political landscape in a coherent way.

Awful as it is the Global Financial Crisis presents social scientists with a rare natural experiment, making it possible to learn what makes crises more or less severe and to study the intergenerational human consequences of these events. I hope you enjoy reading the early output of this project and I look forward to the communication of more results as the project matures.

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  - <sup>4</sup> *Ibid*: 148.
  - <sup>5</sup> For an interesting discussion of the state of macroeconomic theory in the aftermath of the global financial crisis see Paul Krugman's article 'How did the Economist Get It So Wrong?' *New York Times*, 2 September, 2009.

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- <sup>8</sup> Yeung, W J and Conley, D (2008). Black–White Achievement Gap and Family Wealth. *Child Development* 79(2): 303-324.
- <sup>9</sup> Aaronson, D (2000). A Note on the Benefits of Homeownership *Journal of Urban Economics* 47: 356-369.
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## Global Economic Cycles and Australian Families and Children

Janet McCalman

Australia's two most testing economic depressions have so far been in the 1890s and the 1930s, yet, severe as they were, they framed an era of retarded development that remains a warning for us still. The banking and economic collapse of the 1890s left a far longer shadow than the global crisis of the 1930s, but the differences between the two and the comparative effects they had on the most vulnerable, had as much to do with ideas and political value systems as they had with the contradictory stimulatory and destructive effects of World War II. The differences can be seen from the life courses of the respective 'depression generations': the first never recovered; the second, if born in the 1930s, has in retrospect, turned out to be the 'lucky generation' of the twentieth century. The policy lessons are still relevant.

One of the few pleasing consequences of our current global financial crisis has been the restoration of economic history to the centre of economic analysis. Economies and the human lives they sustain or destroy are long-run phenomena, and long-run evidence is critical to understanding their impacts and mitigation. My observations of the impact of global economic cycles on families and children are based on a longitudinal cohort study of impoverished Victorians, born at the Lying-In Hospital (LIH, now Royal Women's) between 1857 and 1900<sup>1</sup>, and on the survey evidence for my book *Journeyings*<sup>2</sup> which looked at a cohort who attended four Melbourne private schools in the 1930s. One can map the life course in historical context against life stages.

Australia's two great depressions — in the 1890s and 1930s — had in many ways quite different long-run effects on Australian families and children, but those effects are difficult to discern from the macro-data. The 1890s financial crash, particularly as it was experienced in Victoria, had, as a number of commentators including Steve Keen have noted, more in common with our present crisis<sup>3</sup>. It was a collapse of a ponzi investment economy that threw not just the poor into further insecurity, but also ruined many who had elevated themselves into the middle and upper middle classes and acquired expectations of comfort and suburban gentility. (One of the emerging consequences of the current financial crisis in the US and the UK is the bleak future of the middle class, now intensely aspirational for their children and highly leveraged, which faces intergenerational downward mobility.) For the poor there was only private charity such as Ladies' Benevolent Societies and their own resources. The Western Australian gold fields and South Africa offered a new chance for the young and fit, and there were experiments with labour colonies. It was a space, however, that most of the working class had been in before at some stage of their lives. The effects on the middle class were more subtle.

The 1890s depression turned the propertied into a cash-poor middle class and reduced income inequality to the extent that upward mobility became easier in the 1920s for tradesmen and small businessmen, whose children flooded private schools seeking one or two years of 'finishing' to buy caste membership. School fees remained low, as parents' capacity to pay was limited, again easing the upward path of those 'in trade'. In the 1890s, the private schools' enrolments had crashed and a generation of middle class boys were denied the professional educations and career opportunities they had once expected. The 1890s depression reconfigured the middle class both financially

and culturally, turning an innovative frontier society into an anxious, security-obsessed, conservative community.

What we can see in family histories is a lost generation of both middle and working-class adolescents and young adults who lost the chance to build skills and a career biography in the 1890s. The working-class men who missed out can be found enlisting at later ages in the First AIF, unskilled, still unmarried in their thirties and if they survived the war, unlikely to marry and do well afterwards. The women who 'missed out' were the more than a third of women who reached reproductive age in the 1890s who were never to bear a child. For men, whose earning capacities were restricted by lack of training and work skills, the chances of forming and sustaining a reproductive household were even worse in this sample of 'poor whites' born in a charity hospital<sup>4</sup>.

Ann Larson in her study of family formation in nineteenth century Melbourne, detected a generation of working-class young people who entered the workforce in the boom years, when work for the young was plentiful, but who never served an apprenticeship nor had the chance of working with a secure employer such as the railways<sup>5</sup>. The second generation or children of the gold-rush immigrants to Victoria were uniquely underqualified from their often erratic schooling in their parents' early years in the colony and the shortage of apprenticeship and trade networks. This underwrote so much of the anxiety about the quality of the second generation by the end of the century and the perceived crisis of Australian manhood that Marilyn Lake first discerned<sup>6</sup>. They faced the 1890s and the muted economic recovery in the new century, unskilled and trapped in the casual economy, increasingly disadvantaged by their ageing bodies and social marginalisation.

The greatest gap in life-expectancy in the LIH cohort was between those men who died in suburbs like North Melbourne, where casual work on the docks and markets was nearby, and those who died in Northcote, where families were still working-class but in regular employment and therefore in stable housing. The irony of the recovery from the 1930s depression was that there was already a shortage of skilled workers by 1938 while unemployment among the unskilled and casual remained severe. This is where we see the long-run effects not just of the 1890s depression, which hit those born in the boom years just as they were entering the workforce or seeking apprenticeships, but also the effects of limited educational infrastructure.

The effects on the middle class are more complex and much less researched. Hugh Stretton, in his brilliant essay in *Daedalus* on the quality of Australian leadership, suggested that the men who went to the Great War returned as a grey, exhausted and conservative generation<sup>7</sup>. Added to that, the middle-class was poorly educated: universities remained small, private schools focused on getting most boys 'good jobs' in banks and insurance companies and Victoria's tiny state secondary system was expected to produce teachers and commercial clerks. Something that Stretton didn't mention was the stranglehold that the private school networks had on university entrance and on managerial jobs in industry, which, combined with low educational standards in most of those schools, afflicted Australian business and even the professions with narrowly educated old-boy cliques that were distinctive only in their religious affiliations and football teams. Stretton was scathing, however, about the conservative, risk-averse and un-innovative leadership that kept Australia a rather dull place and a dull economy from the crash of the 1890s until World War II.

The long-run effects, therefore, on those who were children and adolescents, or were meant to be starting their own families, were due as much to lack of institutions and social infrastructure, in particular education, which could enable people to rebuild their working lives after the depression eased. The 1930s depression was to be rather different.

Although social memory recalls the 'middle-class' depression experience as a time of anxiety and frugality, the behaviour of middle-class families was very different from the 1890s. First they were not as vulnerable, being debt averse after the lessons of the bank failures. Second, the cost of maintaining a middle-class lifestyle was lower because middle-class incomes had fallen since the 1890s: in the late 1920s and 1930s, £500 a year as a bank manager or public servant bought you a nice house in Camberwell, holidays, a car and private secondary schooling for your children. The bank manager got by with two suits and his wife with two best outfits (summer and winter); a good coat was expected to last for years. University education for children was possible, but it was necessary for most to secure a university free place or a Senior Government Scholarship (this amounted to about 100 subsidised university places for Victoria.) Unlike the 1890s, enrolments in the private schools remained stable and retention rates rose as young people stayed on until they found a job. Many were able to take advantage later of the Post-War Reconstruction Scheme to obtain professional qualifications.

The working-class experience was more severe, and for many 'their depression' began in the mid-1920s and persisted until 1941-2. But the macro-data on infant mortality or tuberculosis mortality do not reflect the hardship that the unemployed, and especially those with children, underwent. Here oral history has been an unreliable instrument: it has been easy to find survivors who 'crack hardy' and project 'bad experiences' on to others but not themselves — because they 'got through it'.

— Do you remember being hungry? 'Oh we always found something to eat.'

— 'We were poor, but we had the fun of the world.'

Partly this is also because by the time the oral history movement blossomed in the 1970s, those who had suffered the worst of it — those older, unskilled and without a family — were most likely already dead. But it does reflect a major difference between the 1890s and the 1930s: the presence of just-enough public services to sustain families and children.

First, there was unemployment relief, which favoured families and was paid to women rather than husbands who might spend it at the pub. Second, most working-class children were attending school, whereas in the 1890s up to a third were still very infrequent attendees or not on the roll at all, and schools were providing breakfasts and basic support. Third, in the inner city Dr Vera Scantlebury's vision of an integrated child and maternal health service, crèche and free kindergarten was in operation in suburbs like Prahran, Richmond, Brunswick, North Melbourne, Collingwood and others. Mothers received critical support: clothing, food and moral support. They also built self-confidence on committees that translated into involvement in state school mothers' clubs. Crèches provided child care in an economy where it was often easier for women to get seasonal factory work in food, confectionery, footwear and clothing than it was for men to find jobs. Women's work, especially that of juniors, carried many families through the crisis. Extended families with back gardens or country relatives also provided an informal economy of food production: vegetables but above all eggs.

*Weekly Times* cake recipes contained 12 eggs per cake — the community was awash with eggs.

Education was another significant change: at least now there were state secondary schools, whereas there was only the Model School in the 1890s. And even though the high schools were forced to charge fees in the 1930s and matriculation classes were centralised, enrolments held up. MacRobertson Girls High School enrolled many working-class girls in the 1930s and had an arrangement with factories like Kodak to place early school leavers in a job. More important for boys was the introduction of technical schools: they had risen from eighteen schools with 4,300 enrolments in 1911 to twenty-nine with 18,000 in 1930. More boys in particular were acquiring the mathematics to be able to do skilled work, and significantly, serve in technologically demanding domains of the armed services in the coming war, such as the air force, artillery and engineering. Technical schools and schools of mines became critical pathways of upward mobility into professional work in engineering, science and technology<sup>8</sup>.

Micro histories in the LIH cohort reveal how families made it through, even from out of the most severe poverty in the 1920s and 1930s: all that was needed was one son to get into the army or war industry at the right time and be able to take advantage of on-the-job vocational training such as intensive apprenticeships. The war economy quickly soaked up the unemployed so that, by 1942, only the really poorly and aged were still without work<sup>9</sup>. War service, of course, provided you survived psychologically and physically intact, enabled you to rewrite a biography once spoiled by poverty and unemployment.

The analysis of the end of life socio-economic status of the LIH cohorts revealed that the changing provision of social entitlements had generational effects<sup>10</sup>. What is important is how women did better (judged by their place of residence at death), which, when analysed case by case, mostly depended on their living their final years in the homes of their upwardly mobile children. Hidden also in those post-war social locations was a mass migration to Housing Commission suburbs: if the most frequent last place of residence for the LIH cohort was Brunswick before the war, it was Reservoir by the 1960s and 1970s.

Unlike the aftermath of World War 1, the 1950s and 1960s were years of economic growth, with low cost housing loans, expanding opportunities and significant advances in income equality. The historical cohort who had the box seat on the post-war miracle were those born between 1929 and 1945. They were 'depression babies' and often constructed a 'depression child' biography, but they have turned out to be the luckiest generation both here and in the US and UK.

The American demographer Elwood Carlson calls them 'the Lucky Few'<sup>11</sup>. First it was a small cohort, so competition between the members was less. Second they were too young for the war, but old enough to be able to take first advantage of the new jobs and opportunities when they appeared. They were the first to get Commonwealth Scholarships or generous Teaching Studentships. In academic life, they were ready to fill the staff rooms of the new universities. Now they are retired on large defined benefit pensions. They bought cheap houses that began a private equity accumulation that would sustain the next two generations of their families. The Baby Boomers who came just that little bit later, of course, had all these things too, but there were always too many for the places on offer. David Thomson, the New Zealand historical

demographer, was one of the first scholars to detect the ageing of the Welfare State, and the transfer of investment from the young to the old<sup>12</sup>. And of course both Hugh McKay and especially Michael Pusey have interrogated the erosion of middle-class confidence since the 1970s and the return of inequality<sup>13</sup>.

The lessons for us today, with income inequality arguably worse than it has been for over a century, is that in the panic to preserve the comfort of the superannuated, we do not withdraw support from the social and educational infrastructure that sustains the young and enables them to lead effective lives. To do so is to declare intergenerational war.



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## **Interactions between Household and Market Work in Economic Downturns**

**Duncan Ironmonger**

**T**he economic system of every country consists of a market system and a non-market system. These two parts of the total economy can be called the 'market economy' and the 'household economy'. In the market economy there are actual monetary payments in return for labour time, the use of physical capital, the purchase of 'intermediate' inputs and for the outputs sold<sup>1</sup>. In the household economy households use their own labour time and their own capital to produce services for their own consumption. Members of households do not make monetary payments to themselves for these services. However households do make payments to market and public enterprises for intermediate inputs such as energy, groceries and materials used in household production<sup>2</sup>.

Research over the last 40 years or so has established beyond doubt that in many developed countries these two systems are of about equal orders of magnitude in terms of the value of production of goods and services. However the capital and labour ratios are quite different<sup>3</sup>. The household economy uses less capital equipment than the market but uses more millions of hours of labour time<sup>4</sup>.

Given these facts and the statistical revolution of the last 60 years that has given us the capacity to regularly measure the value and volume of economic production and work, it is surprising that virtually all the attention of official statistical organisations has been devoted to measuring the market economy; virtually no regular measurements exist of the production, labour and capital used in the household economy. This 'one-eyed' view of the economy is even more surprising when we consider that many government and business decisions are based on these incomplete statistics which account for perhaps less than half of the total.

### **Improvements in concepts and measurements**

Although the regular official measurements of the work and production of the market economies of the world have remained relatively fixed over the last half century within the boundaries established by the International Labour Office and the United Nations System of National Accounts, there have been considerable advances made in understanding the concepts and measurements required to measure the household economies of the world.

#### ***Improvements in concepts***

One advance has been to extend the definition of the production boundary of the household economy beyond the Reidian third person criterion<sup>5</sup> to include education and learning as a productive rather than consumptive activity.

Another has been to realise that activities such as shopping and cleaning are ancillary activities that contribute to final household production outputs (such as meals and accommodation). Ancillary activities do not need to be separately counted and valued as their values are embodied in the final outputs.

#### ***Improvements in measurement***

Since the path-breaking diary-based household surveys of time use in twelve countries carried out in 1965, with Hungarian sociologist Alexander Szalai as the principal

architect, time use surveys have been conducted by official statistical organisations at an increasing frequency and geographic spread. In some surveys effective ways have been developed to measure simultaneous (parallel) activities; these are especially necessary with time spent on childcare.

Beyond the original valuation only of labour input at various market wage rates or opportunity cost, household production accounts have been extended to take a full input-output approach, including inputs of capital and intermediate inputs to household production. This involves counting outputs and valuing these at market prices. It has also been established that time use data can be used to count some household production outputs. The household production accounts can use the full resources of available data to estimate all the components of the household accounts as the national accounting statisticians do for the market economy accounts.

### **Interactions between the two economic systems in an economy**

**Why measure the trade-off between market work and non-market work?**

To answer the question, the current focus on the ups and downs of 'economic' activity which only looks at the market and leaves out of consideration about half of all activity, the household, is misleading. What if these two systems act in a counter-cyclical way so the 'ups and downs' of one are offset by 'downs and ups' of the other? The apparent loss of output in an economic downturn of the market economy could be offset to a greater or lesser degree by a gain in output from the household economy. Similarly, increases in market output in an upturn or recovery could be offset by decreases in output from the household economy.

If these trade-offs exist the total of economic output from the two systems has a smaller fluctuation than the fluctuation in each part. The total welfare derived from goods and services consequently is less variable than the present official measures of just the market economy would have us believe.

The trade-off interactions between the two spheres of the economy can be considered as comprising three types: short-term seasonal, long-term trend, and medium-term cyclical fluctuations.

The first is the repeated movements of production and activity that occur regularly due to changes in the seasons and regular festivities and holidays. The second is the (often gradual, sometimes sudden) changes that occur in technology, capital innovation and demography that influence the proportions of production in the two economies. The third is the changes that occur through what can be called the medium-term economic fluctuations (often four to five years) of the 'business cycle' after the other two types of interaction (seasonal and trend) have been accounted for.

This paper reports on the medium-term cyclical fluctuations in economic activity as measured by the *labour inputs* to the two parts of the total economy.

### **Some definitions and some facts**

Household production is production of services by households for their own consumption. It includes accommodation, meals, clean clothes, childcare, transport, self-education and volunteering (for other households).

The household economy is the non-market aggregate economic system of households using their own unpaid labour and their own capital of dwellings, vehicles and equipment in household production.

Correctly measured, in most developed countries, the value added in the household economy is greater than the value added in the market economy.

For example estimates of the value of this production for Australia in 2006 show<sup>6</sup>:

Gross Household Product (GHP)	\$1,236 <b>billion</b>
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	\$1,007 <b>billion</b>
Gross Market Product (GMP) *	\$ 908 <b>billion</b>

Thus GHP was 23 per cent greater than GDP but 36 per cent greater than GMP.

\* GMP is less than GDP to avoid double counting of owner occupied dwellings.

Adding the two parts of the total economic system gives an estimate of Gross Economic Production (GEP) = GHP + GMP.

GEP = \$2,144 **billion** — more than twice GDP

Although the two systems are approximately of the same order of magnitude in terms of goods and services produced, the hours of unpaid labour in household production exceed the hours of paid labour in market production in most advanced countries

For example in Australia in 2006 hours of unpaid household work were more than twice the hours of paid work in the market.

	Total per year	Per household/week
Household	35,651 million	86.0
Market	17,675 million	42.6

### **Research on household and market work**

The longer-term trends in household and market work have received a great deal of research. However the relation between the workloads in the two economies during the business cycle has not been researched because, until recently, the data to continuously measure both spheres of work have not been available.

### **The cyclical trade-off hypothesis**

More than 20 years ago the following hypothesis about the interaction between the household and the market economy was put forward.

Production and employment in the household economy will move in a counter-cyclical way to production in the market economy. When the market is booming with a strong demand for labour, the household will do less work at home. When the market is recessed the household will do more work. Thus the 'total' economy, the sum of the market and the household will be much steadier and have a smoother growth path than that shown by the figures we currently use to measure the total output of 'the' economy<sup>7</sup>.

If the hypothesis is correct it implies that a downturn in the market economy is not as bad and that an upturn is not as good as the market economy data suggest.

From this hypothesis some research questions emerge to which the rest of the paper attempts to provide answers.

1. When the market economy experiences a downturn in activity does the household (non-market) economy experience an upturn?
2. How many hours of household work offset the loss of paid hours of market work?
3. Do market downturns affect women's household work differently than men's?

4. How do market downturns affect household work in households of different stages of the life course — those with children in the middle stage and those without children, both the earlier stage younger households and the later stage older households?
5. What are the effects on the time spent in care of children?

### **The American Time Use Survey**

Fortunately we now have continuous monthly US data from the American Time Use Survey (ATUS) run by the US Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This is the only comprehensive continuous survey of time use in the world.

There are more than 1,000 interviews per month with one 24-hour-diary per person. ATUS provides estimates of the hours of work (both paid and unpaid) and all other uses of time and data are now available from January 2003 to December 2009.

### **Estimating the household work market work trade-off**

A little algebra is required.

The trade-off is an estimate of the coefficient (b) of the linear equation  $y = a + bx$ , which relates the values of household work (y) to the corresponding values of market work (x). Estimates of the values of (b) follow.

Quarterly data provide 28 data points, with an adequate sample size of 3,500 per quarter.

Before these trade-off estimates can be made it is necessary to eliminate the seasonal and trend movements in the data. This process gives what can be called 'season and trend *free*' (or 'season and trend *adjusted*') data.

An initial examination of the ATUS data shows a large downturn in aggregate United States seasonally adjusted hours of market work per head in the last three quarters of 2009 in the midst of the global financial crisis. This was not accompanied by a rise in aggregate hours of household work. Household work per head continued on its medium term downward trend. It is only when this medium term trend is removed and the data are disaggregated for women and men in the different life course stages that some statistically significant trade-off coefficients emerge.

The following three charts show these data for three types of households in the United States for each of the 28 quarters in the period March quarter 2003 to December quarter 2009.

- Younger households without children<sup>8</sup>
- Households with children, and
- Older households without children.

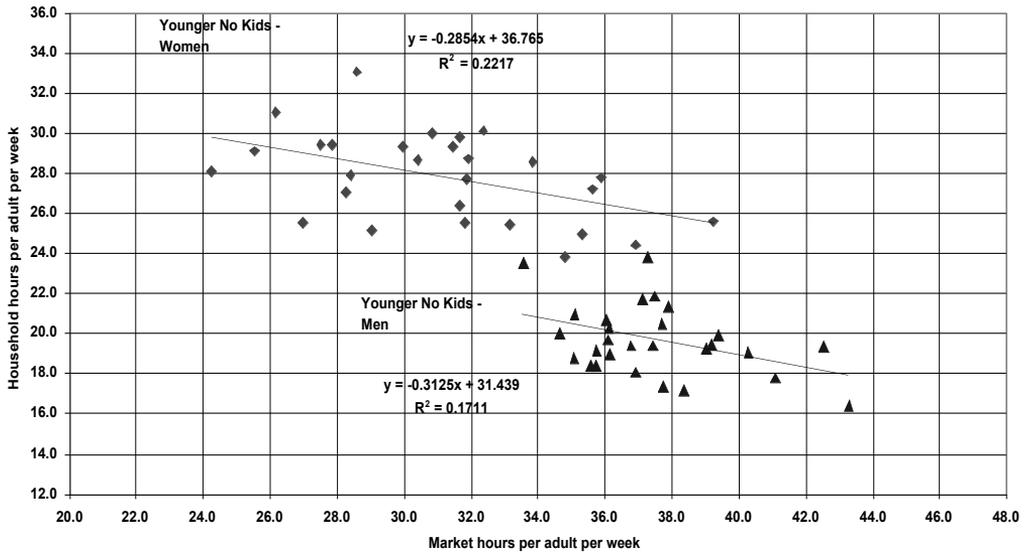
The data show the average hours per week of household work and market work for both women and men in each household type.

### **Younger households without children**

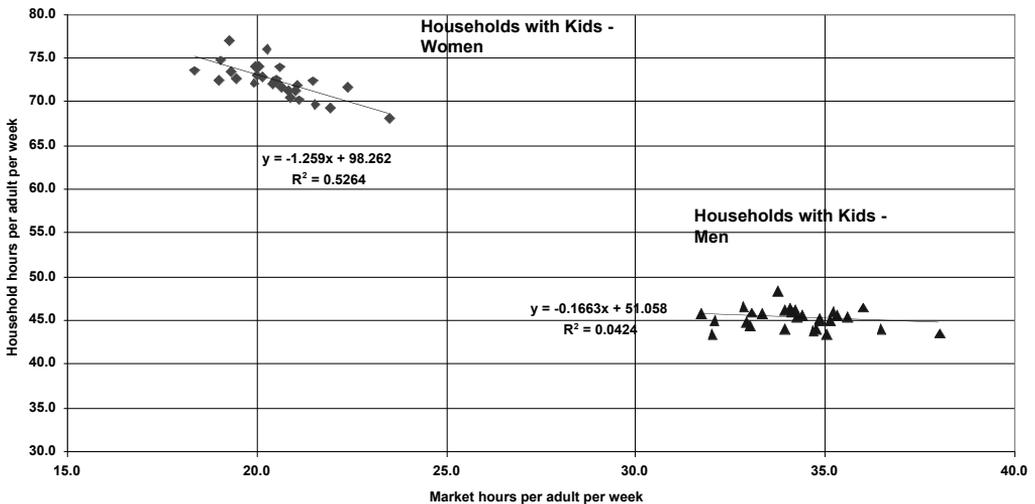
In these households average hours per week for women range around a mean of 28 of household work and 31 for market work, a total of 59 hours per week. For men household work has a mean of 20 and market work a mean of 38, a total of 58 hours per week.

For women (b= -0.29) and men (b= -0.31) the negative relationships between the two spheres of work are both just significant.

Younger Households Without Children  
 Women and Men  
 United States Quarterly 2003-2009  
 (Season and Trend Adjusted Data)



Households With Children  
 Women and Men  
 United States Quarterly 2003-2009  
 (Season and Trend Adjusted Data)



**Households with children**

In these households average hours per week for women range around a mean of 72 of household work and 21 for market work, a total of 93 per week. For men

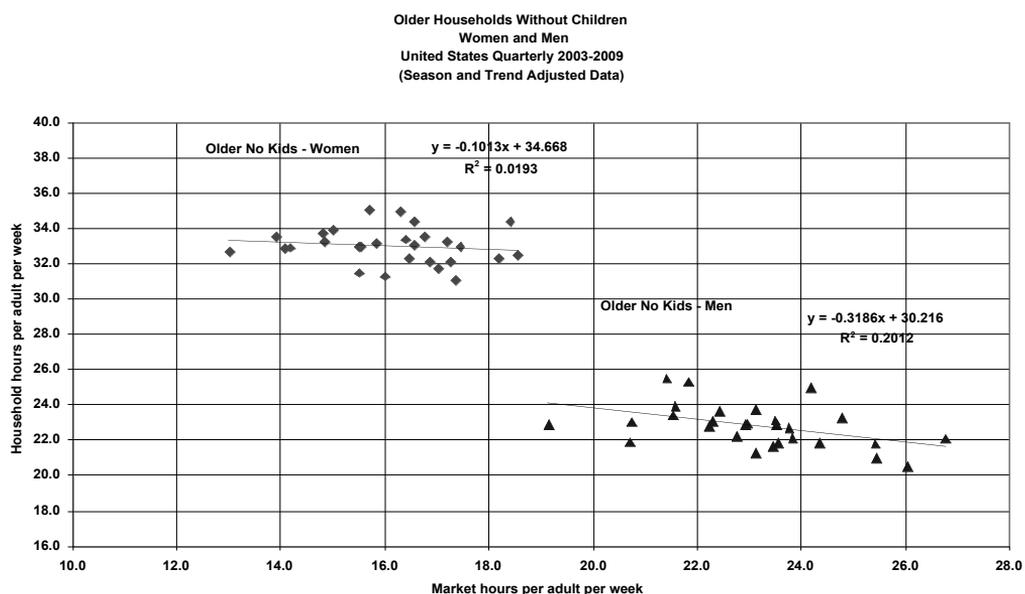
household work has a mean of 45 and market work a mean of 34, a total of 79 hours per week.

For women there is a fairly strong negative relationship ( $b = -1.26$ ) between the two spheres of work; for men the negative relationship ( $b = -0.17$ ) is not significant.

**Older households without children**

In these households average hours per week for women range around a mean of 33 of household work and 16 for market work, a total of 49 hours per week. For men household work has a mean of 23 and market work a mean of 23, a total of 46 hours per week.

For women the negative relationship ( $b = -0.10$ ) between the two spheres of work is not significant; for men the negative relationship ( $b = -0.32$ ) is just significant.



The following table summarises the trade-off coefficients from the previous analysis and shows the standard error of the estimate for each coefficient.

Season and Trend Adjusted Quarterly Data	Household Work Trade-Off Coefficient	
	Women	Men
Younger Households	<b>-0.29</b>	<b>-0.31</b>
	Std Error	0.11      0.14
Households with Children	<b>-1.26</b>	-0.17
	Std Error	0.23      0.16
Older Households	-0.10	<b>-0.32</b>
	Std Error	0.14      0.13

### Care work trade-offs

For households with children an analysis of the trade-offs for women and men between market work and 'care work' showed a significant coefficient for women of -0.87.

Season and Trend Adjusted Quarterly Data	Care Work Trade-Off Coefficient	
	Women	Men
Households with Children	<b>-0.87</b>	-0.17
	Std Error	0.15

### Interactions between women and men

Tests were made for the effects of men's hours of both household and market work on women's household work and vice-versa — women's on men's. Only one significant cross-gender effect is detected. None is detected in the young and old households without children.

In households with children there is a significant effect of men's hours of *market work* on women's *household work*. Surprisingly this is a positive effect with a coefficient + 0.50 (standard error 0.17).

On average one hour *less* of market work per week by men in these households *decreases* women's household work by half an hour per week. It seems that if a man is at home for an hour per week more than usual (and spending more leisure time) the woman increases her leisure time too.

### Conclusions

**When** the market economy experiences a downturn in activity does the household (non-market) economy experience an upturn? How many hours of extra unpaid household work offset the loss of paid hours of market work?

The unique set of continuous time use data from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics covering 2003 to 2009 shows there are some trade-offs in time use.

There are highly significant effects of market work changes on women's household work in households with children.

The strongest trade-off is for women in households with children where a loss of one hour of paid work per week by these women increases their household work by 1.4 hours per week. Surprisingly, they also *decrease* their household work by 0.5 hpw when men in these households lose one hour of paid work.

Men's household work (in these households) is not affected by the market work of either men or women.

In households without children, there are significant coefficients of -0.3 for both men and women of their own paid work on their unpaid work in younger households and for men in older households.

Because the ups and downs of overall market economic activity have differential effects on household economic activity of women and men at different stages of the life course there is only a weak negative overall correlation between what happens to the economy-wide aggregate of market work and aggregate household work.

## Acknowledgements

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**Dr Duncan Ironmonger** FASSA is Director of the Households Research Unit, Department of Economics, the University of Melbourne where he is Honorary Principal Fellow and Associate Professor. His recent major research has been in household economics, specialising in household input-output tables and household satellite national accounts, estimates of Gross Household Product (GHP), and modeling the household economy. In time use statistics his interests cover national time accounts, volunteering time and travel time. Dr Ironmonger's recent publications include 'Household production' International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences (2001), A System of Time Accounts for Melbourne (2006) and 'Time Use' The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics (2008).

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- <sup>1</sup> The outputs of public services such as police and defence can be regarded as part of the market economy because there are monetary payments for the inputs even though none for the outputs.
  - <sup>2</sup> Much of the household capital of land, buildings and equipment has also been purchased from the market. However at the time this capital is being used in household production of services it is owned by the household and no actual monetary payment of rent occurs. Payments of course are made for rented dwellings and equipment.
  - <sup>3</sup> For example Ironmonger, Duncan (1996). 'Counting Outputs, Capital Inputs and Caring Labor: Estimating Gross Household Product' *Feminist Economics* 2(3): 37-64. This paper shows for Australia in 1992 an estimate of Gross Household Product of \$341 billion (of which 17.0 per cent was from capital) and Gross Market Product of \$362 billion (of which 44.4 per cent was from capital).
  - <sup>4</sup> Goldschmidt-Clermont, Luisella and Pagnossin-Aligisakis, Elisabetta (1995). *Measures of Unrecorded Economic Activities in Fourteen Countries Occasional Paper 20*, United Nations Human Development Report Office, New York
  - <sup>5</sup> Reid, Margaret (1934). *Economics of Household Production*, John Wiley, New York proposed the distinction between production (work) and consumption (leisure) was whether a task was one that you could usefully pay someone (a third person) to do for you. You could usefully pay a person to prepare a meal for you; you would not pay a person to eat a meal for you.
  - <sup>6</sup> Ironmonger, Duncan and Soupourmas, Faye (2009). 'Estimating household production outputs with time use episode data' *electronic International Journal of Time Use Research* 6(2): 240-268.
  - <sup>7</sup> Ironmonger, Duncan (1989). 'Households and the household economy', Chapter 1: 3-13 in *Households Work* D Ironmonger (ed) Allen & Unwin, Sydney.
  - <sup>8</sup> Children are those aged 0-14 years. Older households are those with adults on average aged 45 years or more and younger are those with adults on average aged less than 45 years.



## Examining the Social Impact of the Financial Crisis

**Peter Saunders**

There is no doubt that the Australian economy has weathered the storm generated by the global financial crisis very well. This has been acknowledged by international agencies like the IMF and OECD and was highlighted by Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz during a recent visit, where he noted that the government 'did a fantastic job of saving Australia from the global economic crisis'<sup>1</sup>. There is on-going political debate about the extent to which this reflects the package of stimulus measures introduced by the government, and about when and how quickly these measures should be withdrawn. However, the overwhelming sense remains one of relief that the economic impact has not been anywhere near as damaging as many were initially predicting.

Despite this, the economic situation remains fraught with uncertainty and the economic recovery is still regarded as fragile. Concern has also been expressed — mainly by the NGO sector — that the adverse social effects of the downturn have been ignored and unequally shared, with some of the most vulnerable experiencing the worst outcomes. This is despite the one-off payments that many received as part of the fiscal stimulus measures and, in fact, these may have exacerbated the sharp rise in income inequality that occurred in the years before the crisis<sup>2</sup>.

A survey commissioned by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs was conducted between May and June 2009<sup>3</sup>. It found that just over one-third of those surveyed (34 per cent) reported that their current financial situation had deteriorated over the previous six months. This perception of declining wellbeing was heavily concentrated among those with the lowest incomes and in the most perilous financial circumstances.

For example, those who reported themselves as being in the worst financial situations were more likely to report that their situation had worsened over the last six months, with around three-quarters of those in the 'poor' and 'very poor' categories reporting a decline in their financial circumstances in the first half of 2009. Between 10 and 20 per cent of respondents had been unable to pay their utility bills, been forced to pawn or sell something or sought financial assistance from family or friends, with most of them facing such an experience for the first time. The evidence led the authors of the report to conclude that: '...disadvantaged families have been more adversely affected by the economic downturn, and that those on lowest incomes have been the most affected'<sup>4</sup>.

The Salvation Army<sup>5</sup>, one of the largest non-government providers of emergency relief, provides further evidence in a recent survey of the impact of the crisis on low-income Australians. Around 700 clients responded to the survey conducted in April 2010 and, of these, over half (55 per cent) believed that were worse off as a result of the crisis, 52 per cent had had to cut down on basic necessities and 17 per cent had been forced to move to more affordable housing. Around one-fifth had never asked for help from The Salvation Army before, and this is estimated to equate to over 80,000 new service clients nationally.

This evidence reinforces the view that the crisis had an impact that should not be ignored. Even though its effects may have been restricted to small pockets, those

affected were already among the most disadvantaged, raising concerns about their ability to cope.

The evidence cited above relies predominantly on the perceptions of those interviewed and may thus provide a distorted picture of reality. Particularly when government or non-government welfare agencies conduct the interviews, the tendency to exaggerate difficulties may overstate the magnitude of the problem. What is needed is more robust evidence that people are indeed doing it tough, and that their circumstances have worsened since the financial crisis struck. Importantly, such evidence should not be solely dependent on the perceptions of those surveyed, but should be capable of withstanding rigorous external scrutiny.

One approach to identifying social disadvantage that has become popular among poverty researchers and increasingly influential among policy makers (particularly in Europe) is based on the concept of deprivation originally developed by British sociologist Peter Townsend<sup>6</sup>. Townsend's original application has been modified and refined in a series of studies, and the methodology now provides an alternative to measuring poverty using the much-criticised approach of comparing income with a poverty line. The deprivation approach seeks to establish directly that those identified as deprived do not have the resources to buy basic essential or necessary items. In contrast, conventional poverty line studies presume that low income automatically translates into an unacceptable standard of living.

Importantly, the deprivation approach relies on members of the community to identify which items are essential. In effect, this takes the decision out of the hands of researchers, in the process giving the approach a greater degree of credibility.

To identify deprivation, it is necessary to conduct a survey in which people are asked which of a list of items they regard as essential, where that term is defined as covering 'things that no-one should have to go without in Australia today'. The items included in the list reflect the views of low-income people, obtained from focus group discussions in which they are asked to identify which items are needed to achieve a minimal but decent standard of living. Only those items that receive majority support for being essential are taken to constitute the essentials of life — items that meet basic needs to an acceptable community standard in contemporary circumstances.

Those surveyed are also asked if they have each item and, if they do not, whether the lack of the item is because they cannot afford it. Deprivation is then identified to exist when someone does not have and cannot afford items that are regarded as essential by a majority in the community. Clearly, this gives a better estimate of who is actually experiencing poverty than simply comparing people's income with a poverty line: whereas the latter approach implicitly *assumes* that low-income equates with poverty, the deprivation approach seeks to *establish* that a lack of economic resources results in an unacceptable standard of living. Importantly, the use of focus groups and a community survey grounds the identification of deprivation in the experience of poverty in a way that reflects prevailing community norms.

The sequence of questions described above has been asked in two surveys conducted by the author and colleagues at the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) in 2006 and 2010 — before and after the crisis struck. Both surveys were distributed by mail to 6,000 adult Australians randomly selected from the electoral rolls. They generated samples of 2,704 and 2,643 responses, respectively, equivalent to response rates of 46.9 and 46.1 per cent — somewhat above that achieved by other similar social

surveys conducted around the same time. Although both samples contain an over-representation of older people (which is not uncommon for surveys of this type) they are both otherwise broadly representative of the adult population and can be used to examine changes in deprivation over the period.

The survey questionnaires included a series of items (61 in the 2006 survey, slightly more in 2010), which had been identified as essential in the focus group discussions with clients of selected welfare services. Other items were drawn from overseas deprivation studies conducted in Britain, New Zealand and Ireland and include some of those used to identify hardship or financial stress in other Australian surveys<sup>7</sup>.

Following international practice<sup>8</sup>, those among the 61 items that attracted majority support for being essential in the 2006 survey constituted 'the essentials of life'. Deprivation was then identified as existing when people did not have and could not afford each of these items. A total of 26 items satisfied these conditions, although one of these (the television) was dropped after conducting reliability and validity tests, while another item (a separate bedroom for children aged 10 and over) failed (just) to receive majority support for being essential in 2010 and was also omitted.

The remaining 24 items have been used to estimate deprivation in both 2006 and 2010, although the results would be much the same if the list of essential items was identified separately for each year because the support for items being essential changed very little over the period.

The items are listed in Table 1, which also shows the degree of support for each item being essential in 2006. These estimates have been re-weighted using official population statistics in order to ensure that they better capture community opinion, not just the views of sample respondents. (The potential bias towards older people noted earlier can also be removed by re-weighting using official population data but this makes little difference to the patterns described below). Readers should be warned that the data for 2010 are still being analysed and the estimates are preliminary.

Twelve of the 24 items were regarded as essential by 90 per cent, while all but four were seen as essential by at least three-quarters of the population. The findings indicate that not only can people distinguish between what people need and what they have (or want), but also that there is broad agreement on the identification of basic needs among groups differentiated by gender, age, social class and income<sup>9</sup>.

The 24 identified essentials fall into four broad groups: health-related needs (four items); accommodation needs (seven items); participation needs (six items); and basic needs of adults and children (seven items). Together they provide a unique insight into what Australians regard as necessary for people to function effectively as consumers, workers and citizens in today's society. Interestingly, the list of essentials is much less dominated by consumer items (most of which did not achieve the majority support threshold for being essential), but reflects a complex and sophisticated understanding of the different needs that individuals must fulfil if they are to perform their economic and social roles effectively.

Table 1 also shows the deprivation rates for each item in 2006 and 2010. Results are presented separately for all households and for those households with at least one child aged 17 or under. The latter allows the impact of children to be assessed and provides an indication of the extent of child deprivation and how it has changed. It is, however, important to emphasise that the items included as essential for children have been identified by adults not by children (or young people) themselves.

**Table 1: Identification of essential items and deprivation rates in 2006 and 2010 (percentages)**

Item	Support for item being essential (2006)	All households		Deprivation rate: Households with children	
		2006	2010	2006	2010
Medical treatment if needed	99.9	2.0	1.5	2.6	2.2
Warm clothes and bedding, if it's cold	99.8	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.3
A substantial meal at least once a day	99.6	1.1	0.8	0.9	0.9
Able to buy medicines prescribed by a doctor	99.3	3.9	2.9	5.1	4.9
Dental treatment if needed	98.5	13.9	11.9	17.2	16.4
A decent and secure home	97.3	6.6	6.1	7.6	7.1
Children can participate in school activities & outings	94.7	3.5	2.6	4.2	3.8
A yearly dental check-up for children	94.3	9.1	7.0	12.4	10.0
A hobby or leisure activity for children	92.5	5.7	4.6	7.4	6.3
Regular social contact with other people	92.5	4.7	4.7	5.3	6.1
Secure locks on doors and windows	91.6	5.1	4.3	5.5	5.6
A roof and gutters that do not leak	91.5	4.6	4.7	6.2	6.8
Furniture in reasonable condition	89.3	2.6	2.1	3.6	2.8
Up to date schoolbooks and new school clothes	88.5	3.8	3.4	5.6	4.4
Heating in at least one room of the house	87.4	1.8	2.1	1.9	2.4
A separate bed for each child	84.0	1.6	1.8	2.0	2.6
A telephone	81.1	1.5	2.9	1.2	3.3
Up to \$500 in savings for an emergency	81.1	17.6	15.3	23.5	20.4
A washing machine	79.4	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7
Home contents insurance	75.1	9.5	7.8	10.3	9.6
Presents for family or friends at least once a year	71.6	6.6	5.1	7.9	5.7
Computer skills	68.7	5.2	3.2	4.9	2.5
Comprehensive motor vehicle insurance	60.2	8.6	7.7	8.2	9.4
A week's holiday away from home each year	52.9	22.4	18.5	28.2	23.3
<b>Average deprivation rate</b>	-	<b>5.9</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>6.6</b>

It is clear that deprivation rates vary greatly (in 2010), with very few missing out on things like warm clothes and bedding or a substantial daily meal, but over 15 per cent lacking a modest level (\$500) of emergency savings and 18 per cent unable to afford an annual week's holiday away from home. This diversity suggests that not too much attention should be paid to the mean deprivation rates shown in the final row of Table 1, although these have been included to provide an overall summary of the level and trend in deprivation.

Most importantly, the estimates as a whole provide, for the first time, a detailed and compelling picture of Australian hardship that is far more informative than conventional poverty line studies are capable of generating. By focusing directly on people's inability to afford essential items, the deprivation approach produces evidence that has greater credibility than that produced by comparing people's incomes with an arbitrary poverty line threshold.

The greater detail produced by the deprivation approach also generates information that is of more direct relevance to policy makers since it identifies the underlying source of problems like lack of access to dental care or inadequate dwelling protection or insurance coverage and thus points to areas where policy action is needed. It is also apparent that deprivation is generally higher — sometimes considerably higher — among households with children than among those without children, a pattern that in part reflects differences in deprivation between those of working-age and those older people who have retired. This may suggest a need to improve payments to (and services for) families, although it may also be a consequence of other factors that may distort the comparisons between different age groups and this is an issue that is still under examination.

In general terms, the estimates in Table 1 suggest a modest decline in deprivation over a period when the global financial crisis was exerting its influence. There was a slight decline in the average deprivation rate and the individual deprivation rates for all households fell for 17 of the 24 essential items (16 for those with children).

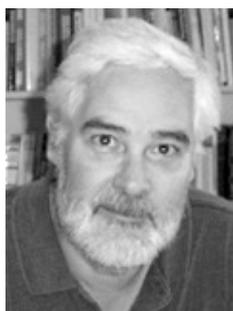
Deprivation increased for five items but generally by a very small amount, while two items (regular social contact with others and a washing machine) recorded the same deprivation rate in both years. The five items where deprivation fell most are: dental treatment if needed; an annual dental check-up for children; up to \$500 in emergency savings; computer skills; and a week's holiday away. Four of these items had among the highest deprivation rates in 2006 and thus had the greatest scope to decline, although the decline in dental deprivation reflects government action to address problems in a system that has long been acknowledged as inadequate and in need of improvement.

On the face of it, this evidence does not confirm the picture of increased hardship produced by the studies mentioned earlier. Although the estimates in Table 1 cover a period that includes two years before the crisis struck, the findings indicate that deprivation has not risen sharply and thus challenge the view that the financial crisis has impacted adversely on those who were already doing it tough.

Of course, it is possible that the surveys reported by others provide a better perspective on the impact on disadvantaged Australians, who are known to be less likely to participate in social surveys of the kind discussed here. However, any such under-representation would have affected both the 2006 and 2010 surveys and thus would not necessarily distort the estimated change over the period.

In conclusion, the survey results reported here suggest that not only did the Australian economy prove resilient in the face of the financial crisis (and as a consequence of the government's fiscal stimulus measures) but the decline in deprivation implies a modest increase in the living standards of those Australians who were most socially disadvantaged. The one-off payments made under the fiscal stimulus measures no doubt played a role here, but so too did efforts to improve policy in areas such as dental care that have long been in need of improvement.

Overall, the results illustrate how the deprivation approach can provide new and illuminating insights into the nature and extent of poverty and avoid sterile debates about where to set the poverty line. They point to the fact that Australia has managed a successful economic *and* social navigation of the troubled waters that emerged in the wake of the global financial crisis.



**Peter Saunders** was the Director of the Social Policy Research Centre from February 1987 until July 2007, and now holds a Research Chair in Social Policy in the Centre. His recent books include *The Poverty Wars*, *Reconnecting Research with Reality* and (with James Walter) *Ideas and Influence. Social Science and Public Policy in Australia* (both published by UNSW Press in 2005). He was elected a Fellow of ASSA in 1995, and is currently the President of the Foundation for International Studies on Social Security (FISS) and in 2009 was elected the first President of the Australian Social Policy Association.

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- <sup>1</sup> Sydney Morning Herald (2010). "Labor Saved Australia": Nobel Laureate Stiglitz', Sydney: 6 August.
  - <sup>2</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2010). *Household Income and Income Distribution, Australia 2007-08*, Catalogue No. 6523.0, ABS, Canberra.
  - <sup>3</sup> Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and indigenous Affairs (FAHCSIA) (2009). *Preliminary Report: Survey on the Impact on Families of the Economic Downturn*, FAHCSIA, Canberra.
  - <sup>4</sup> Ibid: 17.
  - <sup>5</sup> The Salvation Army (2010). *Perceptions of Poverty: An Insight into the Nature and Impact of Poverty in Australia*. The Salvation Army, Sydney.
  - <sup>6</sup> Townsend, P (1979). *Poverty in the United Kingdom*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books.
  - <sup>7</sup> For example, Bray, J R (2001). *Hardship in Australia. An Analysis of Financial Stress Indicators in the 1998-99 Australian Bureau of Statistics Household Expenditure Survey*, Occasional Paper No. 4, Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra.
  - <sup>8</sup> See Pantazis, C, Gordon, D and Townsend, P (2006). 'The Necessities of Life', in C Pantazis, D Gordon and R Levitas (eds), *Poverty and Social Exclusion in Britain. The Millennium Survey*, Policy Press, Bristol: 89-122.
  - <sup>9</sup> See Saunders, P, Naidoo, Y and Griffiths, M (2007). *Towards New Indicators of Disadvantage: Deprivation and Social Exclusion in Australia*, Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales, Sydney.



## Family Fortunes and the Global Financial Crisis Stuart Macintyre

I have been reading the recent book by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, *Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone* (London: Allen Lane, 2009). The authors are epidemiologists, and their book employs a very large body of data to explore the consequences of inequality.

They use both international comparisons and internal comparisons within the United States, first to measure inequality of income and then a range of what they describe as indices of health and social problems: life expectancy, infant mortality, obesity, educational performance, teenage births, homicides and imprisonment; they also employ measures of mental illness, social mobility, happiness and trust.

The book argues persuasively that the effects of economic growth on life expectancy are rapidly exhausted. The relationship is apparent as countries lift themselves out of dire poverty, but the effect levels off at relatively modest levels of per capita income. It is true that life expectancy in rich countries continues to increase but the same increases are apparent in countries that are much less rich. Hence Cuba and the United States share the same life expectancy.

As Wilkinson and Pickett observe, when you are hungry a loaf of bread is everything, but once you are no longer hungry, more loaves of bread are unlikely to help you — and, according to their evidence, the extra bread consumption is more likely to lead to obesity.

On the other hand, life expectancy varies within countries according to income; and, more generally, positive outcomes are higher at the upper income level, negatives ones at the lower.

So far, so obvious. But when Wilkinson and Pickett begin to plot national indicators against levels of income inequality, they pick up a more striking pattern. Those countries that are more unequal fare worse in mental illness, drug use, obesity, homicides and various other outcomes.

Their explanation of these correlations seems to me to be less persuasive. They see inequality creating greater anxiety, lower self-esteem; they argue that the injuries of inequality create both shame and insecurity, lower levels of trust and happiness. Both this argument and the concepts they employ to advance it seem to me to be less amenable to measurement, in part because they rely on self-reporting rather than measurement, and in part because concepts such as trust and happiness are not universal in their meaning across national and cultural boundaries.

What are the implications of their findings for Australia? Among the advanced industrial economies, Anglophone countries are marked by high levels of income inequality. Leaving aside Newly Industrialising Countries such as China and India, and small island nations such as Singapore, the United States is most unequal, followed by Portugal, then the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. Canada, however, has lower income inequality.

Yet Australia does better on a composite index of health and social problems. The US is again the leader here, followed by Portugal, the UK, Greece, New Zealand and Ireland. Our position is scarcely different from France, Germany, Austria and Canada.

We are high on mental illness (but is this a product of our methods of diagnosing it?), and relatively high on teenage birth rates. On the other hand, we are also high on life expectancy, do relatively well on the PISA tests of educational attainment and fall in the middle on infant mortality, homicides; and incarceration.

One striking limitation of the book is its failure to consider the reasons why countries lie well beyond their gradient lines. Another is the inattention to history. It is apparent that economic growth has done little to alter the dispersion of incomes over the past thirty years, but you search *Spirit Level* in vain for any framework that explains the change from the social welfare model of the third quarter of the past century and the neo-liberal one adopted in the last quarter.

Wilkinson and Pickett note that sudden shocks can affect welfare. The measures adopted by the United Kingdom during the Second World War closed income inequality; and the rationing of food increased the nation's nutritional status.

How, then, might we think about the consequences of the Global Financial Crisis? We have papers exploring its effects on employment, incomes, welfare and families. Yet I suspect that the full consequences of the GFC are not yet apparent.

Throughout the discussion of its causes and the nature of the response, there have been frequent comparisons with the Great Depression of the 1930s. That too was preceded by structural imbalances and precipitated by the failure of financial institutions. When the asset bubble burst, banks failed, and the patterns of borrowing brought a chain reaction that took some time to envelop the leading capitalist economies. It took two years before Britain was forced to abandon the Gold Standard, four years before the United States followed.

These countries responded to the crisis by reducing public outlays, including welfare expenditure, seeking to restore profitability by cutting wages and trying at all costs to meet their external debt obligations. When the Gold Standard was abandoned, they embarked on currency devaluations and forms of economic protection that failed to resolve the structural imbalance; a beggar your neighbour strategy that strangled world trade. It took a war to restore full employment, and it was only at the end of the Second World War that a new framework was established for sustainable growth.

The GFC followed a similar course, but the initial response to it was different. Rather than pursuing policies of contraction and deflation, the OECD countries expanded public outlays to stimulate a recovery. While some experienced a severe recession and substantial unemployment, they weathered the immediate crisis.

The difficulty they now face is maintaining the recovery. The cost of meeting the failure of financial institutions and bailing out the banks has been remarkably heavy. With levels of public debt that threaten solvency or at least the willingness of lenders to renew public loans, many governments have had to embark — or chosen to embark — on drastic economies. The predicament of Greece and Ireland is stark. The burden falls on the public sector, affecting government workers and welfare recipients with particular severity.

At the same time central banks have cut official interest rates to the limit, and engaged in repeated rounds of quantitative easing, with perverse effects. Companies have rebuilt their balance sheets, but consumer confidence remains low because so many families are struggling. Moreover, the global imbalance of trade remains pronounced. As in the 1930s, the leading debtors and creditors follow a beggar your neighbour strategy of currency manipulation.

Through its good fortune as a commodity exporter to China, Australia avoided the sharp downturn experienced in the United States and Europe. With relatively high interest rates we had the scope to reduce them. With a very low level of public debt, we were able to raise it and administer a substantial stimulus.

The stimulus was administered through a combination of payments to households and public investment. The payments surely had some ameliorative effect on income inequality, but they were a small proportion of the package. The major programs, from home insulation to school building, were necessarily undertaken with maximum speed and quickly encountered difficulties.

I can well understand the attractions of Building the Educational Revolution (BER). The construction sector has pervasive effects on other sectors of the economy, and it also involves a crucial segment of fickle voters. Yet if a fraction of the money expended on BER had been applied to lifting the status and appeal of the teaching profession, remedying the damage done to our faculties of education over two decades of neglect, and preparing the profession to teach the new curriculum, it would have been better spent. Even in the logic of Treasury, it would have had a similar multiplier effect since teachers hardly hoard their incomes.

The problems with the home insulation scheme and then BER, magnified relentlessly by the Murdoch press, have become a paradigm for the failure of government. It was suggested quite early on that one lesson of the pink batts was that the Commonwealth lacks the administrative capacity to deliver a major national program. My own current research project is a study of Post-War Reconstruction, so I could only wonder about the historical amnesia. Between 1941 and 1949 the Commonwealth government mobilised the country for maximum effort; it created new industries from scratch, put more than a million people into uniform and war production, then demobilised them, administered a remarkable training program, constructed hundreds of thousands of houses, introduced a new range of welfare services, embarked on major public works.

That fifty years later it implemented home insulation and school building through contractors was a direct consequence of the hollowing out of public administration over the past quarter-century. The same is true across a wide range of services that affect the welfare of Australian families: employment services, social security, health and education. There is no evidence that the GFC has induced a rethinking of these arrangements.

This takes me back to a finding revealed by Peter Saunders earlier in the seminar. People feel uncomfortable with the current levels of income inequality, and antagonistic to those who have stretched them, while sceptical of the capacity of government to find a solution. But then people feel aggrieved about all manner of misfortunes — hence the recent royal commission on bushfires in my own state of Victoria, a costly exercise in public grief that enabled those whose lives were scarred to attach blame and demand retribution for an event that was manifestly beyond human control.

The challenge, I suggest, is to distinguish such natural disasters from economic arrangements that are artefacts of political choice and institutional design. It is a particular challenge for the social sciences.



## **Working at the Intersections: An Early Career Research Trajectory in the Social Sciences**

***Christy Newman***

Receiving the 2010 Paul Bourke Award for Early Career Research from ASSA is truly a milestone. It marks the official end of my tenure as 'early career researcher', and the beginning of the even more intimidating era of 'mid career'. It validates choices I made to stick with contract research over more secure employment outside higher education. And, perhaps most importantly, it suggests that pursuing social research in an 'applied' health field did not mean losing my footing in the social sciences. The intersection between the health and social sciences has become not only a place for me to find meaningful work, peers and mentors, but also to receive academic recognition from the world of ideas that first inspired my interest in research.

I have worked as a contract researcher since completing my PhD in 2004, which has meant contributing to and publishing from a diverse range of projects, leading some and playing a smaller part in others. I have also moved through and around various disciplinary fields since my first days at university, excited by what each area had to offer but never quite managing to fully commit to any one of them in terms of consistent conference attendance, network building and so on.

Contract research is becoming more common in Australia, not only in the sciences where research-only careers have had a longer tradition, but also in the social sciences and humanities, which seem to have been slower to understand the particular needs and experiences of research-only academics. Now I am at a point in my career where I am invited to take on more senior roles in terms of postgraduate student supervision and mentoring junior researchers. But how to encourage researchers in navigating a contract research career trajectory when the competition and insecurity is undeniable and relentless?

It seems to me that recognition is needed from university and discipline leaders that contract employment — for good and for bad — is the reality for an increasing number of early career academics in the social sciences and elsewhere, and that this path is accompanied by unique challenges that require particular forms of support for researchers to have a fair chance of building their own research track records whilst also becoming engaged with the broader cultures of their research institutions. My aim with this article, in addition to acknowledging some of the circumstances, mentors, peers and organisations that have made it possible for me to begin to establish a research career, is to help illuminate a way forward.

In my short career as a research academic, I have been lucky enough to write about such diverse topics as the global rise of popular health magazines, the negotiation of neo-liberal discourse in interviews with HIV positive Aboriginal people and the different ways that doctors and patients make meaning about depression among gay men. While these topics all sit somewhere between the health and social sciences, the closest I usually come to describing 'what I do' is to say that I'm a qualitative health researcher. Unfortunately this phrase implies that I'm a random gun for hire, somehow able to apply generic research skills to any and all health issues that come to my attention. It also does little to acknowledge the schools of social, cultural and political thought that first inspired my interest in health as a field of inquiry and that continue to inform how my colleagues and I devise a social approach to applied health research.

And it hardly conveys how rewarding it is to take this kind of social approach to understanding contemporary problems, concepts and experiences in health.

### **Sowing the seeds of a research career**

On graduating from high school in 1992 I was overwhelmed by all of the possibilities of higher education. I ended up enrolling in a unique program at Murdoch University, which enabled me to choose any courses that appealed to me in my first year (as long as I had the required prerequisites) before making a decision about a specific degree. Nonetheless, I quickly realised that the subjects that most captured and sustained my interest were in the social sciences and humanities.

At the end of my degree, I had a double major in Communication Studies and English and Comparative Literature, with a lot of cultural studies thrown in. I am forever grateful to the Murdoch lecturers and researchers who showed me that everyday life was so full of rich material for social inquiry. Alec McHoul supervised my Honours thesis — an analysis of the (then) new genre of electronic dance music magazines — which was my first taste of an extended, in-depth research project. This experience was extremely rewarding, from working on ‘data’ that was directly relevant to my personal interests, to finding ways of working with big ideas from philosophy and sociology about how genres are constructed and performed in social settings, and how cultural citizenships can be both enabled and restricted through these kinds of discursive processes.

After a few years working in the ‘real’ world of hospitality, government policy, and public relations, I returned to university, which felt as though it held the key to a world of work that was in equal parts exciting and terrifying. I followed Catherine Waldby, who had taught me at Murdoch, to the National Centre in HIV Social Research (NCHSR) at the University of New South Wales, and developed a PhD topic which combined my interests in popular media with the world of social research on HIV, hepatitis C and related diseases. It was completely new and fascinating to me.

In 2004, I graduated with a thesis (co-supervised by Philip Bell in the School of Media and Communication Studies), which explored in general the cultural politics of popular and community-based health magazines, and in particular the reader letters published within them. This topic introduced me to an extraordinary range of interdisciplinary ideas, extending from the familiar worlds of cultural and media studies, gender studies, and theories of subjectivity, with the new (for me) fields of governmentality theory, health sociology, critical health psychology, public health communications, science studies, and discourse and narrative analysis.

During my doctoral candidature, I also sought casual work as a research assistant at NCHSR. For all that my undergraduate degree had provided me with inspiration, I hadn’t taken a single course in research methods, so this was on-the-job training. I began to learn the skills most important to surviving in the research-intensive environment of a busy research centre. The work was exhilarating but the anxiety around what I would do after graduation rarely let up and I was fearful that my prospects for securing paid work in a university setting were bleak.

### **Life as a ‘jobbing’ research academic**

As I came to the end of my doctoral candidature, Susan Kippax, then director of NCHSR, offered me twelve months work on a series of qualitative projects with her and several other NCHSR researchers, including an opportunity to try to publish from my thesis material. The chance to stay involved in research during that first year turned out to be pivotal. I began to work closely with other qualitative researchers in learning how

to organise my ideas, prepare an analysis, construct a journal article and manage the huge range of administrative and communication tasks required in conducting large research projects. I began to feel there might be a career path for me in social research after all, and that starting out in the highly intimidating and competitive world of scholarly research might be the right thing for me to do, or at least to try my hand at.

In those twelve months of contract research I published my very first journal articles, fulfilling an aspiration that I had thought way beyond my reach. This experience made me appreciate the value of mentoring PhD students to publish their research during their candidature. It was my own choice to focus on completing my thesis instead, but I now see that developing journal articles alongside thesis chapters positions the PhD as a training degree, and acknowledges that a doctoral qualification can only get you into academia at the ground level, but it won't help establish your research career.

After that first year, I applied for a joint position as NCHSR Research Associate and Research Manager. This was a very challenging role but one that exposed me to grant writing and strategic thinking, and introduced me to a whole range of new research collaborators. I then felt ready to apply for a three-year Research Fellow position at NCHSR, coordinating the qualitative component of the Primary Health Care Project on HIV and Depression, funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council. This was my first exposure to primary health care and general practice research, which has led to one of the most rewarding components of my current research work. I had also submitted the first funding application with my name on it (in collaboration with Asha Persson) for a project on HIV in the media. The funding came from an internal university scheme designed to kick-start new research projects and, although small, it was another important milestone for me. It boosted my confidence in applying for funds, in designing and running a project from start to finish and in working collaboratively with like-minded researchers.

Whilst immersed in those projects, I became pregnant with my first child and took nine months maternity leave after she was born in 2007. I then worked part-time until my second daughter was born in 2009, after which I took another six months off. An unexpected outcome of these life changing events, and perhaps also of having that time at home, was that my passion for research work was galvanised. Even if my contract employment status gave me little job security, and the loss of sleep to worries about mortgages and project deliverables added to the already considerable stress of new parenthood, I knew that this was what I wanted to do.

### **Going out on a limb**

Towards the end of 2007, after I had returned to work part-time, I wrote an application for a large grant from the National Health and Medical Research Council. The idea was to investigate the experiences of the general practice workforce who provide HIV care in different parts of Australia. GPs have played an important and unique role in the HIV response in Australia, yet this workforce is expected to undergo considerable change in the coming years, as the cohort of GPs originally recruited into HIV care in the eighties and nineties begins to retire, and younger or newer clinicians coming into general practice bring a different set of expectations of what taking up HIV medicine might mean for them as a professional and personal choice.

This idea rolled out into a fully fleshed research proposal surprisingly smoothly, facilitated by a small UNSW Research Promotion Grant for Early Career Researchers which enabled me to get some help with literature searches and the 'administrivia' of

grant preparation. Enlivened by its potential to have both an applied benefit and conceptual insights, a research team was convened including John de Wit (health psychologist), Michael Kidd AM (general practice clinician and researcher), Susan Kippax (social psychologist), Robert Reynolds (historian) and Peter Canavan (HIV advocate), as well as community partners in the form of the National Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS, the Australasian Society for HIV Medicine, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations. Knowing these individuals and organisations had faith that we could succeed was just as thrilling as receiving the funding.

This half-million dollar project grant from the National Health and Medical Research Council meant — first and foremost — that I had work for at least another three years, but also that I would be researching a new topic that really excited me. The project is now halfway through and has had other practical outcomes for my career such as contributing to my promotion to Senior Research Fellow, and raising my profile within my own faculty and university. For this and other reasons, whilst I am involved in several other areas of research, the HIV General Practice Workforce Project will always, I think, represent for me the shift from being a contract researcher who found creative satisfaction in contributing to research work developed by others, to a research academic beginning to create and lead projects that I find conceptually interesting as well as relevant and useful to policy and practice.

### **Supporting contract researchers in the social sciences**

Contract research can offer a pathway for early career research social science academics for whom a discipline-based teaching position is either not available or not suitable. It can give younger or newer researchers a chance to grow their track record in rapid bursts, while also building essential skills in writing funding applications and managing large and complex projects. It also, typically, requires engagement with a whole range of research stakeholders, be they collaborators, funders or 'end-users', which can provide priceless insights into developing and conducting research across disciplines, industries and communities.

However, there are considerable downsides to pursuing contract research, particularly in the social sciences. The range of funding options available in Australia is limited, even though the Australian Research Council has increased its support for early career salary awards in its current funding policies. And those of us who can also access health and medical research funding must fit our conceptual and theoretical interests into project designs that aim to address a clear health policy or practice problem. The day-to-day experience of contract research is also extremely challenging, because the timeframes of academic research extend beyond the length of most employment contracts in areas such as grant applications and postgraduate supervision. Book writing can be a particular challenge because of the high output expectations on individual projects (usually journal articles) and — again — the difficulty of making long term plans.

People who are in senior and influential roles in the social sciences and the higher education sector more generally can contribute to raising the profile of researchers who sit outside the more traditional teaching/research pathways. Senior colleagues are also in a unique position to support those researchers through some of the most challenging and potentially productive years of their careers. My employment was sustained by being offered work from mentors and peers who were aware of my

interests and availability, but my research track record was developed by growing my skills in writing publications and grants, and in accessing seed funding to develop smaller ideas into bigger ones. Ensuring research-only staff are eligible and encouraged to seek out these kinds of supports may offer some of the most dramatic returns from the investment. Similarly, opportunities to take part in conferences and other research-relevant meetings can prove essential to contract researchers, even if their lack of continuing employment may theoretically position them as a less reliable long-term investment to the institution.

Promotion can be a particular problem for contract researchers. Higher expectations of research outputs are often placed on research-only staff with little recognition of the many other demands on their time including producing non-academic outputs (eg, community reports and presentations), sitting on government and non-government committees, and drafting collaborative and multidisciplinary papers with multiple authors from different backgrounds. Many research-only academics have had to move from one project to another as the work becomes available, which can make it very difficult to develop a profile to the point of national and international recognition. A particularly harsh reality for some contract researchers is that career disruptions due to illness or parental/carer's leave can lead not only to unemployment, but also to a faltering track record that becomes progressively difficult to get back on course.

My particular experience has been much more positive than this. I have managed to survive each of the most risky stages, and my faculty and university have shown a great deal of support and encouragement for my developing career.

### **Conclusion**

Looking back at some of the turning points of my research trajectory to date, I can see that my late adolescent reluctance to focus on fine arts, medicine or any other specific undergraduate option has proved fortuitous. Rather than settling on one side of the perceived social/health and applied/conceptual divides, I have instead found the intersections between these a rich and rewarding environment for research work, alongside many other inspiring and interdisciplinary researchers. Contract researchers have no choice but to develop their own research interests within the scope of the projects on which they have been employed. While this can lead to great personal and professional anxiety, it can, as in my case, provide opportunities to explore a much more diverse range of ideas, theories and methods than may have been possible within a more singularly focused research field. I hope that in the next few years I can continue to seek out and develop my research interests in this kind of flexible (if unpredictable) mode, following new directions of inquiry according to changing needs in the community rather than a predetermined path.

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## Reflections on Ross Garnaut's Cunningham Lecture

*Don Aitkin*

Shoppers and citizens alike are urged everyday to buy this or do that, to pay more for 'green' energy, to ask Qantas to plant a tree, all to offset their greenhouse gas emissions. The content of Ross Garnaut's Cunningham Lecture is similarly accepting of the orthodoxy, and deals confidently with how best our government may attempt to mitigate anthropogenic global warming (AGW), or what he calls 'climate change'. The issue of AGW is vast, and one could write a hundred essays on aspects of it. In this one I look at just two themes, drawn from the lecture's title.

The title starts with a question. 'What if Mainstream Science is Right? The Rout of Knowledge and Analysis in Australian Climate Change Policy (and a Chance of Recovery?)'. The first theme is the obvious weakening of the confidence that Professor Garnaut displayed three years ago in his celebrated *Review*. Then he said this: 'The outsider to climate science has no rational choice but to accept that, on a balance of probabilities, the mainstream science is right' (page xi). Now he instead asks us to ponder the possibility that the mainstream science might actually be right. In the lecture Professor Garnaut explained that the political context of climate change in Australia had changed fundamentally: in 2007 both sides of politics were prepared to commit themselves to an emissions trading scheme, but in 2010 neither would do so. He sees the cause to be a shift backwards to short-term sectional politics, from what had been a theme of 'broadly based change to increase living standards in the reform era 1983-2001, at times requiring leaders to confront special interests'.

The much more powerful reason, surely, is that over the past two years the spectre of AGW has lost a great deal of its power to alarm both governments and electorates. Our politicians, like those in other Western countries, are talking about other things. 'Mainstream science', to use Professor Garnaut's term, is considerably less united and confident, and the learned academies are becoming much more circumspect in what they now say about climate change, the Royal Society having appropriately taken the lead. Let's consider that change first.

### **Anthropogenic global warming in decline**

The highpoint of the issue's salience, in at least the Western world, was the period leading up to the Copenhagen Climate Conference at the end of 2009. The conference drew something like 25,000 people, including many heads of state and prime ministers, representatives from 194 countries, and battalions of reporters, television crews and commentators. But it was, at least in terms of the expectations that had developed, an almost comic flop. Its successor, in Cancun in Mexico late last year, hardly rated a mention in the mainstream media.

A number of factors seem to have produced this dramatic shift in salience, the most powerful the fact that the major developing countries would not curtail their own economic development by reducing greenhouse gas emissions unless the developed countries paid them generously to do so. But the Western countries were and many still are in the grip of the Global Financial Crisis, and are not prepared to provide anything more than talk. Their own close attention has moved to deficits, unemployment and a feeble economy. President Obama hardly mentioned global warming in his recent State of the Union address. China and India, on the other hand,

have simply gone ahead in rapid economic development, whatever the consequences in greenhouse gas emissions.

The second, in my judgement, has been a growing feeling, around the political systems of the world, that the case against carbon dioxide, as the principal villain in all this, has been exaggerated and over-dramatised.

The third, which helps to explain the second, was a series of contemporaneous events that cast doubt on the objectivity and adherence to scientific principles of the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and its supporters. Shortly before the Copenhagen conference a great quantity of emails and computer files became available, either through whistle-blowing or through hacking, from the Climatic Research Unit (CRU) of the University of East Anglia in England, a principal supplier of scientific information to the IPCC and to climate science generally. The emails did not make comfortable reading, since they showed scientists colluding to suppress inconvenient articles attacking their own work, acting to avoid responding to freedom of information requests seeking data and code, and subverting the IPCC's own rules about publishing. Three inquiries held to investigate what has been called 'Climategate' purported to clear the scientists of any wrongdoing, but in my opinion none of these inquiries satisfies ordinary tests of conflict of interest and thoroughness.

A fourth was a series of mistakes and gaffes that centred on the IPCC and its Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) in 2007. Despite the IPCC's claim that its reliance on peer-reviewed scientific work was of gold standard, a close examination of the actual sources for much of the work cited showed that this was not so. Some of the cited work had even come from Greenpeace and the WWF. A claim in the AR4 that the Indian glaciers could melt by 2035 turned out to be both wrong and based on a journalist's story. A comparable exaggeration concerned prospects for the Amazonian rainforest.

Finally, despite the basic proposition that the world is warming up, and that the warming is due to human use of fossil fuels, both the 09/10 and 10/11 northern hemisphere winters have been unusually severe. Some AGW proponents can be found to argue that these severe winters are due to 'climate change', but since climate change is said to come from global warming, one is thus forced to argue that heating up can cause cooling down, which is an awkward proposition to put to most audiences. Indeed, the IPCC's third and fourth reports projected much higher temperatures for the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century than those shown by actual observations, a fact which caused one of the 'Climategate' emailers, Kevin Trenberth, to write to his colleagues that it was a 'travesty' that the predicted warming had not occurred. Since the highpoint of 1998, whatever global warming has occurred seems to have been subdued. Carbon dioxide continues to be added to the atmosphere, but warming has hardly followed.

Put together, these events and their consequences help to explain why people are less interested in AGW, and why the media have largely dropped the issue. In such issues governments tend to follow, not lead.

### **The 'blogosphere'**

The second theme is the odd notion that there has been some kind of 'rout of knowledge and analysis'. The climate change debate is alive and well in what is now called 'the blogosphere' — the set of websites all over the world interested in the issue. There are at least several hundred of them. Twenty years ago the world of what we now call 'climate science' hardly existed, and its output was confined to academic journals. The growth of the AGW issue, and the entry and astonishing spread of the

Internet, has changed all that. 'Peer-reviewed' journals are still the locus of important published work, but by and large the peer-review process operates to support orthodoxy, as it does in every field. Real debate in contentious areas takes place in the websites in response to published papers, and it is immediate. Long before a response to a given paper can go through the hoops of a peer-reviewed journal publication, the paper that called forth the response may already have been completely dissected in many websites, and argument about its point, methodology and conclusions may have raged on within, and between, rival websites, where hundreds of critics take part. Why, you might ask, does anyone take notice of what happens in cyberspace? Isn't most of it just opinionated nonsense? While this is a common reaction among academic specialists, it should be noted that many who participate in website discussions are retired or otherwise active scientists and academics who are highly competent in their own fields, and able to comment sensibly on published work. They may no longer have much interest in publishing themselves, and nor do they need to possess an alternative 'theory', but they find the intellectual pursuit in the AGW domain interesting and even exciting, as I do.

Websites like Judith Curry's 'Climate etc.' offer an extended and continuing seminar in every aspect of climate science, engaged in by people who are not only able scientists but often experienced communicators as well. In my judgement, what appears in our newspapers, radio or television about climate change is usually well behind what you can find on the web, and skimpy in comparison.

### **The central anthropogenic global warming proposition**

It might be useful here to remind readers of what is said to be the case about global warming. I think a fair summary of what I would style the central AGW argument runs as follows. I have drawn the first five elements from the Summary for Policy Makers of the AR4 in 2007, and the sixth from repeated stories in the media since 2007.

1. The earth is warming.
2. This warming is unprecedented.
3. The warming is caused by the human burning of fossil fuels.
4. The warming is dangerous to humanity, perhaps catastrophic.
5. The only way to prevent dangerous outcomes is to curtail greenhouse gas emissions.
6. Things are getting worse, not better.

These propositions should be familiar, because we have been hearing them for much of the last few years. Although I generally refer to 'supporters' of the orthodoxy and 'dissenters', in fact, it is more complicated. There are eminent scientists who support the orthodoxy, others who agree that the carbon dioxide is warming the atmosphere but don't think we know enough yet about its effect, still others who think that CO<sub>2</sub>'s effects will be slight, agnostics like me who find the data and argument unsatisfying, sceptics who know a lot about one or two (or more) aspects of the whole theory and plug away at those, and straight-out opponents who see AGW as a 'scam'.

### **The points of division**

Finally, what do they all argue about? A preliminary comment is that there is virtually no statement from within the AGW orthodoxy that cannot be contested in some way, given that AGW is based largely on conjecture. Yes, there are data, but the data are often equivocal, or come with large margins of error, or depend on smoothing and

adjustments of various kinds. Assumptions have to be made everywhere because we simply do not know a lot about the components of climate (see Table 2-11 of AR4's Working Group 1).

Take the simplest 'fact' of all — the 'agreed' warming of the earth over the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (about 0.7 degrees Celsius). At the moment a little over 1,000 thermometers cover the world's land, which is a big area (measuring temperature over the sea is altogether different). The number and placement of thermometers have changed considerably over time. The results have been 'adjusted' again and again. Most of the original instrumental data seem to have been lost. The best and most comprehensive data come from satellite measurements, but these only began in the 1970s — and they too come with their own limitations. I would have to say that the instrumental data seem just awful to me, nowhere near good enough to show indices to two decimal places, let alone the three used in talking of the 'global temperature anomaly' (whether or not this past year has been the hottest on record). Baldly, I doubt that we really know, or can know, the extent to which the earth warmed in the last century, if it warmed at all.

For 'unprecedented warming' we have to rely on proxies of various kinds. All of them come with problems of validity, reliability and error. We know from historical evidence that parts of the planet have known warm and cool periods long before human beings could have added much extra CO<sub>2</sub> to the atmosphere. There is great debate about how much the earth has warmed, how much of the warming is due to natural variability, whether or not temperatures are recovering from the Little Ice Age, and whether or not it was actually warmer in the medieval period. You can choose your position, and find data to support it. We will probably never know the extent to which the earth has warmed 'globally', let alone what that means. Those who hold to the AGW position seem sure that they are right. After four years of considerable study I can't see the grounds for such confidence.

Proposition three, the role of carbon dioxide, depends on the physics of atmospheric radiative transfer, and while this is the most robust component of climate models, both in theory and in the laboratory, a great deal depends in practice on what is called 'climate sensitivity' — that is, how climate actually works and the role within it of greenhouse gases other than carbon dioxide. To simplify: most participants, though not all, will accept that a doubling of CO<sub>2</sub> would by itself produce an increase of about 1 degree Celsius, which is not much. But that outcome will be much affected by the role of the main greenhouse gases, water vapour and its manifestation in clouds. AGW proponents see water vapour as greatly amplifying the warming caused by carbon dioxide, dissenters generally see the effect as much smaller, perhaps even as a minimisation. There are plausible arguments both ways, and not much solid evidence. Here, as elsewhere, the orthodoxy makes great use of ingenious computer models (General Circulation Models, or GCMs), but dissenters argue that we know too little about climate for such models to produce anything more than that with which they were fed. The key question, about which there is deep disagreement, is whether or not any technique available to us can distinguish the 'signal' of human activity from climate's natural variability.

The GCM models underpin the last three propositions, too. Whether warming is going to be dangerous for humanity or beneficial, where, and in what proportions, depends on the outcome of the models. Given the low level of scientific understanding of some of the variables in the climate models, and the need to make lots of estimates, it is not clear why we should take especial interest in what the models say. They do not

'predict', incidentally, but produce 'scenarios' or 'projections', on an 'if...then' basis. Scary projections usually make it to the media, which like scary stories. But we have had an awful lot of them in the last few years, and many people have begun to hear Matilda crying 'Fire'.

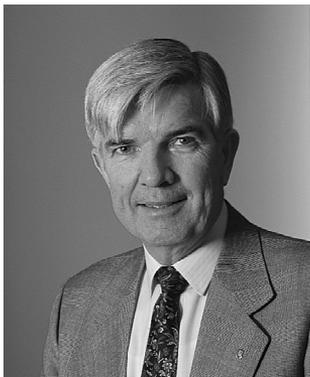
### Envoi

Despite the suggestion in the lecture's title that somehow knowledge and analysis have left the scene, I think the reverse is true. There is much more of both now, and much more of a debate, in early 2011, than there was in 2007 when I began to read and think about the issue. It puzzled me that Professor Garnaut made no mention of these matters in his lecture, and it puzzles me even more that his recent public paper is so upbeat about the perceived 'certainty' of the science — again, without any recognition that the scientific goalposts are no longer where they were in 2008. Of course, Professor Garnaut is responding to a government brief, but I feel a more dispassionate survey might have been more persuasive.

One of the people writing on Judith Curry's blog offered the opinion that he could not remember an issue where the stakes were so high and the signal-to-noise ratio so low. I wish I had thought of that line.

### Reading

Ross Garnaut's major contribution here is *The Garnaut Climate Change Review: Final Report*, Cambridge, Melbourne, 2008. The IPCC's reports can be obtained from its website, [www.ipcc.ch/](http://www.ipcc.ch/). For Climategate my favourite source is Steven Mosher and Thomas W Fuller, *Climategate: The CRUtape Letters*, CreateSpace, Lexington 2010. See also A W Montford, *The Hockey Stick Illusion*, Stacey International, London, 2010. For anyone who wants to observe the debate at a decently high level I recommend again Judith Curry's 'Climate etc.' which purports to be a bridge-building exercise to connect the contestants. If you want a good dissenting point of view, try [www.co2science.org](http://www.co2science.org). For the orthodox view go to [www.realclimate.org](http://www.realclimate.org).



**Don Aitkin** AO FASSA was Vice-Chancellor of the University of Canberra from 1991 to 2002. Over the past thirty years he has had extensive involvement in science and research policy, as Chairman of the Australian Research Grants Committee and of its successor, the Australian Research Council, of the Board of the Institute of Advanced Studies of the ANU, of the Australian Mathematics Trust, of the Multi-Disciplinary Assessment Committee of the Canada Foundation for Innovation, and as a member of the Australian Science and Technology Council, the blue-ribbon panel (peer review) of the Canada Humanities and Social Sciences Research Council, and of the Canada Excellence Research Chairs Committee.



## Academy News

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### International programs

#### Australia-India Symposium

#### Enhancing Human Security in the Context of Climate Change

**Bill Pritchard**

India and Australia share an unwanted distinction of being in the frontline of climate change. Both countries possess long coastlines with coastal populations vulnerable to sea level rise. Both are highly susceptible to drought and an increased intensity of extreme weather events. The populations of both countries are highly dependent on water from river systems that are forecast to come under increasing stress due to reduced rainfall in catchments and resultant declines in stream flows. Agriculture is vital to the economic and livelihood concerns of both countries. A consensus of global models suggests that an average global temperature rise of 4.4°C by 2080 would potentially reduce global agricultural productivity by up to 16 per cent, but the reductions in India and much of Australia could be as high as 25 per cent.

In June 2010, ASSA supported a two-day symposium in Mumbai addressing these issues. Titled 'Enhancing human security in the context of climate change', the event featured papers from 11 Australian and 11 Indian researchers. Drawing on their respective country-specific knowledge, participants sought to develop a comparative framework in which to examine and understand these issues by applying recent conceptual advances in the field of climate adaptation research to a range of specific themes in the two countries.

The symposium also received support from the University of Sydney's International Project Development Fund and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. The joint convenors of the symposium, Associate Professor Bill Pritchard from the University of Sydney and Associate Professor Madhushree Sekher from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, are preparing a book from the proceedings. The symposium has also forged a set of relationships between researchers, which will assist ongoing bilateral Indo-Australian social science initiatives. One indirect outcome from the symposium was the awarding of a Prime Minister's Australia-Asia Postgraduate Scholarship to a student from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, who will commence a PhD at the University of Sydney in 2012.



**Australia-China Exchange Program, 2010**  
**Thomas Wilkins**

I visited Beijing for 11 days in May 2010 under the ASSA-Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) Exchange Program. CASS kindly organised a comprehensive program of visits, meetings, participation in local events and lunches, all of which will feed into an article I am preparing on 'China's Strategic Partnerships'. I am seeking funding to complete the article at the National Taiwan University in the near future. I have employed an intern from Hong Kong to assist in this project on 'China's Strategic Partnerships' and will make follow-up visits to Beijing and Shanghai to finish it.

I was primarily hosted by the Institute of World Economics and Politics (IWEP) and the Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies (IAPS) at CASS. I had opportunities for one-to-one meetings and group discussion with academics and master's students throughout the program. The visit built my China-based network and laid the foundation for cross-collaboration for the future. I am now in touch with a number of researchers/scholars and media professionals based in Beijing. Among them were Professors Han Feng, Li Dongyan, Xi Yanbin, Yun Jie and others with whom I share overlapping research agendas. I intend to return to Beijing to renew these contacts in May 2011 for a workshop held by the MacArthur Foundation-sponsored 'Asian Security Initiative'. I also made contact with Professor Zhu Feng of the Center for International and Strategic Studies (CISS) at Peking University, who will be hosting the workshop.

During the exchange I was able to identify and collate new source material, and 'get inside' opinions on some of the key questions posed by my research. I am now better informed about China and genuine Chinese perspectives. Personal contacts facilitated my joining a Peking Duck dinner and address by China expert David Shambaugh. Other key American scholars in my field including Andrew Kuchins, Richard Samuels, and Mike Mochizuki were there, which proved an unexpected highlight of my visit.

The CASS International Office provided me with assistance for two cultural visits around Beijing tailored to my particular interests/research. One was to the Marco Polo Bridge (*Lugouqiao*), which is assigned the dubious distinction of being the place where the second Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937. I thoroughly explored the Memorial Museum of the Chinese People's Anti-Japanese War in Wanping nearby.

The other visit was to Tianjin less than two hours drive from Beijing where I was able to examine the former colonial settlements scattered throughout the city, and, most pleasingly, to discover a little-known museum dedicated to the Boxer Rebellion (1900) (*Yihetuan*). I took photographs which will be collated and combined with material from my visits to historical sites and museums in Beijing, Shanghai, Pyongyang, Tokyo, Saigon, Seoul for a dedicated seminar presentation on '*The role of historical memory in East Asian relations*'.

All these activities reaped substantial benefits for my research, teaching, and understanding of China and its history. It was a thoroughly enriching trip. I enjoyed being ambassador for ASSA, and exercising my rusty Mandarin skills.

I would like to thank ASSA and CASS for their generous support, and I would like to thank CASS personnel, who are too many to mention, for their time and interest and their hospitality.

## **Australia-France Social Sciences Collaborative Research Project Reconstruction and Morphological Study of Lapita Skeletons from Teouma Cemetery (Efate, Vanuatu)**

***Frederique Valentin***

The reconstruction and morphological study of human skeletons from the Lapita cemetery of Teouma (Vanuatu), the earliest and the largest of this period, offers a unique opportunity to describe physically the migrant Lapita groups of 3,000 years ago, currently known only through a limited number of individuals. The potential outcomes of this study are of significance for our understanding of human history worldwide. The project will allow better understanding of the first inhabitants of Southern Melanesia and Western Polynesia. It will also allow discussion of the ancestry both of Lapita people and of the first Polynesians.

### **Issues and background**

Several aspects of the South Pacific peopling are as yet enigmatic despite recent advances in archaeology, linguistics and genetics recognising dynamic processes of colonisation and subsequent transformations. Issues that are still the subject of vigorous debate include: the biological definition of Lapita groups who first colonised Southern Melanesia and West Polynesia 3000 years ago; the degree of Southeast Asian ancestry of the Lapita groups; the biological relationship between the Lapita groups and the Sahul and North Melanesia populations already there since 45000 years ago; and the biological relationship between Lapita migrant groups of 3000 years ago and the later populations of East Polynesia.

Molecular genetic and historical morphometric studies have contributed to clarification of these issues. However, most of them focus on the origins of Polynesian populations, neglecting the question of the origins of Southern Melanesian populations and their transformations over time. Moreover, the historical relevance of earlier studies is limited because they analyse living or recent (last few hundred years) populations that are certainly not fully representative of past populations due to various demographic and migratory events.

Consideration of biological characteristics of past populations is therefore crucial to achieve a better understanding of the peopling of the South Pacific region, one of the most remarkable chapters of world history. However, the only published study using ancient DNA characteristics (by Hagelberg and Clegg, 1993) was performed at the beginning of the use of the methodology, and it suffers from too many flaws to be considered convincing. Also, until recently, morphometric and morphological comparisons between early and late populations were similarly inconclusive due to the small size of the samples and the absence of early Lapita populations available for study.

The identification of the Lapita cemetery of Teouma on Efate Island (Vanuatu) in 2004, and subsequent excavations completed during five field seasons, have led to the recovery of 60 burials revealing complex funerary practices and human skeletal remains of Vanuatu's first Lapita settlers. These skeletal remains allow a re-examination of the above issues using the partly inherited metric and non-metric characteristics of the bones and teeth. Such a re-examination constitutes the general aim of the current project.

## **Results**

The operation of reconstruction and data collection, carried out in April-May 2010, has dealt with 14 burials uncovered in 2008 and 2009, temporarily curated in the Quarantine Laboratory of the Department of Archaeology and Natural History, The Australian National University, Canberra.

Individuals recovered in 2008 and 2009 at Teouma are mainly adults (13 of the 14 burials), of age at death varying from 30 to more than 50 years and generally over 40 years. Sex determination has identified six males and four females, the pelvic bones of the three other adults being insufficiently preserved or absent.

Laboratory findings add to the documentation of the complexity of the mortuary practices demonstrated by the field observations performed using the French methodology of 'anthropologie de terrain'. Bone inventories have shown the absence of the skull in all of them and the lack of sternum, clavicles and forearm bones in most, while evidence of an in situ decomposition of these anatomical parts is recorded. This confirms the systematisation of purposeful bone removal previously described at the site. Interestingly, the unique adolescent found at the site, displaying evidence of skull removal, received the same treatment as the adults, suggesting that individuals of that age had already reached adult status in the Lapita society of Teouma.

Previous reconstructions have documented specific discoveries such as purposeful alterations of skulls. These include cut marks on the occipital and modification of the shape of the occipital foramen, suggesting skull preparation and exhibition at the end of a pole. The present operation has failed to identify further artificial bone modification but alterations due to animals, including rodent gnawing, were noted on several bones and in several burials, confirming the loose nature of the sediment covering the bodies.

A preliminary analysis of these data indicates that all the observable femoral heads possess an oval shaped fovea capitis (for the ligatum teres), a trait frequent in Polynesian populations, while present in various other populations as well. Breadths of long bone extremities express the robustness of the Teouma skeletons. Preliminary comparisons with series of skeletons from Polynesia suggest an important diversity among the Teouma individuals, with individuals inscribed respectively in the male and female Polynesian variability as well as individuals both more gracile and more robust than the Polynesian individuals used in the comparison. These metric and non-metric observations highlight the uniqueness of the Teouma Lapita group, displaying morphological characteristics apparently rare in more recent Polynesian groups, but suggesting that they may have played a role in Polynesian ancestry.

## **Concluding remarks**

Research results will contribute to co-authored articles between French and Australian colleagues, as well as to conferences for the scientific community and co-authored documents or talks for a wider audience, including ni-Vanuatu students and members of the public. A co-authored seminar on Teouma cemetery discoveries and the French methodology of 'anthropologie de terrain' was presented to Masters students of the ANU School of Archaeology and Anthropology on May 10 2010, and individual students were able to observe and, in one case, participate directly in the analyses. Further analyses and publications are planned with the co-directors of the Teouma project, Professor Matthew Spriggs and Dr Stuart Bedford of the ANU.

## **Public Forums Program**

### **2010 events**

The 2010 annual events were all well attended, with the Cunningham Lecture filling the Shine Dome to capacity.

The Fellows' Colloquium, on 8 November 2010, was on the theme 'The Degradation of the Professional Capacity of the Australian Public Service(s) with Regard to Effective Policy Development and Implementation', and was chaired by Anna Yeatman (FASSA), with speakers Sue Vardon AO, Lyn Carson and Janine O'Flynn.

The 2010 Symposium, convened by Michael Bittman, Duncan Ironmonger, Dorothy Broom and Sue Richardson, on the theme 'Family Fortunes and the Global Financial Crisis', was held on 9 November 2010. Proceedings may be published at a later date and versions of some of the papers presented appear in this issue of *Dialogue*.

Ross Garnaut presented the 2010 Cunningham Lecture on the topic 'What if Mainstream Science is Right? The Rout of Knowledge and Analysis in Australian Climate Change Policy (and a Chance of Recovery?)'. The lecture was published as Academy Proceedings 1/2010 and is available online at: <http://www.assa.edu.au/publications/proceedings/file.php?id=62>. A video recording of the lecture is also available on the ASSA website.

### **2011 events**

#### **2011 Paul Bourke Lecture**

Dr Christy Newman, the recipient of the 2010 Paul Bourke Award for Early Career Research will present the 2011 Paul Bourke Lecture at the University of New South Wales, at a date to be confirmed, most likely in July-August.

#### **2011 Fay Gale Lecture**

Nominations for the 2011 Fay Gale Lecture closed at the end of February 2011. It is expected that the lecture will be given in the second half of 2011.

#### **ASSA AGM, Colloquium and Annual Symposium**

The Annual General Meeting and related events this year will take place in Canberra on 7-9 November 2011.

The Symposium, convened by Tim Rowse (FASSA), Geoff Lawrence (FASSA), Elspeth Probyn (FAHA) and Mark Howden (CSIRO), will be on the topic of 'Food Regimes'.

## **Workshop Program**

### **2010-11 workshops**

'Rethinking Australian Research on Migration and Diversity'. Convened by Stephen Castles (FASSA, USyd), Ellie Vasta (UWS). 9-10 August 2010.

'The Hybridisation of the State: Past, Present, Future'. Convened by Linda Weiss (FASSA, USyd), Ronnie Lipshutz (UC Santa-Cruz), Beatrice Hibou (CERI, Paris). 13-14 July 2010.

'Understanding Emotions: An Interdisciplinary Workshop'. Convened by Phillipa Maddern (UWA), David Badcock (FASSA, UWA), Andrew Lynch (UWA). 24-25 September 2010

'Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Inter-country Adoption in Australia: History, Policy, Practice and Experience'. Convened by Denise Cuthbert (Monash), Shurlee Swain (FASSA, ACU), Marian Quartly (Monash). 30 September - 1 October 2010.

'Contesting Neo-liberalism and its Future'. Convened by Damien Cahill (USyd), Frank Stilwell (FASSA, USyd), Belinda Edwards (ANU). 2-3 December 2010.

### **International Science Linkages workshops**

'Psychoanalysis and Politics: Histories of Psychoanalysis and Political Repression'. Convened by Joy Damousi (FASSA, Melbourne), 9-10 September 2010.

'Security and Stability in Southern Philippines: Implications for Australia and the Region'. Convened by Mary Ann Palma (Wollongong), Victor Prescott (Melbourne) and Rommel Banlaoi (Philippines Institute for Peace, Violence and Terrorism Research), 28-29 September 2010.

'Transition and Challenge: Health and Mortality in East and Southeast Asia'. Convened by Peter McDonald (FASSA, ANU), Zhongwei Zhao (ANU) and Adrian Hayes (ANU), 25-27 October 2010.

'Is Complexity the New Framework for the Study of Global life?' Convened by Anna Yeatman (FASSA, Western Sydney) and Emilian Kavalski (Western Sydney), 19-20 January 2011.

### **Forthcoming workshops**

'Whither Australia's Children's Courts? Contemporary Challenges and Future Prospects'. Convened by Allan Borowski (FASSA, La Trobe) and Rosemary Sheehan (Monash). 17- 18 February 2011.

'Work and Employment Relations in an Era of Global Change'. Marian Baird (Sydney), Keith Hancock (FASSA, Adelaide and Flinders) Joe Isaac AO (FASSA, Melbourne). 31 March -1 April 2011.

### *International Science Linkages workshops*

'Australian and International Perspectives on the Cosmopolitan Civil Sphere'. Convened by Ian Woodward (Griffith University), Zlatko Skrbis (University of Queensland) and Robert Holton (FASSA, Trinity College, Dublin). 28-29 April 2011.

### **Support for other workshops**

The Academy contributed funds towards the costs of workshops convened under the auspices of the Australian Dictionary of Biography ('The Seven Dwarfs and the Age of the Mandarins', 4-5 November 2010) and the Federal Elections series ('The Australian Election Workshop', 8-9 October 2010). Both were held in Canberra.

### **2011-12 workshops**

The call for proposals for the 2011-12 round of workshops closed on 29 October 2010. The Workshops Committee received 18 applications for funding, and, from an extremely competitive field, selected eight for full or partial funding from the 2011-12 program. They are:

'Family, Work and Wellbeing over the Life Course'. Convened by Belinda Hewitt (Queensland), Lyn Craig (UNSW), Janeen Baxter (FASSA, Queensland). 20-21 October 2011.

'Purposes Beyond Ourselves: Power and Principle in Foreign Policy'. Convened by Matt McDonald (Queensland), Tim Dunne, (Queensland), Robyn Eckersley (FASSA, Melbourne). 13-14 July 2011.

'Religion and Social Policy in Australia and Neighbouring Countries'. Convened by Peter Saunders (FASSA, UNSW), Minako Sakai (UNSW). October-November 2011.

'Neurolaw in Australia — Revealing the Hidden Impact of Neuroscience and Behavioural Genetics on Australian Law'. Convened by Wayne Hall (FASSA, Queensland), Jeanette Kennett (Macquarie), Nicole Vincent (Macquarie). 14-15 July 2011.

'Australian Women's Non-Government Organisations and Government: An Evolving Relationship?' Convened by Marian Sawer (FASSA, ANU), Patricia Grimshaw (FASSA, Melbourne), Judith Smart (Melbourne). 29-30 November 2011.

'Cultures of Humanitarianism: Perspectives from the Asia-Pacific Region'. Convened by Jacinta O'Hagan (ANU), William Maley (FASSA, ANU), Miwa Hirono (Nottingham, UK). July 2011.

'The Paradox of Melancholia: Paralysis and Agency'. Convened by Anthony Elliott (FASSA, Flinders), Jennifer Rutherford (Flinders), Brian Castro (Adelaide). June 2012.

'Australian State Politics and Policy in Transition: The Case of NSW'. Convened by Rodney Smith (Sydney), Murray Goot (FASSA, Macquarie). 4-5 July 2011.

### **2012-13 workshop program**

Applications for the 2012-13 workshop program will be invited in the first half of 2011.



## Reports from Workshops

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### Understanding Emotions: An Interdisciplinary Workshop

**Andrew Lynch, Susan Broomhall, Philippa Maddern**

The workshop was intended to provide a forum for an intensely interdisciplinary discussion of the problems of studying human emotions between sets of disciplines (medieval and early modern studies, experimental science) that are often seen as so widely separated that little meaningful collaboration can take place.

To this end, in September 2010, we invited twenty top Australian researchers, from six universities, in the fields of social and intellectual history, religious studies, English literature and cultural studies, Latin studies, philosophy, visual arts, music and performance practice, museology, philosophy, business psychology, social psychology, experimental psychology, neuro-psychiatry, and population health, to a two-day symposium at the University of Western Australia, hosted by UWA's Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies (CMEMS).

The group included three Early Career Researchers. Our funding from ASSA enabled us to leverage sponsorship from the Institute of Advanced Studies (UWA) and the Elizabeth Rutherford Centre for Advanced Research on the Emotions (UWA). We were also able to invite the president of the International Society for Research on Emotion (ISRE), Professor Gerrod Parrott (Psychology, University of Georgetown, USA), to deliver an opening public lecture as well as attend the workshop as a commentator and discussion leader.

#### **The social functioning of emotions**

In the last twenty years, in the words of Professor Ottmar Lipp (the opening speaker, Psychology, UQ), there has been a:

renaissance of emotion as a topic of psychological research and a changed view of emotion in the context of psychological functioning.

Basically, what was regarded for a long time as a hindrance for optimal psychological functioning is now regarded as a prerequisite.

Not only has the study of the physiology and psychology of emotion intensified in recent years, but social scientists, social psychologists and historians have started to seriously address the questions of the social functioning of emotions, the extent to which even the production (let alone the expression and regulation) of emotions may be socially and culturally conditioned, and the extent to which individual and social emotions may change over time. In 2009, the long-running International Society for Research on Emotion (ISRE) established a refereed journal, *Emotion Review*, 'to enhance debate about critical issues in emotion theory and research ... across a wide interdisciplinary field'. Two of its contributors, James A Russell and Lisa Feldman Barrett assert that:

For humans to understand their place in the world, we need to understand the nature of emotion. Such understanding will occur only when scholars from different national and cultural backgrounds, different disciplines, and different points of view can communicate their ideas and scholarly investigations to one another and consider perspectives that are different

from their own. We must work toward a common language and understanding.

Despite these developments, there has been little dialogue in the Australian university system between practitioners working on the subject from their widely different disciplinary backgrounds.

### **Beginning an interdisciplinary dialogue**

Our workshop, then, acted to break down some of those disciplinary walls. To ensure intense cross-disciplinary discussion, the workshop was structured into sessions, each with a primary paper, posted beforehand on the CMEMS website. For each session, two participants from very different disciplines to the speaker were asked to provide ten-minute responses to the primary paper. Thus, the responses to Professor Lipp's opening paper, 'The state of emotions in modern psychological research' came from the disciplines of music and medieval English literature. Dr Danijela Kambaskovic-Sawer's paper on 'The aging of love: Physiology, philosophy and poetry', on readings of Plato's views on love and enthusiasm in pre-modern poetry, attracted responses from the disciplines of neuropsychiatry and philosophy. Responses to Professor Stephanie Trigg's cultural studies paper on changing emotional responses to fire over the long term, from the Great Fire of London to the present day, came from the disciplines of population health and history/museology.

As well as these issue-and-response sessions we scheduled four open discussion sessions around such broad topics as 'Do societies undergo changes in emotional regimes (for instance, the dominance of particular emotions, such as fear, or aggression)? If so, what drives these changes?' or 'How can scholars in the social sciences and humanities benefit from the methodologies and findings of modern scientific research into the emotions? How might the historical understanding of past mentalities relate to modern neuroscience and physiology?'

It is fair to say that some of us approached this challenging format with a degree of trepidation. Would disciplinary methodologies prove so diverse as to be mutually incomprehensible? Could we even find a common language in which to discuss the study of emotion? If (for instance) fear can now be demonstrated to manifest as a common and well-understood neurophysiological process, (involving a set of neurological pathways leading to stimulus of the amygdala), is anything significant left for historians to discover about its manifestation in pre-modern contexts?

### **Finding a common language**

In fact the format proved a brilliant success. All participants joined eagerly in the lively debates. All reported a greatly enhanced understanding of the range of questions and approaches necessary to a full comprehension of emotion in both its individual and social contexts, with a concomitantly heightened enthusiasm and engagement in their subject. For example, the new experimental discoveries on the brain physiology of fear provided the basis for an excellent discussion on psychologists' understandings of the point at which, in emotional genesis, social and cultural constructs affect the production of emotion. This led to discussion of what humanities and social science researchers might need to consider in order to contribute to a full understanding of emotional genesis.

Each set of disciplines produced tough questions for the others to consider. On the production of fear, for example, early modernists pointed out that the word 'fear' encompassed a slightly different range of meanings in the early modern period than it

does today, including the definition of fear as justified awe and respect often of the divine (as in the early 17<sup>th</sup> Century King James' Bible translation, 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom'). Can we be sure that this fear would also manifest as stimulation of the amygdala through certain known neurological pathways? In other words, did 17<sup>th</sup> century people attribute a different meaning to the same physiological phenomenon, or were they applying the one term (fear) to two different physical phenomena? The group decided that an approach to settling this point could be made only if experimental psychologists were to carry out tests on modern populations (Amish? devout Hindus?) who retain a sense of numinous awe. Conversely, psychologists and neuro-psychiatrists challenged humanities researchers' use of the term 'emotional regimes'? What does it mean? How could an emotional regime be identified or demonstrated? Does the term connote merely a loose social and cultural norm centring around the appropriateness of emotional expression, or does it imply a sense of regulation, often of communal emotion, by the powerful of the comparatively powerless, for political ends?

### **Outcomes**

This workshop will, we believe, result in both comparatively short-term outputs (publications), and long-term and less tangible but perhaps more valuable outcomes, such as more frequent and higher-level communications between researchers in different disciplines, a better appreciation of the values and limitations of each disciplinary approach by the others, and enhanced collaborative cross-disciplinary research. The three participants of one session, for instance, have been invited to submit their papers for publication in *Emotion Review*, the journal of ISRE.

The workshop has enabled us to recruit Professor Gerrod Parrot to the Advisory Board of the recently funded ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of the Emotions (Europe 1100-1800). Professor Parrott will attend the international conference on pre-modern emotions to be held at UWA in June 2011, sponsored jointly by CMEMS and the ARC Centre for the History of Emotions. Conversely, Humanities researchers will join the ISRE, and attend its forthcoming conference in Japan in July 2011. Professor Colin MacLeod (Psychology) and Professor Jane Davidson (Music Performance Practice), both participants at the workshop, will in future collaborate on research on audience emotions generated in response to music, and will both be involved in running an international symposium in 2011 on 'The Power of Music'.

In short, this workshop turned an intense interdisciplinary focus onto major research questions in the current study of emotions; set up lively cross-disciplinary discussions of fundamental understandings of emotions and the terms of the debate surrounding them; discovered research synergies between vastly different fields and methodologies; raised challenging questions for all participants; and enabled the establishment and development of collaborative research efforts for the future.



## **Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Inter-country Adoption in Australia: History, Policy, Practice and Experience**

**Denise Cuthbert**

This workshop was funded by ASSA in conjunction with the Schools of Political and Social Inquiry and Philosophy (PSI) and Historical and International Studies (SOPHIS), Monash University, the Australian Catholic University and the Inter-country Adoption Branch of the Department of the Attorney-General. It was held at Monash University, Caulfield Campus on 30 September and 1 October, 2010 and convened by Denise Cuthbert of Monash University.

The event, which was closed to the general public, brought together policy makers, social science researchers and members of adoption communities to consider the origins, present practice and future of inter-country adoption (ICA) through the interdisciplinary lens of social science disciplines including history, sociology, demography, law, social work, and anthropology.

The two-day workshop included presentations by 15 speakers. With support from Monash University and the Australian Catholic University, the workshop was able to host Korean-born, American-raised and educated film-maker Tammy Chu who gave a presentation accompanying a rare Australian screening of her film *Resilience* which documents the reunion of an American Korean inter-country adoptee with his Korean mother and the rise of birth mother advocacy and support in Korea.

### **From the global to the local**

Proceedings commenced with a keynote address by Professor Peter Selman, a Visiting Fellow in the School of Geography, Politics and Sociology, Newcastle University. Selman is the leading authority on the demography of ICA. In his presentation, 'The global decline of inter-country adoptions: What lies ahead?', Selman examined the latest trends in ICA worldwide. The analysis concentrated on the period from 2004 to 2009 when estimated annual global numbers declined from 45,000 to 29,000, fewer than those recorded in 1998. The paper concluded with a consideration of the implications of continuing high 'demand' from childless couples in rich developed countries and the prediction of David Smolin that, unless truly reformed, ICA will eventually be abolished and labelled a 'neo-colonial mistake'.

The first panel session presented views from the Commonwealth and Victorian governments on the rapidly changing nature of ICA, and a presentation by the Chief Federal Magistrate, the Honourable John Pascoe, outlining the fine line between the movement of children for adoption and their trafficking.

Kerri-Anne Smith, from the Inter-country Adoption Branch of the Department of the Attorney-General, outlined the Commonwealth's experience and challenges in facing the changing nature of ICA. She charted the shift from the 2005 report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Human Services (the Bishop Report) which signalled unequivocal support for ICA and recommended the opening of new programs, harmonising state and territory practices and reducing 'red tape'. The realities of ICA in 2010 call for a different approach, prompted by the changing characteristics of children in need of overseas adoption, longer waiting times, compliance with the Hague Convention of 1993, risk management, trafficking and other issues.

### **A focus on the child**

The second panel presented both historical and critical legal perspectives on adoption, the 'adoptable child', the role of the professions in adoption and the rights of children. Shurlee Swain's presentation 'Shifting definitions of "the adoptable child" in the language of people seeking to adopt and to place children, 1860-1960' demonstrated that while discomfort about the notion of adoption as facilitating a market in children has been one of the major motivations for regulation and control, the signs of the marketplace lurk close to the surface of the history of adoption in Australia.

In 'We find families for children, not children for families: Professionals and consumers at odds over inter-country adoption', Marian Quartly examined the historical experience and the self-understandings of those around the table — as activists, as citizens, as professionals — for what this tells us about the long history of tensions between child-focused approaches to adoption and what may be termed adoption-focused approaches to children in need in the making of policy and practice in Australian ICA. This panel concluded with a paper by Judy Cashmore (University of Sydney) 'Making space for the voice and views of the child in family law' in which she argued that children have experiences and perspectives that can inform the decision-making process and need to be taken into account in making decisions about children's living arrangements and family composition — including adoption and foster placement and post-separation arrangements.

The theme of the third panel, 'Different ways of doing family', sought to bring critical perspectives from gay and lesbian studies, and from work on foster care, to bear on considerations of ICA. In her paper, 'Lesbian and gay parented families: Structure, outcomes for children and implications for adoption law and policy', Deborah Dempsey (Swinburne) gave a brief overview of the now extensive literature indicating good developmental outcomes for children raised in same-sex couple families and looked at the implications for adoption law and policy of lesbian- and gay-parented families in light of recent Australian and international research.

### **International legal frameworks**

On the second day, the first panel saw presentations by Patricia Fronek (Griffith) and Denise Cuthbert (Monash) which questioned operating assumptions in ICA in Australia and overseas. Fronek's paper 'The future of inter-country adoption: A paradigm shift for this century?' argued that thinking that focuses solely on individual solutions for individual children is outmoded, and approaches that address the structural issues that separate children from their families are called for. Fronek argued for a shift in paradigm from the legalistic to the socioecological in managing ICA in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Also questioning the adequacy and child-centredness of international legal frameworks for ICA, Denise Cuthbert's paper, 'Inter-country adoption, the global care of children and the "failure of national politics"' began with the assessment of legal scholar Kerry O'Halloran that ICA arises from a 'failure of national politics' in sending countries with which national politics in receiving countries are complicit. Using this as a starting point, the paper asked whether the trans-national instrument of the Hague Convention (1993), which is commonly viewed as protecting the rights of children, is sufficient to overcome the deficiencies in national politics of which O'Halloran writes, concluding that it was not and as a result is compromised in its protection of the rights of children.

### **A focus on the adoptive parents**

The second panel foregrounded research into inter-country adoptive parents, with presentations by two early career researchers, Joshua Forkert (Adelaide) and Indigo Willing (Queensland), and the work of Damien W Riggs (Flinders). In 'When the war is over: Legitimizing inter-country adoption in Australia, 1968-1975', Forkert traced the rise of adoptive parents' activism from the mid-1970s, at the closing stages of the Vietnam War in which they advocated adoption as a humanitarian and morally responsible act, to its culmination in the Australian Government's participation in the mass airlifts of children known as 'Operation Babylift' before the fall of Saigon in April 1975. This paper examined how this parent movement interacted with government authorities, professional social workers and voluntary groups in Vietnam to legitimise inter-country adoption as a social practice in Australia and to influence the formation of official policy.

In her paper 'Trans-national adoptive parents in Australia: Cosmopolitan horizons, cross-border ties and issues of race', Willing examined the life experiences and outlooks on diversity that 'ordinary' Australian trans-nationally adoptive parents bring to the practice. It reported on research with 35 trans-nationally adoptive parents raising children whom they have adopted from various countries in Asia and also from Ethiopia. Willing found that most parents in the study grappled with issues of racism and processes of white racial privilege. There also appeared to be a lack of formal avenues for these parents to gain mentoring from people who share the racial and ethnic background of adoptees. She concluded that more attention needs to be given to issues of race in adoption education and post-adoption support services, and more people from diverse backgrounds should be included in the development and delivery of such services.

In his presentation 'Other people's children too: Practice of naming and belonging in adoptive and foster families', Damien W Riggs (Flinders) contrasted the practice whereby foster parents are often discouraged from assuming the title of 'mum' or 'dad' on the grounds that that this will confuse children or deny the ongoing role of birth parents, with the practice in adoption where the opposite is true. Using this as a starting point, the paper considered the ethical responsibility that rests with birth parents to develop practices of kinship and belonging that celebrate the 'birth' of the adoptive family while also honouring ongoing connections to birth families.

The final panel session presented perspectives often missing from public discussions of ICA in Australia: the adoptee voice, and the perspectives and insights from other episodes of child removal in our history. Early career researcher and independent scholar, Jessica Walton presented a paper, 'Re-visiting the "unknown": What it means to be adopted from the perspectives of Korean adoptees'. In particular, it addressed the on-going challenge of reclaiming what is often a largely 'unknown' part of the adoptee's identity and making it into something meaningful. In her paper, 'Inter-country Adoption: Are we creating another stolen generation?' Evelyn Robinson (Member, National Inter-country Adoption Advisory Group, NICAAG) reflected on the development of ICA in Australia in the contexts of domestic child adoption and the removal of Indigenous children. She suggested that ICA has proceeded without close scrutiny of the values which underpin the transfer of children through adoption from one family to another. The ethical viability of ICA, Robinson concluded, must be assessed with the benefit of the knowledge which we already have of past Australian experiences of adoption and family separation.

### **Where to now?**

The workshop concluded with a Policy Forum chaired by Shurlee Swain, which focused on the need for more Australian research into ICA and for more effective dissemination of the findings of this research. This session provoked animated discussion and a number of key themes that had emerged over the previous two days were revisited. These included the issue raised by Peter Selman in his opening keynote address, that contemporary ICA is changing very rapidly and no longer bears much resemblance to the version of ICA circulating in popular discourse. Discussants observed the need to reduce the gap between popular understandings of ICA and its contemporary reality, and the need to think of options other than adoption for the care of children — many older, many with special needs — who are now entering the adoption market.

Many workshop participants were keen to explore the concept of inter-country fostering, while others saw poverty reduction and family preservation measures in sending countries as the best option for children. The need for a 'new paradigm' in which to think about and deliver policies in this area resonated through the forum. Selman cautioned that ICA may be some way from ideal but for many children in the present moment it provides their best chance of life and education.

A proposal for a special issue of the international journal *Social Policy and Society*, which will include selected papers from this workshop, is currently under consideration by the editorial board of that journal.



### **Hybridisation of the State: Past, Present, Future**

***Linda Weiss***

Held at the University of Sydney in July 2010, this workshop brought together an international group of scholars of the state, global civil society, and international political economy, including early career and senior scholars from Australia, North America, and Europe, to examine the logic underlying the process of 'public-private hybridisation' of state-provided functions, businesses and services.

This phenomenon has been attributed to the neo-liberal turn in politics and economics. The workshop engaged with the idea that hybridisation represents a reorganised form of governmental rule and authority, both within and between states, that serves to maintain and even reassert state power in new ways that extend also to the international arena.

Previous workshops have been held in Paris and New York, with support from the France-Berkeley Fund and the International Studies Association (ISA), New York. The Sydney workshop thus formed part of an ongoing program of study strongly supported internationally. It was the third and final event, with primary support from ASSA, and supplementary support from the School of Social and Political Sciences, and the Institute for Social Sciences, at the University of Sydney, together with travel support from the ISA. The international leaders of the project, titled 'The Public-Private

Hybridization of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century State', are Professor Ronnie D Lipschutz, Dr Beatrice Hibou and Dr Shelley Hurt.

### **The rise of the hybrids**

It is often assumed in discussions of neo-liberal policies that the boundaries between the public and private sectors have been not only redrawn but also reinforced by a number of processes, such as privatisation and outsourcing. However, instead of producing clear delineations between the activities of state agencies and private economic actors, the era of neo-liberalism has witnessed increasing fluidity of state-market boundaries, complex partnerships between public and private actors, and the widespread creation of new hybrid forms that belie the state-market dichotomy at the conceptual core of (neo)liberalism.

The workshop's framing paper was delivered by the program organisers, Professor Ronnie Lipschutz of the University of California, Santa Cruz and Dr Shelley Hurt of Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo, in a presentation entitled 'The Chimerical State: Public-Private Hybridization in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century'. This arresting title refers to the mythological 'Chimera' — half one creature and half another, that has special powers attributed to it in mythological accounts. The authors made the point that a range of public-private hybrids have emerged over the course of the past decade which seem to be neither traditional public agencies nor traditional private sector organisations but hybrids — 'chimeras'.

Examples range from government co-owned venture capital funds (like Australia's Innovation Investment Fund, or the CIA's In-Q-Tel venture fund), to military services companies (like Blackwater and Armorgroup), to international regulatory bodies (like the International Organisation for Standardisation). In their mix of ownership, funding, and goal-setting, these are neither strictly public nor privatised agencies, but a distinctive blend of each — in short, hybrids. Understanding their drivers, rationale, and consequences, as well as the extent of their diffusion — not just in the US but internationally — were key questions for the workshop.

Lipschutz and Hurt adopted a broad view of hybridisation that included the outsourcing of social welfare tasks to non-governmental organisations; the phenomenon of 'corporate social responsibility' through which companies, rather than states, propose to protect the environment; and the transfer of public property rights to private parties, notably patenting.

### **Neo-liberal bureaucratisation and the consequences for democracy**

Taking a different tack, the paper of Beatrice Hibou (National Centre for Scientific Research, France) on 'Neo-liberal Bureaucratisation' argued that public private hybridisation of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century state creates new (neo-liberal) forms of bureaucratisation in both public and private arenas. These 'new' forms find expression in the proliferation of standards (the ISO being one of her cases), procedures, bureaucratic practices, routinised rules, and so on (rather than in administration in the institutional sense). Analytically, they range from new public management, modes of regulation of the private sector and development of technical, management, accounting and social standardisation to development aid, justice and security, borders management, and the fight against economic crime. In highlighting consequences, she noted that neo-liberal bureaucratisation, as an expression of public-private hybridisation, produces control and surveillance, questions the independence of intermediate bodies, and undermines public liberties.

The scope and diversity of public-private hybrids defies easy generalisation. Linda Weiss, University of Sydney, emphasised this point in choosing to focus on the post-1980's emergence and growth of 'developmental hybrids' in the US setting. Specifically, these involve government-owned and government-funded venture capital firms and technology commercialisation ventures that blend public and private elements in new ways to achieve national security objectives. In her presentation 'US Developmental Hybrids: Side-stepping the antistatist constraint?', Weiss argued that (developmental) hybridisation challenges the liberal perspective precisely because it involves integrating the state in economic-entrepreneurial endeavours rather than effecting its removal. She also proposed that hybrids have become a favoured policy response in the United States because they resolve the tensions inherent in a system that not only demands technological supremacy (in order to maintain global pre-eminence), but also a relatively weak or small state.

Like Hibou, workshop co-convenor Shelley Hurt also discussed the implications for democratic politics, proposing that the emergence of public-private partnerships within the United States reduces government transparency and diminishes democratic accountability. The consequences of these partnerships are evident in several well-known cases in the post-9/11 era, such as the CIA's extraordinary rendition program, the outsourcing of intelligence gathering to the telecommunications industry, and Halliburton and Blackhawk's participation in Iraq. However, it was noted that the US government began outsourcing and privatising public functions in many other areas well before 9/11. One of the most prominent of these is federal science policy. Based on her analysis of US bio-defence policies from the 1970s up to the present day, Hurt proposed that the US government has increasingly relied on public-private partnerships to avoid public oversight of weapons research. Arguably, this process transforms the basis of governmental authority by expanding a regime of hybrid rule that encloses the public domain.

### **Sovereign wealth funds**

The emergence of Sovereign Wealth Funds (SWFs) in both developing and developed countries offers another example of hybridisation that formed the basis of Herman Schwartz's presentation ('Revenge of the SWF? Hybridization and the expansion of political capitalism'). While their recent rise has been portrayed either as the return of state power or as portending a diminution of US global economic power, neither notion is well grounded. Schwarz (University of Virginia) used Weber's concept of 'political capitalism' and an understanding of commodity chains to argue that rather than 'returning', state power in markets has shifted its location and form. In the 'neo-liberal' period, the US state exercised power in both financial and goods markets in order to assure its own growth and to capture growth elsewhere for US-headquartered firms. The US sought liberalisation of developmental states' banking systems in order to capture a piece of the action for US banks and to open markets for goods firms closely connected to the US state (eg, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, aircraft). This exercise succeeded on its own terms but provoked a shift in developmental states' strategies. Their effort at control shifted from targeted industrial finance to exchange rate targeting and the accumulation of trade surpluses in central banks and other state organisations. Sovereign Wealth Funds are the visible manifestation of this strategy. They permit developmental states to continue suppressing domestic demand while targeting strategic nodes in value chains. In this sense, global capitalism remains a 'political' rather than a 'competitive' capitalism.

Subsequent discussion examined the idea that a common thread tying these diverse developments together was an effort on the part of national governments to address legitimacy concerns. This led to a discussion of the governance of hybrids, in particular their ethical and political dimensions. The extent to which hybrid developments address legitimacy concerns, yet in turn create negative implications for democratic politics and public accountability, is a core issue that deserves close attention by policymakers and researchers alike.

### **Outcomes**

Workshop papers will be published in a book, edited by Ronnie Lipschutz and Shelley Hurt, entitled *The Hybridised State: Past, Present, Future*. A special journal issue is under consideration (eg, in *International Organization* or a comparable journal), for which revised versions of the papers will be sought. It is anticipated that working versions of the contributions will be posted on a project web site sometime later this year. It is also anticipated that project participants will present their final chapters at the annual conference of the ISA in Montreal in March 2011.

The organisers and participants thank the Academy for its financial support.



## **Rethinking Australian Research on Migration and Diversity**

***Stephen Castles, Graeme Hugo and Ellie Vasta***

Social science research on international migration and its significance for societies has grown rapidly since the late 1980s. Special research centres, journals and conferences have proliferated in Europe, North America and more recently in Asia, Latin America and Africa. Closer links between migration and diversity research and broader social theory has been an important trend. The debate on the need to overcome methodological nationalism and to build transnational social sciences has involved much closer attention to human mobility and its role in shaping social relationships. Similarly, understanding of the political and practical significance of human mobility has grown, and migration researchers have advised national governments and international bodies such as the Global Commission on International Migration (2003-5) and the Global Forum on Migration and Development (an annual event since 2007).

A curious aspect of this trend has been the relatively low profile of Australian researchers. Australian migration and multiculturalism research was highly developed and well linked to policy formation from the 1970s to the mid-1990s. But Australian social-scientific concern with these issues appears to have declined — no doubt partly as a reflection of changing political agendas which led to the abolition in 1996 of the Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research (BIMPR) and the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. Several special university research centres quickly followed. Although some Australian researchers continue with important and innovative work on international migration and diversity, they play a limited role in national and international debates.

The central aim of the ASSA workshop 'Rethinking Australian Research on Migration and Diversity', held at the University of Sydney in August 2010, was to explore ways of strengthening Australian research in this important field, and to think through strategies for reconnecting it both to mainstream social science and international debates.

The convenors brought together a mix of older and younger researchers, including some who had played an important part in the pre-1996 migration research institutions, as well as those currently active in various areas of migration and diversity research. The workshop was interdisciplinary and brought together economists, geographers, sociologists, political scientists and anthropologists, among others. Two overseas speakers (one each from India and New Zealand) were included to provide international perspectives. A prominent representative of the business community took part. Invitations were also issued to government officials, but their participation was prevented by the looming election. Altogether, some 20 colleagues from a wide range of Australian higher education institutions were invited as full participants. In view of the considerable interest in the topic, another 15 or so people from the University of Sydney and other New South Wales universities attended all or some of the workshop as observers. These included several doctoral candidates working in the area.

The workshop covered the following themes.

### **Global and regional trends in international migration**

Stephen Castles presented an overview of global migration trends, using new UN data. International migration has grown considerably since the 1970s, and some 214 million people now live outside their countries of birth. International migrants represent only 3.1 per cent of the world's population, while internal migration is much larger. However, international migration has major effects on certain origin and destination areas. Binod Khadria provided an analysis of migration trends in the Asia-Pacific region, showing how certain areas have become 'hubs', which attract large numbers of migrants, while others serve as 'hinterlands' that provide labour. Khadria argued that educational migration involved a transfer of both financial and human capital from poor to rich countries.

Graeme Hugo examined the relationship between migration and development in the Asia-Pacific region, and argued that migration between Asia and Australia should be understood as a system based on circularity and reciprocity, rather than a one-way process. Migration could contribute to economic development of origin countries, though this only happened if policy-settings on infrastructure, investment and governance were appropriate. Dr Fei Guo examined trends in migration to Australia from various parts of Asia, showing a shift from the idea of 'Australia as part of Asia' to 'Asians as part of Australia'. Migration has become more fluid, with a trend towards temporary and repeated mobility.

### **Australia's migration perspectives**

The second session focused on the significance of migration for Australia. Siew-Ean Khoo provided an overview of recent migration trends, showing the rising importance of economic migration. Student migration has become particularly important — and many of the 650,000 overseas students in Australia also form part of the labour force. Sandy Gifford pointed to the global decline in refugee numbers, partly due to growing restrictions in destination countries, as shown by the rise in numbers of people displaced within their own countries. Surprisingly little is known about the background

to refugee movements or about refugees' experiences in Australia, indicating an important research gap.

Michael Humphrey analysed the relationship between the securitisation of international relations and public hostility to immigrants and asylum seekers. Jock Collins showed how all these trends are undermining Australia's traditional model of permanent settler migration. The focus has shifted towards greater selectivity on the basis of employability and skills, with increased opportunities for temporary entry. The new situation makes it important for social scientists to re-examine long-standing ideas on the specific characteristics of migration and settlement processes in Australia, and to link their research to international debates on globalisation and transnationalism.

### **Diversity and 21<sup>st</sup> century societies**

On the second day, the focus shifted to Australia's experience of diversity and multiculturalism. Ellie Vasta explored notions of social cohesion concerned with ensuring that immigrants and ethnic minorities integrate into the dominant culture. In contrast to Australia, Vasta's London-based research found that migrants and ethnic minorities who do not have a sense of belonging to the nation can still have a sense of commitment to the common good.

Amanda Wise and Selvaraj Velayutham presented an approach to understanding 'everyday multiculturalism', and discussed methodological issues in research of this kind. Everyday multiculturalism is concerned with the ways in which cultural diversity is experienced and negotiated in situations such as neighbourhoods and workplaces, and how social relations and identities are shaped and re-shaped in the process. Kevin Dunn provided detailed empirical data and maps on attitudes towards minority groups in the various areas of Sydney, and linked specific views and behaviour patterns with a range of social and economic indicators.

Ashley Carruthers examined the everyday lives of Vietnamese, Lao and Cambodian communities in Western Sydney. These largely working class communities have experienced the sharp end of economic globalisation. They have also, however, responded positively to some of the possibilities opened up by globalisation, especially those presented by cheap communications and transport. The paper explored new forms of transnational connectivity, such as the emergence of transnational marriage markets.

### **Advancing migration and diversity research in Australia**

The last afternoon was devoted to the topic of advancing migration and diversity research in Australia. Richard Bedford presented an overview of new issues and approaches in international migration research, leading to a discussion on how to apply these to the Australian context. Three prominent researchers (Ien Ang, James Jupp AM and John Nieuwenhuysen AM) then gave their views on the state of Australian migration research, reflecting on past experiences and ways forward. A final panel addressed the topic 'Preparing Australian migration and diversity research for the future'.

The panellists (Ghassan Hage, Neville Roach AO, Amanda Wise and Stephen Castles) pointed out that Australia should be a pre-eminent site for exploring the significance of migration and diversity for economics, politics and society. Australian researchers have made major contributions to scientific understanding and policy formation. It is important to think through ways of maintaining and enhancing this role. Strategies to be examined include: improving networking and cooperation among

researchers; overcoming disciplinary boundaries to achieve more holistic understandings of migratory processes; connecting Australian researchers to international social scientific networks; and building partnerships between researchers and other stakeholders (including governments, business, labour organisations and migrant associations).

### **Workshop outcomes**

The convenors of the workshop plan to produce an edited volume, to be submitted to an academic publisher along with a book proposal. A final manuscript should be ready by about April 2011.

The idea was also proposed that a new edition of *Australian Immigration: A Survey of the Issues* should be prepared. This work was originally published by AGPS in 1990. A second edition, edited by Mark Wooden, Robert Holton, Graeme Hugo and Judith Sloane, was published by AGPS in 1994. The work provided a valuable overview of the 'state-of-the-art' in Australian migration research. An updated version would be an important resource for newer researchers seeking to work in the field. The convenors will explore the possibility of undertaking this project. If it seems feasible, we would involve many of the participants of the workshop.

The convenors will prepare a Policy Brief summarising the main policy-relevant findings of the workshop. This will be passed on to appropriate state and commonwealth government agencies, and made publicly available through university websites.



## **The Seven Dwarfs and the Age of the Mandarins**

**John Nethercote**

Questions about the Seven Dwarfs and Snow White opened a two-day conference at Old Parliament House in November examining Commonwealth administration in the middle decades of the last century.

For more than half a century the Seven Dwarfs have been a periodical topic of conversation in public service circles and occasionally elsewhere. There has never been a canonical list of the Dwarfs, but the term refers to leading personalities of the public service after the Second World War. No certain identification has ever been made of Snow White.

Nearly all lists of the Dwarfs have included Roland Wilson, Head of the Treasury from 1951 to 1966; Nuggett Coombs, Chairman, Commonwealth Bank and Governor of the Reserve Bank, 1949-68; and Jack Crawford, Secretary, Commerce and Agriculture/Trade, 1950-60. The part of Snow White has been a contest between Prime Ministers Chifley (1945-49) and Menzies (1939-41; 1949-66).

Exploration of the policy environment in which the Dwarfs, their peers and colleagues operated concentrated on post-war reconstruction policies and adoption of Keynesian economics in Australian government following the Second World War.

In addition to Wilson, Coombs and Crawford, the personalities covered were, on the domestic scene, Fred Shedden, Ken Bailey, Allen Brown and Fred Wheeler. Paul Hasluck, John Burton, Arthur Tange and James Plimsoll figured in a *tour d'horizon* of Australia's developing relationship with the world. The activities of Alf Conlon and his staff were also covered.

A formidable speaking list included Dr Nicholas Brown, Professor Stuart Macintyre, Dr Alex Millmow and John Nethercote, on thematic topics; and Professor David Horner, Professor Selwyn Cornish, Professor Tim Rowse, Dr David Lee, Professor Geoffrey Bolton, Adam Henry, Professor Peter Edwards, Jeremy Hearder, Professor Jack Richardson, Sir Peter Lawler, Ian Hancock and Dr Barry Jones on biographical topics.

The conference was organised by the National Centre of Biography at the Australian National University in association with the Public Policy Institute, Australian Catholic University and the Museum of Australian Democracy.

It was strongly supported by the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia, ANU Research School of Social Sciences and ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences, the Australia and New Zealand School of Government and the Economic Society of Australia.

A book based on papers presented at the conference will be published by ANU e-Press.



## **International Science Linkages Workshops**

### **Psychoanalysis and Politics: Histories of Psychoanalysis and Political Repression**

***Joy Damousi***

The objective of this International Science Linkages (ISL) workshop, held in September 2010, was to explore the social and cultural dimensions of psychoanalysis and psychology under a wide range of political regimes that in widely varying ways placed restrictions on political and cultural freedom.

Papers focused on the impact of authoritarianism in the development of psychoanalysis and its practice in different cultural spaces. On a more theoretical level, papers looked at the potential of psychoanalysis as a body of knowledge and as a system of beliefs to legitimise and, at the same time, resist different levels and forms of authoritarianism. Another key concern of the workshop was how political structures and regimes enhanced or limited cultural ideas within a transnational context.

The aim on both counts was to ensure that the workshop, and the publications that arise from it, make a substantial contribution to the body of scholarship on the history of psychoanalysis (a field in itself). At the same time it was hoped the work of the workshop would transcend this area of specialisation by addressing broader issues

such as the reception and transnational circulation of ideas, and the relationship between politics and non-political systems of thought and beliefs.

The research discussed at the workshop was leading edge, international and genuinely interdisciplinary. Psychoanalysis has been one of the systems of thought and beliefs that has defined the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Our ideas about sexuality, the self, morality and, more generally about the functioning of the mind, have been shaped to a greater or lesser extent by Freud's ideas or in opposition to them.

### **Questioning received history**

The history of psychoanalysis has generated a voluminous body of scholarship. The influence of psychoanalysis has been so pervasive that its analytical categories have been used, sometimes uncritically, even by the scholarship that is supposed to analyse and historicise it. Thus, most of the works dealing with the history of psychoanalysis put an emphasis on the supposed 'resistances' without empirically examining whether those resistances actually existed in each particular case. Moreover, given the alleged 'subversive' nature of the psychoanalytic truths, these resistances became more apparent in circumstances where political and social freedoms were restricted. Thus, according to accepted views, there is a 'chemical incompatibility' between psychoanalysis and political authoritarianism.

This workshop questioned the received wisdom on various aspects of this history of psychoanalysis. The key questions addressed were: 'Under which political conditions is the implantation and diffusion of psychoanalysis possible?' Or, more broadly, 'What is the relationship between the dissemination and practice of psychoanalysis and politics?' 'How does psychoanalysis perform and develop under regimes where democracy is either non-existent or somehow restricted?' 'Why and how have some authoritarian regimes utilised psychoanalytic concepts of the self to envisage a new social and political order?' 'To what extent has psychoanalysis provided elements (both theoretical and practical) for, at the same time, legitimising and opposing resistance to those authoritarian experiences?' 'If psychoanalysis was at the same time compatible with the restriction of political and cultural freedom and provided elements to oppose that restriction, then how was psychoanalysis, as a system of ideas and as a practice, conceptualised and legitimised in the different societies?'

### **Taking a closer look at particular regimes**

The workshop papers framed these questions within an historical perspective. The regimes analysed ranged from the 'classical' totalitarian or authoritarian ones, such as Mussolini's Italy ('Psychoanalysis and Italian Fascism' by Mauro Pasqualini), Franco's Spain ('Psychoanalysis in Franco's Spain (1939-1975)' by Anne-Cécile Druet), France under the Vichy regime ('Psychoanalysis during the Vichy regime and the post-war period' by Annick Ohayon); and Hungary ruled by dictatorships of the left and the right ('Effect of dictatorial regimes on the psychoanalytic movement in Hungary, before and after the Second World War' by Judit Meszaros), to more modern Latin American dictatorships such as in Brazil ('Psychoanalysis in Brazil during Vargas' Times' by C Lucia de Oliveira and 'The social diffusion of psychoanalysis during the Brazilian military regime: Psychological awareness in an age of political repression' by Jane Russo).

Other regimes that were examined ranged from Argentina in the 1960s and 1970s ('Psychoanalysis in Argentina under Peronism and anti-Peronism (1943-1963)' by Alejandro Dagal and 'The Diffusion of Psychoanalysis under a Terrorist State: The

Case of Argentina in the 1960s and 1970s' by Mariano Ben Plotkin) to more benign, but nevertheless disturbing, forms of political and cultural restrictions such as those emerging in the US and Australia during the Cold War ("Have You No Shame?" The Redbaited History of American Psychoanalysis' by Elizabeth Ann Danto; 'Democracy and Free Associations: Psychoanalysis in Australia' by Joy Damousi and 'America in the 1960s' by Eli Zaretsky).

The specialists working on these subjects engaged both the specifics of each case and how they intersected with broader developments worldwide. These papers and commentators showed that a transnational perspective is only fruitful when it focuses on the tensions between global and local contexts. Trans-cultural flows and circulation of ideas, beliefs and peoples take place across cultures but become localised in specific cultural and social settings where they interact with native, pre-existing systems of thought.

### **The transnational circulation of psychoanalytic ideas**

The particular cases of Brazil, Argentina, France and Spain, for instance, constituted interesting examples of shared influences and circulation of psychoanalytic ideas and peoples during the periods analysed. Psychoanalysis in Argentina was influenced by theories and practices developed in France and Spain. While most Argentine doctors interested in psychoanalysis read French sources, the presence of Spanish visitors in the 1920s, and exiles from the Spanish Civil War and later from the Franco regime, was crucial for the diffusion of psychoanalysis in the country.

Similarly, the early Brazilian psychoanalytic community which emerged during the Vargas regime developed strong connections to Argentine analysts and in many cases received training in Argentina, to the point that one of the psychoanalytic groups existing in Rio de Janeiro during the late 1940s and 50s was known as the 'Argentine group'. Later, in the 1970s, prominent Argentine analysts such as Emilio Rodrigué and Bernardo Horne would establish themselves in Brazil. Argentine fascists were well connected to their Italian counterparts and, as one of the articles in this collection shows, they developed their ideas about psychoanalysis following parallel paths. Within this international context, analysts in Australia received influences from Europe, the US and (later) from Argentina. The Cold War climate in Australia and, particularly, the US created a deep paradox where there were freedoms but also severe limitations on analysts.

### **Political structures and the development of psychoanalysis**

In connecting politics and political regimes to the historical expression or suppression of psychoanalysis and cultural theories informed by psychoanalytic studies, this workshop also aimed to significantly advance our current understanding of the nature of political structures.

A certain level of political and social freedom would be a pre-condition for a successful implantation of psychoanalysis in a given society. The fate of psychoanalysis in the countries ruled by different kinds of authoritarian regimes between the two world wars seems to confirm this perception. Psychoanalysis was all but banned by Stalin in Soviet Russia after a short honeymoon between the young Soviet regime and the Freudian doctrine; it never really took off in Fascist Italy; the active German psychoanalytic community was dismantled by the Nazis, while most psychoanalytic activity stopped in occupied Europe.

On the other hand, psychoanalysis flourished very early in democratic US and Australia, in France (between the wars, but mostly in the 1960s) and, to some extent, in England. In totalitarian Europe, the best possible scenario for psychoanalysis was precarious survival. The problem with this view is two-fold. First, if we shift our glance to other non-European contexts, the picture we get is completely different. As the contributors to this workshop showed, in Latin America, for instance, psychoanalysis was persecuted neither by the authoritarian-populist regimes of the 1930s and 40s nor by the much more authoritarian military regimes of the 1960s and 70s. More disturbingly, it was precisely under those regimes that psychoanalysis became popularised and disseminated to unprecedented levels.

In drawing the concepts of psychoanalysis and authoritarian politics together, this workshop made an important contribution to understanding how repressive practices can paradoxically produce and draw on categories of analysis and practice which are not inherent in their ideologies. For instance, none of the more or less authoritarian or totalitarian regimes mentioned above theorise the unconscious. But in different circumstances and with different results, they have attracted theorists who have seen the relevance of such understandings to the workings of authoritarian ideas. Authoritarianism and psychoanalysis are historically grounded concepts and the meanings attached to them are defined by time and place.

### **Outcomes**

The outcomes of the workshop were threefold:

It promoted Australian research internationally. The inclusion of Australian scholars from a range of fields provided the opportunity to promote the scholarship of Australian social scientists in three significant ways. First, it allowed us to further explore the impact and development of politics and culture in Australia, a country that exemplifies the transnational dimension of the diffusion of psychoanalysis.

Second, it enhanced the presence of Australian scholars in discussions on the transnational dissemination of psychoanalysis, across a range of disciplines. Finally, it allowed Australian scholars to engage in, and make a contribution towards, the theoretical applications of psychoanalytic categories within a range of academic disciplines.

It fostered future research opportunities. The scholars who attended this workshop have been working together for five years. They represent the efforts of genuine international collaboration. The first product of this collaboration is a volume titled *The Transnational Unconscious* which was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2008. In May 2008 the group held a workshop at the Rockefeller Archive Center in New York. This was our second international meeting. The aim is to give permanence to this collaborative enterprise through the publication of several volumes that approach different dimensions of psychoanalysis, taking into consideration a transnational perspective. Following the meeting in 2010, a further meeting is now planned for 2012/2013 in Madrid on the theme of Psychoanalysis and the 1960s.

The papers delivered at this workshop are to be published by Oxford University Press (New York) in a collection entitled *Psychoanalysis and Politics: Histories of Psychoanalysis and Political Repression* edited by Joy Damousi and Mariano Plotkin, due for publication in 2011.

## **Health and Mortality Transitions in East and Southeast Asia**

**Zhongwei Zhao and Adrian Hayes**

The region of East and Southeast Asia has experienced the most rapid mortality decline in the world during the last sixty years, and some of its national populations share among the highest life expectancies ever recorded. The region, which includes about one third of the world's total population, also displays large disparities in health and mortality. Further improvements in population health and longevity present great challenges for policy makers, especially in the face of rapid development, environmental pollution and the adverse health effects of climate change. Yet detailed and comparative research on health and mortality changes in the region is surprisingly limited.

Since late 2008, researchers at the Australian National University (ANU) have been coordinating a number of research activities in order to narrow this research gap. These include forming core research teams (both formal and informal), promoting health and mortality research in East and Southeast Asia (eg, at the 2009 International Forum held in Shanghai), and undertaking studies on various aspects of health and mortality changes in the region.

### **Conference focus and objectives**

One of our major activities was the International Conference on Health and Mortality Transitions in East and Southeast Asia. The major objectives of this conference were to bring together some of the best researchers involved in the studies of health and mortality changes in East and Southeast Asia, compare and discuss the latest research findings, and establish a new focus to identify those strategic policy interventions that make the most difference.

AusAID, ASSA, and ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences all provided financial support for the conference which was organised by the Australian Demographic and Social Research Institute at ANU and took place in Canberra in October, 2010.

The number of participants exceeded expectations. There were 44 from 13 countries and territories including 20 international participants and 24 Australian-based researchers. As well as researchers working in universities there were officials, policy makers and researchers from governments and international organisations. Researchers came from many academic disciplines, such as demography, epidemiology, sociology and medical sciences. There were world or regional leading scholars as well as early career researchers including several graduate students.

The Vice Chancellor of the ANU, Professor Ian Chubb, the Deputy Director General and Australian Ambassador HIV/AIDS of AusAID, Murray Proctor, and the President of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population and the Director of the Australian Demographic and Social Research Institute, Professor Peter McDonald, all spoke at the opening session.

Altogether, 32 papers were presented, including the keynote speech by the past President of the International Society of Environmental Epidemiology, Professor Anthony McMichael. There were two sessions on general trends of health and mortality changes and related issues, one session on health and mortality in East Asia, two sessions on these issues in South and Southeast Asia, and one session on environmental health. In addition, there was one session focusing particularly on

epidemiological and mortality changes in Indonesia and another session on health risk transition in Thailand. The conference concluded with a panel-led open discussion on the papers presented, experiences and lessons of health and mortality transitions in East and Southeast Asia, future directions in health and mortality studies, and major challenges in further improving population health and lowering mortality.

The conference is likely to play a major role in improving our understanding of health and mortality transitions and in promoting further studies in these areas in East and Southeast Asia.

### **Interdisciplinary research on health and mortality changes**

Detailed studies of mortality in East and Southeast Asia were previously difficult to find, however, at this gathering there were several conference papers that, on the basis of recent mortality data, systematically examined changes in infant and child mortality, adult mortality, changes in major causes of deaths, and sex differentials in mortality in East and Southeast Asia. These studies represent the latest knowledge on mortality changes in the region.

It is evident from the studies presented that considerable effort has been made in both large-scale international comparative study and in-depth investigation into mortality changes in particular countries. It is particularly encouraging that a number examined mortality changes in countries that were considerably understudied before, such as Cambodia and Myanmar. Cross-country comparisons also led to some interesting research findings that have not been discussed before.

The conference did not concentrate on mortality changes alone, but also addressed changes in causes of death, epidemiological, nutritional, and health risk transitions. Many presentations were made by researchers working in areas such as epidemiology, medical sciences and public policy, and participants suggested the interdisciplinary nature of the conference was a major factor in its success.

Several papers examined the impact of environmental factors on population health and mortality on the basis of newly collected data. These included the study of the association between overall health, psychological distress and occupational heat stress, Asian dust storms and their impact on the pulmonary function of school children, the impact of weather conditions and air pollution on changes in daily mortality patterns, and the relationship of obesity to physical activity, domestic activities and sedentary behaviours. These investigations represent some of the latest developments in environmental health research in the region.

Many papers provided further evidence for the epidemiological transition theories and lessons learned from past experiences of improving mortality in East and Southeast Asia, such as promoting education and autonomy among the female population and making basic health care available to all people. In addition, several papers addressed policy and institutional challenges in further lowering mortality and the importance of good governance in improving health services and population health. While mortality in many East and Southeast Asian populations has now fallen to a relatively low level, there remains considerable room to improve health and mortality through improving the efficiency, accessibility and fairness of health services. This is clearly an area where effective policy intervention could help.

### **Future research collaborations**

The conference was very important not just because it addressed cutting edge research questions but also because it promoted and strengthened the international research networks centred at some Australian universities and confirmed Australia as a world leader in health and mortality research in East and Southeast Asia. A number of conference participants have already discussed plans for future research collaboration with some planned research activities likely to start very soon.

The research started by this conference will continue and the following research plan will be implemented in the next few years. Some conference papers will be selected for publication. In addition to recommending selected papers to certain international academic journals, we are planning to edit a book addressing health and mortality transitions in East and Southeast Asia. Preparing the conference papers for publication will be one of our major research activities in 2011.

The Australian Demographic and Social Research Institute's long tradition of research on demographic and health transitions in Southeast Asia and their relationship to development have been strengthened by the conference. The research will be continued and expanded to cover more countries in future.

Over the next few years, a major research project examining long-term mortality changes, especially the relationship between certain environmental factors and mortality in East Asia, is likely to be undertaken. Work on a research proposal, which will soon be submitted for grant application, is underway.

The support of AusAID, ASSA and ANU CASS is gratefully acknowledged.

### **Security and Stability in the Southern Philippines: Implications for Australia and the Region**

***Mary Ann Palma***

The International Workshop on Security and Stability in the Southern Philippines was held on 28-29 September at the University of Wollongong. It was attended by academics and government officials from the Philippines and Australia and was funded by the ASSA International Science Linkage Program, and, at the University of Wollongong (UOW), the University Internationalisation Committee, International Links Grant Scheme, Faculty of Law, and Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS). The workshop was convened jointly by ANCORS and the Centre for Transnational Crime Prevention (CTCP) of UOW and the Philippine Institute for Peace, Violence and Terrorism Research (PIPVTR).

The workshop aimed to examine and clarify the different factors affecting the security and stability of the Southern Philippines. It also looked at the impact of such factors on the bilateral relations of Australia and the Philippines, as well as strategies that the two countries might undertake to address common concerns.

The workshop was divided into five sessions discussing the political and strategic context of the Southern Philippines, territorial and boundary issues, maritime security, economic and environmental security, and human security concerns.

### **Political and strategic context**

Dr Chris Rahman, Senior Research Fellow at ANCORS, discussed the strategic importance of the Southern Philippines for the promotion of international security, specifically with respect to regional terrorism, sea lines of communication, protection of trade and other extra-regional security engagement. He highlighted Australia's interests in the Southern Philippines in areas of counter-terrorism, regional stability and maritime security, and in particular the establishment of the Coast Watch South. Dr Rahman looked at a number of relevant activities being undertaken jointly by Australia and the Philippines to promote peace and security in the area and concluded that the stability of the Southern Philippines will continue to play an important role in the security of the Southeast Asian and wider Asia Pacific region.

Professor Rommel Banlaoi, Executive Director of the Philippine Institute for Peace, Violence and Terrorism Research (PIPVTR), discussed the challenges to political stability and the peace process in Mindanao. He briefly described the threats of insurgency and armed conflicts in Mindanao, their root causes and some of the key players. He explained the complex nature of these political challenges and key actors, and identified a number of causes of conflicts in Mindanao such as social exclusion and marginalisation, poor governance and ineffective law enforcement, extreme poverty and competition for scarce resources.

### **Territorial and boundary issues**

Associate Professor Clive Schofield of ANCORS looked at the claims to maritime jurisdiction and delimitation of maritime boundaries in Southeast Asia. He also discussed the lack of maritime boundary delimitation and overlapping maritime claims in the tri-border area of the Sulu-Sulawesi Sea and elaborated on disputes over Pulau Sipadan and Pulau Ligitan and the Ambalat. He concluded that because of these maritime boundary and territorial disputes, the Sulu-Sulawesi Sea is considered a maritime black spot and a porous area which serves as a conduit for illegal activities.

Dr Lowell Bautista of ANCORS explained the concept of ancestral domain and referred largely to the memorandum of understanding developed between the Philippine Government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Ancestral domain refers to the territory of the Bangsamoro people, the natives or original inhabitants of Mindanao and its adjacent islands. Within the concept of ancestral domain, the Bangsamoros envision having sufficient control over economic resources in their territory, and a structure of governance that will allow them to govern themselves with minimal interference from the capital.

Lorelei Peralta, Chief of Staff of the Philippine National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA), explained the concept of municipal waters in the Philippines and briefly demonstrated how such waters are delineated for municipalities and cities without offshore islands.

### **Maritime security**

Commander Ronnie Gil Gavan of the Philippine Coast Guard described the maritime domain of the Southern Philippines and the transnational criminal activities that occur in the area. He focused on piracy and armed robbery against ships to illustrate the collaborative initiatives of the government and neighbouring countries to address the problem. He also elaborated on security arrangements between the Philippines and Australia that aim to increase the capacity of the former to address maritime security concerns in the Southern Philippines. He concluded that, while existing tactical

coordinative arrangements have helped attain a comfortable level of maritime security in the Philippines, serious efforts are needed to harmonise operational arrangements and upgrade the security capabilities in the area.

Attorney Rodel Cruz of the Asia Pacific Regional Security Forum started his presentation by discussing the maritime economy of the Southern Philippines and its neighbouring vicinity in the Sulu-Sulawesi region. He also examined the maritime governance framework in the area, comprising domestic legislation, operational strategies, inter-agency cooperative arrangements, cross-border and multilateral cooperative mechanisms, and other bilateral or multilateral arrangements.

### **Economic and environmental security**

Jackson Ewing of Bond University and the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore explained the concept of environmental security within the context of Mindanao. He discussed the depletion of forests, fisheries, reefs, mangroves, and freshwater systems in the Southern Philippines, as well as the impact of climate change in exacerbating environmental degradation and development challenges. He also emphasised the possibility of conflict being reinforced in the vulnerable regions of the Southern Philippines as a result of these environmental changes. He concluded that the primary challenge in the Southern Philippines is to pursue much-needed economic development that respects Mindanao's social context and natural environmental thresholds.

Dr Mary Ann Palma of ANCORS discussed the resource management concerns in the Southern Philippines, particularly how resource utilisation affects other security issues such as political security, environmental protection, maritime security, and human rights. She highlighted issues with respect to fisheries and oil and gas use and exploration in the Southern Philippines, and the need to balance resource conservation with meeting the economic needs of the people in the region.

### **Human security**

Father Jun Mercado of the Institute of Autonomy and Governance, Notre Dame University discussed human security in the Southern Philippines and the complexity of the culture, values, and belief systems of the people in the region. He argued that ethnic, religious and political conflicts are rooted in centuries of struggle and that such complexity has been the subject of misunderstandings that have at times led to exclusion and conflict.

Professor Harry Roque of the University of the Philippines College of Law looked at the Ampatuan massacre in Maguindanao in 2009 and discussed how such atrocities demonstrate a denial of victims' rights to justice.

### **Summary of discussion**

It was emphasised in the discussions that an understanding of the intricate cultures, beliefs and value systems in the Southern Philippines is a prerequisite to finding solutions to its political, religious and economic struggles. The complexity of factors contributing to the insecurity and instability in the Southern Philippines requires a paradigm shift and the development of a strategy that would collectively address various issues confronting the area. Security sector transformation is considered a key solution to promoting justice, peace and overall development and political stability in the Philippines.

The people of the Southern Philippines share their values and ethnicity with Indonesians and Malaysians residing around the Sulu-Sulawesi (Celebes) Sea. Hence it is important that any development plan focuses not only on Mindanao but also on the fringing territories of its neighbours. Considering the existing bilateral and multilateral arrangements in the region, it is reasonable to continue and further enhance cooperation amongst these countries. The Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East Asian Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) also serves as an important framework in implementing common economic, political, and security goals in the Sulu-Sulawesi region.

Over the years, much emphasis has been given to addressing peace and security on land while there has been little focus on good order at sea or the security of the maritime domain — the 'basin security' approach. While there are synergies developed between the littoral States of the Sulu-Sulawesi Sea under the BIMP-EAGA framework in terms of trade, customs, immigration and quarantine, it was highlighted that a shift from port security to port-to-port security is necessary in order to ensure a comprehensive approach in promoting stability in the region.

There are a number of aspects to the basin security concept or maritime perspective in the Southern Philippines and the Sulu-Sulawesi region. One is the weaving of common interests of the three littoral States through a commission-type governance structure. Such a governance mechanism could facilitate the peace process in the Southern Philippines. In terms of law enforcement, the need to re-engineer law enforcement capacity with a coastal and archipelagic focus was raised.

The use of the basin security approach is clearly justified from an ecological and environmental perspective. However, as gleaned from the past, the potential involvement of Mindanao with its neighbouring foreign governments may be viewed by some as an erosion of sovereignty or surrender of the capital's control over resources. This issue may arise as the Philippines increasingly explores energy development in the Sulu-Sulawesi Sea. As more energy resources are found, it is likely that security threats may increase. These perceived risks would justify the need to strengthen security arrangements in the area, which would benefit not only the littoral States but also other stakeholder States in the region such as Australia.

Timing is of the essence. It was underscored that border disputes in the Sulu-Sulawesi subregion are latent and that cooperation, instead of competition, can be fostered. With the new Aquino administration in place, the Philippines may forge fresh cooperative arrangements in the subregion. The Philippines may also investigate establishing potential economic activities, such as the development of a major trade hub in Sulu or Tawi Tawi which will be protected by a port-to-port security arrangement. There is a need for the littoral States to act now, while the political environment is conducive to cooperation.

### **Proposed research and policy directions**

The participants raised the need to conduct more studies on the different elements affecting the security and stability of the Southern Philippines. While varied research has been undertaken into the political concerns in the area, such studies would need to be comprehensive enough to look into the inter-relationships of aspects such as ecological uniqueness and variability, environmental protection and climate adaptability, and sea-lanes security. As an example, additional studies may be conducted to fill the gap in the economic drivers or risk premiums associated with

traversing certain straits or finding alternative trade routes in the Southeast Asian region in case of security threats. It is from such research that potential solutions may be formulated and presented not only to policymakers but, more importantly, to relevant industry stakeholders.

### **Recommendations and outcomes**

In terms of policy impact, two key recommendations have been identified. One is to organise a high-level meeting involving a small number of people from the workshop to present to key agencies in Canberra on common issues and opportunities between Australia and the Philippines. It is envisaged that the workshop outcomes will be presented at that meeting, as well as a discussion of strategies that may enhance the bilateral relationship between the two countries and the role of Australia in establishing a trilateral framework in the Sulu-Sulawesi Sea.

The second recommendation is to include some of the key concepts and recommendations of the workshop in the drafting of *Mindanao 2020*, a development plan in progress, particularly in its chapter on Peace and Security. It was suggested that the development of policies promoting a maritime point of view, rather than a land perspective, would be most favourable for the Southern Philippines.

The key output for this workshop is a book based on the presentations. The University of Wollongong, through ANCORS, will be able to fund its publication and a proposal will be prepared for submission to other potential publishers such as CRC Press, ISEAS, and Edward Elgar Publishers to ensure wider readership. The expected publication date is the second half of 2011.

The workshop not only clarified some of the issues pertaining to the security and stability of the Southern Philippines but also fostered exchange of ideas between academic and government institutions in Australia and the Philippines. The participants shared examples of relevant programs in their respective institutions where aspects of the workshop outcome may be further developed.

This is the first time that a workshop of this nature has been convened and the participants expressed hopes for further collaboration, beginning with the publication of the book and the development of future research projects addressing concerns highlighted in the workshop.



## **Is Complexity the New Framework for the Study of Global Life?**

***Anna Yeatman and Emilian Kavalski***

The workshop, sponsored by ASSA and the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Technology, took place in January 2011 at the Bankstown campus of the University of Western Sydney. The proposition was that, in order to cope with the escalating complexity of global life, the discipline of political science needs to abandon its predilection for linear models, accept unpredictability, respect (and utilise) autonomy and creativity, and respond flexibly to emerging patterns and opportunities. The focus of discussion was primarily on the reconsideration of the perspectives of International Relations. While political scientists have often employed the metaphor of complexity, the potential theoretical and policy insights of Complexity Thinking (CT) have not been convincingly explored and used to enrich the study of world affairs.

### **What is complexity thinking?**

Complexity Thinking (CT) is the name for a new framework of explanation and understanding developed in evolutionary biology and related natural science disciplines for the exploration of non-linear, emergent, adaptive, and dissipative systems and phenomena. Complexity can be observed across a range of both physical and social systems. While, as workshop participants acknowledged, social systems are *sui generis*, they are also embedded in and interactive with non-human systems. Most participants agreed that political science has been resistant to engagement with CT propositions, because of its scepticism about the application of biological/natural sciences approaches and language to social systems. Thus, despite the intellectual challenges posed by the growing awareness of interdependence and connectedness between human and non-human systems, the mainstream of political science investigations are, on the one hand, dominated by traditional modern models of linear, causal explanation and, on the other hand, underpinned by an inherent anti-biologism (if not biophobia). As a result, political science (in general) has been anthropocentric and has tended to ignore the links between the social world and the rest of the material world.

The workshop addressed this shortcoming by engaging the participants in a conversation on the characteristics and consequences of CT when applied to political science, and particularly to International Relations. Apart from the invited speakers, participants came from Macquarie University, University of Queensland, University of New South Wales, University of Sydney, University of Technology Sydney, and the University of Western Sydney. In this way, it provided a platform for a broad, yet meaningful conversation on the implications of CT not only for political science, but also for social scientific inquiry in general.

### **Ramifications of the complexity paradigm**

The workshop began with the papers by Stephen Hobden 'Foundations of Complexity, and the Complexity of Foundations: Beyond the Foundation/Anti-Foundational Debate' and by Walter Clemens 'Towards a New Paradigm for International Studies: The Complexity of Interdependence', which were discussed by Associate Professor Brett Bowden. Both Hobden's and Clemens' papers outlined the ramifications of the complexity paradigm and its impact on the study of global life. They also offered a summary of the basic concepts of CT and a comparison of CT's explanatory power

with that of different mainstream approaches. The authors examined the grounds on which CT promises a new approach for the explanation and understanding of global life and what the implications of this approach might be. Both papers advocated distinct versions of differentiated complexity which view the social world as embedded in a diversity of non-social systems. This view rejects some of the forms in which CT has been utilised by political scientists (for instance, agent-based modelling), and has profound implications for the means and purposes of the study of politics. The contention during the discussions of the first session was that CT's aspiring meta-theory provides a more useful framework for the study of global life in the field of International Relations than any current alternative. Thus, at a minimum, CT merits a place alongside the other paradigms used in the study of world affairs.

The second session included presentations from Dennis J D Sandole, 'Global Governance and Complex Problem-solving in the Post-9/11 World' and Christopher A Ford, 'Conceptualizing Ideology Through the Prism of Complexity Theory'. These were discussed by Professor Anna Yeatman of the Centre for Citizenship and Public Policy at the University of Western Sydney (UWS), who co-convened the workshop with Dr Emilian Kavalski of the School of Humanities and Languages at UWS. Both papers presented the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 as a particular moment confronting scholars, policy-makers, and publics with the complexity of global life. Sandole's suggestion is that despite such confrontation subsequent developments have confirmed that 'our ways for dealing with that radically altered world have not changed'. He therefore outlines the various issues, topics, and frameworks that define the current *global problematique*. As Sandole indicates, such a problematique (i) defies the efforts of any one person, state, organisation or academic discipline and their corresponding ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies, to deal with it on their own; (ii) makes the case that there is a need to do things differently in the world; (iii) suggests conceptual and operational ways for addressing its contingencies premised on a CT-based shift.

Ford, on the other hand, indicates that complexity presents a unique paradox for policy-making — it seems to teach that we cannot predict what results our policy choices are likely to have over time. In this setting, his contention is that when outcomes are radically resistant to prediction, they are also necessarily resistant to the sort of deliberate control that contemporary evidence-based policy-making assumes is both possible and necessary. Ford therefore explores the possibility offered by CT that policy interventions in the realm of ideas may have more potential to create transformative change than other types of intervention. By looking at the 'memetic' systems of decision-makers, Ford constructs an approach to policy-making that focuses on shaping the conceptual frameworks that guide and channel human behaviour within complex adaptive social systems.

### **Acting politically under the direction of CT**

The second day began with presentations by Jürgen Scheffran, 'Adaptive Complexity and Stability in Climate-Society Interaction' and David Earnest, 'Cows Grow Trees, Nets Grow Fish: Self-Organised Governance of Complex Interactions in World Politics', which were discussed by Dr Gerda Roelvnik. This session addressed the question of what acting politically under the conditions of complexity might mean. Scheffran's point of departure was that with global warming, the world is facing complex interactions between climate stress, environmental change, human responses and social conflicts that could significantly shape the future landscape of international relations. He

therefore focused on concepts and frameworks of adaptive complexity as CT-derived ideas that can provide guidance to influence multiple decision points and adjust decision-making actions along the causal chain to protect human security, develop social livelihood and strengthen societal resilience.

Likewise, Earnest emphasised that the interactions between natural and social systems are a primary cause of complexity in global life. As actors interact with physical, technological or natural systems, they alter not only the system but also the incentives, payoffs, and strategies of future actors. Earnest's finding was that in interactions between social and natural systems, institutions informed by CT concepts and ideas may help achieve 'fitness peaks'. His study concluded that in addition to monitoring and sanctioning violators, social networks among appropriators confer informational advantages in the management of complex interactions.

### **The challenges of CT**

The workshop concluded with an open discussion on the challenges of CT in the study of global life, led by Emilian Kavalski. The key questions that animated the discussion were: Is there a need to have a unified CT approach? What can CT add to our understanding of the challenges posed by global life? Can CT prepare institutions, organisations, and communities to be surprised? If CT is the answer, what is the question that it responds to? Most participants indicated that what political science can gain from infusion with CT concepts and ideas are useful analytical and policy-making tools and ways of thinking about the dynamism of a fragile global life. Moreover, some proffered the contention that the recognition of the unpredictability and randomness of such socio-political and biophysical interdependence demanded by CT can remove the constraints on analytical imagination and allows political science — as a discipline — to rethink its approach to governance not just in global context but more generally. At the same time, many indicated that there is a need to operationalise CT-proffered ideas and concepts as they still remain at the theoretical level. Furthermore, some participants suggested there needs to be a more serious conversation on the ethics and politics of engaging CT in social science.

### **Outcomes**

Workshop participants are currently exploring several collaborative initiatives. Cambridge University Press (UK) has agreed to review a proposal for an edited collection based on the discussions at the workshop, which will include contributions from the speakers and participants. The organisers are also exploring the possibility of a special issue of a peer-reviewed publication, which would include revised versions of the speakers' presentations. Workshop participants are discussing the preparation of a proposal for a 2012 collaborative research award by the James S McDonnell Foundation, which supports investigations on the topic of 'studying complex systems', and planning a bid for the 2012 round of grants offered by the Institute for New Economic Thinking.



## State-based initiatives

### Psycho-Social Research into Cancer

**Phyllis Butow**

The inaugural meeting of the South Australian Interest Group of the Psycho-Oncology Co-operative Research Group (SAPoCoG) was held at The University of Adelaide on June 18 2010. SAPoCoG aims to bring together and foster collaborative projects amongst those conducting psycho-social research into cancer, specifically within South Australia. Membership of SAPoCoG has grown steadily since the group was convened. Approximately 25 were in attendance, representing the 33 then-current members with diverse research and clinical interests from nine different institutions or organisations, including academic, clinical, support, and advocacy, across a wide range of occupations and career levels.

The event was supported by a small grant from ASSA, with in-kind support from the University of Adelaide, Cancer Council Australia, the Cancer Council of South Australia, and our parent organisation, Psycho-Oncology Co-operative Research Group, which also funded the presence of the guest speaker, Professor Phyllis Butow of Sydney University. Her talk, on lessons learned in establishing a thriving psycho-oncological research community, was insightful and warmly received. Attendees had the opportunity to talk about their research, with many giving brief PowerPoint presentations outlining past, present, and above all, future research interests. This prompted much productive preliminary discussion of potential opportunities to collaborate.

We hope to continue identifying and developing collaborative projects within the group, with the intent ultimately to apply for funding to relevant bodies. Those interested in learning more about, or contributing to, current and planned activities can contact the SAPoCoG Convenor, Dr Jaklin Elliott, via email: [jaklin.elliott@cancer.org.au](mailto:jaklin.elliott@cancer.org.au)

*This state-based initiative was part of ASSA's Outreach Program which funds a Fellow or Fellows from an Academy state branch to convene dialogue-oriented events addressing a state-based issue.*



## Reports from Roundtables

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### Improving the Safety and Wellbeing of International Students in Australia

**Dennis Trewin**

In August 2010, in partnership with the Australian Human Rights Commission and Universities Australia, the ASSA Policy and Advocacy Committee convened a policy roundtable in Sydney. Titled *Building an integrated response to the safety and wellbeing of international students in Australia*, the roundtable was the second in a series. Its aim was to build on the findings of the March 2010 workshop *Racism and the tertiary student experience* (reported in *Dialogue* 2/2010: 98-99) by discussing policy futures for the wellbeing of international students in Australia.

The roundtable assembled 21 social scientists, state-level policy makers, tertiary education administrators and representatives of international students in Australian tertiary education institutions. The context was increasing awareness of the need to deal effectively with issues confronting international students at a time when international student commencements were dropping dramatically.

#### **Key issues**

A wide-ranging and constructive dialogue took place. In particular, participants agreed that leadership in the public sphere, including by political leaders, was needed to increase social inclusion and improve the wellbeing of the significant number of international students currently resident in Australia, and of migrants and temporary migrants more generally. It was the view of participants that policy instruments can achieve only so much, and that public leadership on issues of tolerance and multicultural social inclusion has been lacking in recent years.

Participants also agreed that a central issue for international students, as well as students more generally, was the shortage and cost of suitable housing. Improvements in the quantity and cost of suitably located accommodation for students, including international students, would act to mitigate issues facing them in other areas, such as personal safety and employment.

The key issue is racism in the broadest context. There is evidence that racism in Australia has grown in recent years and this will affect our international reputation. Surveys have demonstrated that many students have experienced racism, although relatively few have experienced actual violence. Violence against international students is only part of the problem, although it may have the highest profile. Racism on campus does not seem to be a significant issue.

#### **Need for public leadership**

There were about 600,000 international students, including dependents, in Australia in early 2010. They are not only significant economically as their experience here can affect Australia's international relationships in the long term as many of them go on to become leaders in their own communities. There is considerable reputational risk to Australia if international students have an unhappy experience.

There is some urgency in addressing this problem. There was a 20 per cent decline in international student commencements in 2010 and a further decline is expected in 2011, threatening one of Australia's most important areas of export earnings. The

decline in student commencements also threatens the viability of significant parts of the tertiary education sector, especially some of the private colleges.

Many organisations and individuals have responsibility for addressing the issue but the roundtable focused on those with the major responsibility — governments and tertiary education providers. It is also noted that there had been a lot of reports but not much response to date. A stronger focus on solutions is required.

Governments have responsibility for policy, legislative frameworks and the distribution of funds. Additional funding would certainly assist in some important areas. However, the roundtable agreed that funding decisions should be aligned with an agreed strategy for international students.

Importantly, governments at all three levels can provide the leadership that might influence community attitudes to international students. A bipartisan approach is preferable and this occurs in some states and local government areas, but is not occurring at the Commonwealth level. The roundtable was concerned that international students are caught up in the more general debate about immigration. There is an urgent need to decouple the debate about international students from the immigration debate because the issues are quite different.

The roundtable noted that cultural diversity has been one of Australia's comparative strengths and drivers of progress in recent decades and should continue to be so. International students contribute to cultural diversity.

### **Recent government responses**

The roundtable recognised that the Government had been reviewing policy and legislation impacting on international students. It was supportive of the recommendations and findings of the Baird Review into the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act. It also supported the sentiments of the Council of Australian Governments' communiqué following the Baird Review, particularly the agreement to develop an international student strategy. However, the Baird review (by design) did not address some issues pertinent to international students and the contents of the international student strategy are still unknown. The roundtable's findings should be seen as complementary to government initiatives that are already under way. At present a lot of government effort is spent reacting to individual incidents. This is not cost-effective over the longer term.

The changes proposed by Baird to ESOS should be carefully considered. Baird recognised the social inclusion issues but did not address them fully because of limitations on his terms of reference. In this context, the following policy options should be considered:

- Compacts (agreements) with the relevant embassies on how Australia will deal with international students. These could draw on human rights language.
- An agreed approach to the division of labour between the three levels of government and funding distributed accordingly. For example, policing the standard of student housing is the responsibility of local government.
- A body which would enable the views of international student representatives to be canvassed.
- The use of social inclusion policies and supporting research as a framework for developing policies and programs that address the issues associated with international students.

International students are usually in Australia for at least three years. Whilst here, they should be treated as quasi-citizens with rights and obligations.

### **The role of tertiary institutions**

There is increasing recognition among the tertiary institutions of the importance of the services they provide for international students. There were anecdotes about some tertiary institutions not taking responsibility for off-campus incidents but the representatives of the tertiary institutions felt this was now the exception rather than the rule.

Improved and affordable access to student housing may go a long way towards addressing many of the issues. If international students were able to live on campus or in tertiary institution-managed accommodation, their risks would be greatly reduced. Accommodating domestic students and international students together would support 'integration' and provide a much richer student experience.

The roundtable noted the importance of international student information services, and a dissymmetry in the relevant knowledge between domestic and international students. The latter need a reliable source of information for when they face problems of various types. Training in English language skills is also important. Even though international students have some knowledge in English, the Australian use of English can be quite confronting.

Student representatives felt strongly that reform was necessary and suggested that it should be of the type that 'provided more freedom, more support and fewer restrictions'.

The student representatives also emphasised the importance of reasonable equity between international and domestic students in the provision of services. The representatives of the tertiary institutions strongly supported this. They did not want international students to be seen as having special privileges, especially in student accommodation.

A more detailed paper contextualising and discussing the findings of the roundtable was commissioned from Professor Andrew Jakubowicz and Dr Monani Devaki from the University of Technology Sydney, and has been published as a peer-reviewed Academy Occasional Paper. Copies of this paper are available for free download from the Occasional Papers page in the publications area of the Academy's website: <http://www.assa.edu.au/publications/>



### **Vale Fellows of the Academy**

The following Fellows have died:

Michael Clyne, AM (Linguistics)

Alfred Hagger (Economics)

Bruce Miller (Political Science)

Roger Wales (Psychology)

John Western, AM (Sociology)

John Barnes (Sociology)

T H (Harry) Rigby (Political Science)

The Academy extends its condolences to their family and friends.

Obituaries will appear in the Annual Report.