



# AUSTRALIAN POLITICAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION 2024 ANNUAL CONFERENCE PERTH

## The State of Democracy and Politics: Local, Regional, and Global Abstract Guide



Australian Political  
Studies Association

Edition 2

30 November 2024

# CONFERENCE INFORMATION

Hosted By:

The University of Western Australia

35 Stirling Hwy, Crawley  
Western Australia

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UWA Public Policy Institute

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## CONFERENCE PARTNERS





# WELCOME TO THE APSA 2024 ANNUAL CONFERENCE!

The last time the APSA National was hosted in Perth/WA was back in 2013. A lot has changed since then – economically, demographically, socially, culturally, and, of course, politically – and we look forward to welcoming to the UWA campus and exploring Perth and WA if you are planning on staying on after the conference.

This year's conference will be hosted at The University of Western Australia on the banks of the Derbal Yerrigan/Swan River on what is Wadjuk Noongar land. APSA 2024 is partnership between political studies, international relations and public policy colleagues drawn from all five WA universities – Curtin University, ECU, Murdoch University, University of Notre Dame, and, The University of Western Australia.

The theme of this year's conference – The State of Democracy and Politics: Local, Regional and Globe – seeks to capture the fact some 3.7 billion voters will go to the polls across 72 countries in 2024. This provides an important backdrop for APSA 2024 and for Australian and international scholars in political studies, international relations and public policy to showcase emerging research – theoretical, methodological and empirical – on the challenges, opportunities, changes and dynamics of the democratic condition in the 21st century at the local, regional and global scale.

We have 230 registered attendees and over 250 papers/panels/roundtables will be delivered across 10 tracks. In addition, we have over 60 postgraduate students attending the PhD symposium this year. The PhD symposium will be held at Forrest Hall and is supported by the Forrest Research Foundation. We appreciate your patience and support

We are delighted to have Prof. Ariadne Vromen (ANU) and Prof. Nicole Curato (Canberra) deliver the keynote addresses this year. And, as part of this year's conference the Australian Political Studies Association (APSA), The Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, and the UWA Public Policy Institute are co-hosting a special public panel discussion – Is Democracy Done? Australian Perspectives on the Future of Democracy. This panel features two academics – Prof. John Phillimore (Curtin) and Prof. Carolyn Hendriks (ANU) – and two former politicians – Dr Carmen Lawrence and the Hon. Ken Wyatt.

The local organising committee would like to extend its thanks to the APSA National Executive Committee, the Forrest Research Foundation, CHASS, and Business Events Perth for financial support and strategic guidance throughout the planning of this year's conference.

Last, but by no means least, the local organising committee would like to thank Clare Feenan and Tarryn Basden at the UWA Public Policy Institute for their professionalism in program management and logistics.

Assoc. Prof Paul J. Maginn

Chair, APSA 2024



# SCHEDULE

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
25 November	9.00 - 5.00pm	PhD Symposium	Forest Hall
	7.00 - 10.30pm	Welcome Reception	The Reveley
26 November	9.00 - 9.30am	Welcome to UWA	SSCI LT
	9.30 - 10.30am	Keynote Address	
	10.30 - 11.00am	Morning Tea/Coffee	Uni Club Terrace
	11.00 - 12.30pm	Concurrent Session 1	SSCI/ ARTS
	12.30 - 1.30pm	Lunch	Uni Club Terrace
		Book Launch	ARTS G62
		Political Theory Research Group Meeting	ARTS G59
		Women's Caucus Meeting	ARTS G60
		Policy Studies Research Group Meeting	ARTS G61
		Interpretivist Study Group Meeting	ARTS 162
	1.30 - 3.00pm	Concurrent Session 2	SSCI/ ARTS
	3.00 - 3.30pm	Afternoon Tea/Coffee	Uni Club Terrace
	3.30 - 5.00pm	Concurrent Session 3	SSCI/ ARTS
	5.45 - 8.00pm	Is Democracy Dead? Public Panel Discussion	SSCI LT
27 November	9.00 - 10.30am	Keynote Address	SSCI LT
	10.30 - 11.00am	Morning Tea/Coffee	Uni Club Terrace
	11.00 - 12.30pm	Concurrent Session 4	SSCI/ ARTS
	12.30 - 1.30pm	Lunch	Uni Club Terrace
		AJPS - Meet the New Editorial Team!	ARTS G59
		Political Orgs/Participation Research Group Meeting	ARTS G60
		Teaching and Learning Group Meeting	ARTS G61
		LGBTQI Caucus Meeting	ARTS G62
	1.30 - 3.00pm	Concurrent Session 5	SSCI/ ARTS
	3.00 - 3.30pm	Afternoon Tea/Coffee	Uni Club Terrace
	3.30 - 5.00pm	Concurrent Session 6	SSCI/ ARTS
	6.30 - 10.30pm	Closing reception and APSA awards	18 Knots Rooftop Bar
28 November	9.00 - 10.30am	Presidential Address + AGM	SSCI LT
	10.30 - 11.00am	Morning Tea/Coffee	Uni Club Terrace
	11.00 - 12.30pm	Concurrent Session 7	SSCI/ ARTS
	12.30 - 1.30pm	Lunch	Uni Club Terrace
		Env Pols/Policy Research Group Meeting	ARTS G59
		Quant Methods Research Group Meeting	ARTS G60
		Int'l Relations Research Group Meeting	ARTS G61
	1.30 - 3.00pm	Concurrent Session 8	SSCI/ ARTS
	3.00 - 3.30pm	Afternoon Tea/Coffee	Uni Club Terrace

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Tuesday 26 November

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Keynote Address

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**What's trust got to do with it? Reimagining policymaking-research relationships**

**Prof Ariadne Vromen, Australian National University.**

In a year of tumultuous policy change for Australian universities, the distance between the public sector and university researchers is expanding. In this keynote I will overview the current debates on evidence-based policymaking and outline the asymmetric power relationships (Marsh et al 2024) between policymakers and researchers embedded in knowledge exchange and knowledge brokering. University-based researchers increasingly compete with other influential knowledge producers, such as think tanks and for-profit consultants, to supply evidence that shapes policy. Simultaneously, political and ideological factors often undermine evidence-informed policymaking (Head 2016); or some forms of knowledge and evidence, such as RCTs, are prioritised and valued. To seriously reimagine the contribution political studies researchers can bring to effective policymaking we need to focus on how mutually constituted trust can be re-built into knowledge brokering relationships (see Cuffe et al 2024). Policymakers need to welcome evidence into the heart of the policymaking process and work with researchers to co-create research agendas that address government agendas (Cairney et al 2024). In the context of ongoing policy problems more pluralist forms of evidence are also needed. Recently Helen Sullivan (2024) has called for a paradigmatic shift in public policymaking, built on sustainability, sovereignty, and justice, that requires active collaboration with a plurality of actors enabled to contribute new knowledge. Continuing this theme, I will also argue for a renewed focus on recognition and dignity (Lamont 2023) in strengths-based policymaking using qualitative evidence based on lived experience and personal stories.

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Concurrent Session 1

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Public Policy + Politics I

Governance and Social Dynamics

**Navigating Uncertainty During Implementation: Policy Hovering as a Procedural Tool.**

**A/Prof Paul Fawcett, University of Melbourne. A/Prof Azad Singh Bali, The University of Melbourne.**

Despite best efforts there are several design challenges in policy implementation that designers do not anticipate or accommodate. Time and political pressures, incomplete or insufficient data, existing institutional constraints, and capacity constraints are common impediments that accentuate challenges in policy implementation. However, addressing these are important as once policy programs are announced they have path forming effects, and calibrating or adjusting key features during implementation is difficult to do. It is in this context, that the paper advances the notion of 'policy hovering', as a procedural tool to calibrate implementation designs before they are rolled out. The idea of hovering is not new. Experimental designing, participatory designs, policy pilots, policy sandboxes, agile or flexible designs among others have used to describe strategies and processes where public policies can be calibrated in the face of extreme uncertainty, including in the implementation stage. This paper fleshes out the idea of hovering as an ex-ante activity during policy formulation, and illustrates its utility with examples from social policy programs. The central argument developed in the paper is that the implementation stage of a program must be designed during policy formulation, and 'hovering' gives designers sufficient leeway to adjust these designs when the program is rolled out; that is, hovering can be an effective procedural to manage uncertainty during the implementation stage.

**Collaborating in future states – Contextual instability, paradigmatic remaking, and public policy.**

**Prof Helen Sullivan, Australian National University.**

Collaboration is ubiquitous in public policy life, its presence and profile determined by prevailing governance conditions. Commitments to globalisation and marketisation in the latter part of the 20thC marked the onset of an era defined by collaboration, between and across tiers and spheres of government, with non-state actors, and through market and network instruments. Current contextual instability poses questions

for dominant public policy paradigms and the existing collaborative settlement. This article explores the challenges presented in the current moment and how policy makers and scholars might navigate them. It focuses on how ideas about economics and security shape public policy illustrating the paradigm shifting impact of economism and securitization. It argues for the replacement of economism and securitization by sustainability, sovereignty, and justice and demonstrates the latter's engagement with economics and security and their accounting for what have hitherto been 'subaltern voices' in public policy. It discusses the implications for collaboration in relation to future collective action problems, more diverse and disconnected. 'publics', and a more congested and lower trust policy environment. It highlights the need for collaborative plasticity and pluralistic agency.

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## International Relations I

## Great Power and Competition

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### **A 'Free and Open' Indian Ocean Region?**

**Prof Benjamin Reilly, University of Sydney.**

We report the results of our SPGP study on the changing strategic significance of the Indian Ocean. recurrent framing of Indo-Pacific futures foresees a region cleaved between democracy and autocracy, based on a geopolitical competition between free and repressive visions of world order. At the same time, initiatives for a "free and open" Indo-Pacific such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue assume, at least implicitly, a continuation and deepening of democratic governance across the region. This article examines whether such deepening within and between Indo-Pacific democracies is either likely or possible in coming years. It first examines the scope and extent of democratic and autocratic regimes in the Indo-Pacific today and in the likely future, and the growing prevalence of "illiberal", semi-democratic regimes which combine elements of both models. It then assesses the likely implications of an Indo-Pacific region split between a mostly-democratic maritime East Asia, an autocratic East Asian mainland, and a South Asia which sits somewhere in-between. It ends with a discussion of the democratic peace theory – one of the strongest "laws" in international relations, but one which may need to be re-evaluated in the light of the regional trend towards illiberal democracy.

### **Governing Deep-Sea Mining: Great-Power competition on a New Geostrategic Frontier in the Indo-Pacific.**

**Dr Lai-Ha Chan, University of Technology Sydney.**

Deep-sea mining (DSM) is a nascent and understudied research topic and yet has considerable implications for international politics. It constitutes a new geostrategic frontier of China-US great-power competition. This paper studies DSM through the lens of International Relations, focusing on the US-China contest for authority over norms and regulations within the International Seabed Authority (ISA), established by the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to regulate DSM beyond national jurisdiction. Geographically this paper focuses on the South Pacific, proximately to the Clarion-Clipperton Zone (CCZ). The area has abundant supplies of critical minerals; and is also where China and the US (and its Indo-Pacific allies) are competing for political influence. Since 2021 Nauru has been urging the ISA to finalize a mining code. The paper addresses: How will China's advocacy of DSM and its accelerated diplomatic outreach to the South Pacific, especially to pro-DSM Nauru, shape the architecture of the global governance of DSM, and how will China and the US (and Australia as its allies) compete with each other over the building of an emergent DSM order? It is not primarily about how states and mining companies are in practice scrambling for harvesting the critical minerals in the deep sea, but rather about how China and the US narrate their respective preferences for governing DSM while the ISA is drafting the rules.

### **Geopolitical realities faced by small states: A comparison of New Zealand and Sri Lanka.**

**Dr Bhagya Senaratne, New York University Shanghai. Dr Germana Nicklin, Massey University**

New Zealand and Sri Lanka neighbor Asia-Pacific regional powers, Australia, and India, which wield considerable influence in the Pacific and Indian Ocean regions due to its size, wealth, and resources, respectively. The island-states in Australia's neighborhood are dependent on Australia for trade and security, whereas India's neighbors engage in trade, have security pacts, and are occasionally influenced on domestic and foreign policy resulting in both New Zealand and Sri Lanka being in these Asia-Pacific regional powers' direct sphere of influence. Accordingly, this paper examines whether the geographic proximity of small



states to a bigger, more powerful neighbor influences how smaller states manage these relations. The research follows the comparative case study method using two sets of cases: Australia and New Zealand, and India and Sri Lanka. Applying the distinct types of geographical distance provides a more nuanced picture of the degree of influence and the agency. In conclusion, this paper suggests four distinct dynamics between small states and their larger neighbors.

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## Public Policy + Politics II

## Policy Implementation Changes

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### **The use of political discretion and public engagement in managing National Park tourism: comparative study on Tasmania and New Zealand.**

**A/Prof Valentina Dinica, Victoria University of Wellington, School of Government.**

Tasmania and New Zealand are acclaimed for their extensive Protected Area (PAs) networks. They share a history of bottom-up PA management, with extensive inputs from citizens and local/regional conservation boards. However, concerns have been raised, lately, over the exercise of political discretion by conservative politicians. This study compares the decision-making discretion of PA ministers in Tasmania and New Zealand and the public engagement opportunities afforded by law. The study focused on decisions regarding PA zoning and tourism concessions. Two case studies were selected, to also analyse relevant claims in the public sphere, since 2012: the Cradle Mountain Lake Saint Clare National Park in Tasmania and the Westland Tai Pounamu in New Zealand. The study found that the decision discretion of PA ministers is remarkably wide; however, it is wider in Tasmania, especially regarding concessions. In Tasmania, transparency is lower regarding the environmental assessments of concessions and whether to notify concession applications. The ministers' competences to modify PA zoning, to accommodate demand for concessions, were used in both Parks, while the quality and timing of public engagement recorded deficiencies. So far, public resistance to politically-driven PA commercialization, beyond management plan provisions, has produced more tangible results in New Zealand.

### **Unwilling network actors: The Australian Army's reluctant role in domestic disaster response policy.**

**Joshua Newman, Monash University.**

By all accounts, natural disasters in Australia have increased in frequency and severity over the last few decades and will likely continue to arrive more often and with even greater impact going forward. While disasters have always captured public attention, in recent years the sheer scale of natural disasters in Australia and their impact on human populations has fuelled a demand for increased government action. Like many policy areas, disaster response requires the participation of a variety of policy network actors, including the state and Commonwealth governments, local councils, volunteer services, not-for-profit organisations, private companies, and, in this case, the military. While much has been written about the inherent, and perhaps inevitable, antagonism that is evident in many policy networks, there is little research on network actors who are reluctant to participate. Using interviews with senior officers in the Australian Army with significant experience with domestic disaster relief, this paper elaborates a scenario in which a network actor is compelled to participate in policy formulation and implementation against its wishes. The existence of unwilling network actors adds a new dimension to our understanding of policy networks and the role of antagonism between network actors in generating policy outputs.

### **A Tale of Two Forests. The Implementing of Logging Regulations in Nigeria's National Parks and Forest Reserves.**

**Mr Henry Ufomba, Flinders University.**

The loss of forest cover is a topical environmental issue in Nigeria. To address this problem, protected forest areas are created with regulations to ensure conservation in national parks and sustainable logging in forest reserves. However, the implementation outcome has not been optimal in preventing illegal logging and further deforestation. Armed with this observation, a two-pronged study was conducted. First, I adopted a document analysis approach to probe this problem by scrutinising regulatory documents by Nigeria's federal and state governments to ascertain their robustness. The finding reveals the existence of discretionary powers for street-level bureaucrats. Second, I tested the Street-Level Bureaucracy (SLB) theory in the

context of the use of discretionary powers by street-level bureaucrats in protected forest areas in Oyo State, Nigeria. The findings suggest a nexus between the use of discretion by street-level bureaucrats and the poor outcome of logging regulations.

## **Governing community engagement towards social acceptance: The case of Tasmania's proposed North-West Renewable Energy Zone.**

**Ms Marion Schoen, University of Tasmania. Dr Hannah Murphy, University of Tasmania. Prof Fred Gale, University of Tasmania. Prof Heather Lovell, University of Tasmania. Dr Daniel Goodwin, University of Tasmania. Dr Kim Beasy, University of Tasmania.**

The urgency and demands of carbon reduction efforts in Australia have accelerated governmental efforts to advance energy transition strategies. A major success factor for such transitions is not only addressing scientific and technical challenges but garnering sufficient social acceptance. As illustrated by numerous recent energy infrastructure projects, without sufficient social acceptance from civil society, governments and commercial proponents are encountering delays and project abandonments. In this paper we engage with the literature on the governance of community engagement and ideas of social licence and social acceptance in relation to renewable energy developments. We contribute to the literature by examining the case of the Tasmanian Government's first proposed Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) in North-West Tasmania, an important development in building renewable energy supply chains including for green hydrogen. Drawing upon public documentation and interviews with local and regional stakeholders, we outline the government's approach to engaging with civil society actors to consult on and promote the benefits of the REZ. Our key findings demonstrate the significance of government steering and coordination, capability, resourcing, education and issue framing in generating social acceptance of large-scale renewable energy projects. Applying these lessons may be crucial for the realisation of long-term place-based energy transitions.

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**Gender/Sexuality + Politics I**

**Gender and Sexuality Resistance**

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## **Human Rights and Political Participation in Southeast Asia: The case of SOGIESC Rights.**

**Prof Anthony Langlois, Curtin Centre for Applied Ethics, Faculty of Business and Law, Curtin University.**

In this paper, I read the creation of the ASEAN human rights regime, the development of SOGIESC rights claiming (where this denotes sexual orientation, gender identity & expression, and sex characteristics), and the social conflict associated with homophobia and the backlash to LGBT rights through modes of political participation analysis. This framework is used to interpret the different uses of rights and values-denominated language and institutions in the context of advocacy for sexuality and gender diversity rights protection. I first explicate the modes of participation approach and reprise how I have previously used this to analyse SOGIESC rights claiming. I then show its utility for understanding the emergence of the elite level human rights regime in ASEAN, before indicating how it can also be used to analyse non-elite resistance to SOGIESC rights. Both elite and non-elite resistance can be linked to the older anti-rights discourse of "Asian Values", which I illustrate with reference to three states: Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. Taken together, these examples illustrate the capacity of modes of participation analysis to provide a persuasive account of the often contrasting and competing politics of human rights in the region.

## **'The Glowing Fireflies': Invisible Activism under China's Queer Necropolitics.**

**Dr. Fan Yang, University of Melbourne. Dr Ausma Bernot, Griffith University.**

In China, the escalating repression of gender and sexual diversity has given rise to 'queer necropolitics.' This paper contributes to the concept of 'queer necropolitics' which refers to the hegemonic ability to determine who is allowed to suffer, survive, or thrive. We examine China's sustained re-enforcement of traditional gender norms, which has rendered queer communities non-existent from official recognition. In this context, we aim to understand how China's queer necropolitics has shaped queer organising in the country. From 2021 to 2022, we conducted 26 semi-structured interviews with a diverse cohort of self-identified LGBTIQ+ members and activists across 12 provinces in China. We find that the interplay of legal invisibility and politicised, moralised visibility has placed queer communities under hegemonic governance techniques of suppression. The paper argues that China's queer necropolitics has established invisible

activism. The juxtaposition of invisibility with activism denotes the quiet, implicit, and everyday embodied acts of communal care among queer communities as a form of resistance. Building on the metaphor of 'glowing fireflies' shared by a research participant, invisible activism presents a more sustainable approach than conventional rights-based activism. The paper expands our understanding of politically antagonistic practices, acknowledging the diversity and complexity embedded within queer activism.

### **Internationalist solidarity: feminist praxis and sacrifice in northern Syria.**

**Dr Eda Gunaydin, University of Wollongong.**

Transnational and postcolonial feminisms, as well as feminist international relations, richly critique the material and epistemic damage generated by attempts to 'save' women, as well as queer people, in the Global South (Munzahim 2024; Abu-Lughod 2013). This literature also potently explicates how differences (of identity and power) can prevent the establishment of meaningful solidarity between women across borders. This article focuses on a group of female foreign fighters, as well as LGBTQ members of the Queer Insurrection and Liberation Army (TQILA), who travelled to Syria to fight ISIS and, later, state forces. It asks to what extent these entanglements reproduce 'imperial solidarity'. The article argues that exploring the activities of these groups of fighters, who travelled to Syria to defend the 'Rojava revolution', a Kurdish-headed left-wing movement that has achieved self-governance in northern Syria for over a decade, reveals the presence of a transnational, feminist, militant solidarity, one oriented around 'praxis-oriented, active political struggle' (Mohanty 2003, 7).

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Australian Politics I

Panel: Liberal Party

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### **Mapping Liberalism in the Liberal Party and Beyond.**

**A/Prof Matteo Bonotti, Monash University.**

While it might be thought that the Liberal Party is the primary vehicle for the carriage of liberal political thought in Australian politics, the reality is more complicated. The Liberal Party has always contained various strains of liberalism, alongside other non-liberal values, while liberalism of various kinds can be detected in other Australian parties. This paper seeks to make sense of the distribution of liberal values across the Australian party system. The paper is structured into three sections. We begin by identifying two main traditions in liberal political thought. The first is classical liberalism, which is centred around individual freedom and private property and rooted in the work of such authors as Friedrich A. Hayek and Robert Nozick. The second tradition is egalitarian liberalism, which assigns more importance to equality and social justice, and whose main contemporary exponent is John Rawls. Following this theoretical unpacking, we trace the manifestation of these traditions within the Liberal Party since its origins. This historical analysis shows that the ideology and values of the Liberal Party have changed over time, in response to leaders' priorities and political events. Finally, drawing on survey data from the Australian Election Study, we seek to identify the extent to which classical and egalitarian liberalism are present within the current base of Liberal voters, and how the liberalism of Liberals compares to the liberalism that can be found among the supporters of other parties.

### **The Western Australian Liberals.**

**Prof Narelle Miragliotta, Murdoch University.**

In 2018, the outgoing state president of the WA Liberal Party, Norman Moore, implored the gathered party conference to remain faithful to the commitment to a secular, broad church party. Moore was seeking to draw attention to the increase in evangelical members within the party and the ways in which their presence was changing the factional, ideological and policy orientation of the WA division. Less than four years later, an internal review of the party's dire performance at the 2021 state election reiterated these concerns, although steps to moderate the influence of religious conservatives at the highest levels of the party have floundered. This paper explores the ways in which the changing ideological composition of the party is remaking the WA Liberals.

### **The Federal Division of the Liberal Party.**

**Dr Zareh Ghazarian, Monash University. Marija Taflaga.**

The Liberal Party has enjoyed remarkable electoral success at the national level in Australia. The party was created in 1944 and appeared to have addressed the brittleness of previous anti-Labor parties during its

uninterrupted time in government between 1949 and 1972. Since then, the party has had lengthy periods in office from 1975 to 1983, 1996 to 2007, and 2013 to 2022. This paper highlights how the Liberal Party's policy foundations, which were built upon ideological disunity, allowed the party to be pragmatic and responsive to the policy demands of the electorate and attract wide electoral support. This led to some describing the party as a 'broad church'. In contemporary Australian politics, however, such a description may be tenuous. The paper identifies that the party has been beset with new and enduring fissures which involve questions of social policy and intersections with religious movements. The paper analyses how some Liberal figures have sought to position the party as an advocate for socially conservative values which has caused further divisions within the membership. The paper explores how this may help and hinder the party's pragmatic tendencies and capacity to attract voters. In doing so, the paper highlights the challenges confronting the party to remain a significant political force in Australian politics in the 21st Century.

### **The NSW Liberals: An Unexpected Success Story?**

**Prof Anika Gauja, University of Sydney. Rodney Smith.**

In the 21st century, the NSW Division has been the most successful of the Liberal Party's state and territory branches. The Liberals have governed NSW in Coalition with the National Party for half the period since 2001 (12 years), longer than their counterparts in any other state or territory, where the overall average has been just 5.3 years. NSW has provided all four Liberal Prime Ministers during this period (Howard, Abbott, Turnbull and Morrison). This success presents a contrast with the period from the formation of the Liberal Party in 1944 to the end of the 20th century, when the Liberal-led Coalition governed NSW for just 18 years and Victorians (Menzies, Holt, Gorton and Fraser) dominated the position of Prime Minister. Somewhat paradoxically, the recent success of the NSW Division has come during an era of heightened factional instability within the Division. The moderate, centre-right and hard right factions have regularly engaged in bitter semi-public disputes over pre-selection contests, leadership positions, organisational rules and party policy. Efforts to stabilise factional relations through constitutional reform have had little success. So how has the NSW Division achieved its recent success? First, demographic changes and a decline in traditional partisan loyalties have reduced Labor's electoral advantage in NSW, making the Liberals more competitive in areas such as western Sydney. Second, since Barry O'Farrell became Opposition Leader in 2007, the parliamentary Liberals have had effective parliamentary leadership, despite three unplanned leadership transitions and broader organisational instability. Third, NSW Labor's chaotic final term in Government (2007-11) left it in a weakened state from which it has still not fully recovered.

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## **International Relations II**

## **AUKUS and Allies**

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### **An Australian strategy for the Indo-Pacific? Assessing advantages and risks.**

**Dr Gabriele Abbondanza, Complutense University of Madrid, University of Sydney, Istituto Affari Internazionali.**

The Indo-Pacific is becoming the world's geopolitical and geoeconomic epicentre. Home to about two-thirds of the global population, gross domestic product, and maritime trade, it is also increasingly defined by superpower competition and numerous regional tensions. Amid all this, Australia is one of the earliest and staunchest supporters of the Indo-Pacific construct, due to economic, strategic and normative interests, middle power diplomacy, and a shared commitment with the United States and its regional allies and partners. However, despite this significant foreign policy tradition, Canberra does not have a dedicated policy for the Indo-Pacific, unlike several countries and institutions. Against this backdrop, this paper assesses the desirability of an Australian strategy for the Indo-Pacific. First, it recounts the significance of this macro-region for contemporary global affairs. Second, it retraces Australia's own role within it. Third, it assesses the advantages and risks of a dedicated Indo-Pacific strategy, arguing that the former outweigh the latter. Fourth, it explores the potential contours of such strategy, while simultaneously taking into account national and regional interests. As a novel research on a topical issue, this paper therefore contributes to debates pertaining to both the Indo-Pacific and Australian foreign policy.

### **Taken for Granted? Social License and National Security: A Case Study of AUKUS in Western Australia.**

**Dr Troy Lee-Brown, UWA Defence & Security Institute. A/Prof Paul Maginn, UWA Public Policy Institute.**

What is social license? The literature on social license began in the business world but in recent years it



has also crossed over into other domains such as environmental policy, major infrastructure developments, and, of course, mining and resources. With projects of state and/or national significance, governments and other entities, chiefly private sector corporations, seek and require social license in order to legitimise their projects and practices. However, within the realms of national security, questions abound as to whether social license is genuinely sought and earned. This is especially relevant in regard to local communities directly affected by proposals that are rhetorically framed as in the ‘interests of national security’, to protect national sovereignty, and/or when elected governments, irrespective of their political persuasion, assert that they have a mandate to make adopt national security policies and thus evade the norms of securing social licence for contentious proposals. In recent times, some members of government, business and industry, and academia have contended that developing and maintaining a social license for Australian nuclear- powered submarines under the recently signed AUKUS program between Australia, the US and the UK will underpin the initial and ongoing success of the program. Drawing on a mix of textual data sources – policy documents, media statements by government officials/departments, and, media reporting on AUKUS, this paper seeks to make sense of the policy discourses and objectives in relation to: (i) the definition and meaning of social licence within the scholarly and policy literature at large; (ii) the framing of social licence by government; and, (iii) the nature and extent of social licence assumed and/or pursued by government.

## **Perceptions of AUKUS.**

**Dr Kathryn Robison, USSC at the University of Sydney. Dr Luis da Vinha, De Montfort University.**

How is AUKUS perceived within the impacted sectors, such as defence, space, and technology? This paper surveys opinion professionals within this sector across Australia, the US, and the UK to investigate their perceptions of AUKUS on measures such as importance, impact, future cooperation, among other issues. While AUKUS is portrayed as an important and vital partnership domestically, how does this compare with its perception with our partner nations overseas? Based on the results of this survey, this paper will seek to place AUKUS among other international cooperative endeavours in this domain and seek to explore how Australia has leveraged its involvement as a middle power in this and other security pacts.

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### **Comparative Politics I**

### **Federalism, Governance, and Political Systems**

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## **Fiscal federalism in an era of financialization.**

**A/Prof Kyle Hanniman, Queen’s University.**

In the normative fiscal federalism literature, central governments are generally assigned three tasks: risk sharing, redistribution, and macroeconomic stabilization. But the recent efforts of central banks, and governments to stabilize domestic financial markets in the wake of volatility in global financial markets clearly suggests a fourth. This paper describes and documents a number of these stabilization efforts in wealthy jurisdictions (including Australia, Canada, the Eurozone, Sweden, and the United States) since 2008, with a special emphasis on direct efforts of central banks to stabilize subnational bond markets. It also explores the origins, or implications of these policies from three perspectives: (1) an economic perspective – broadly aligned with the priorities of first-generation fiscal federal scholars – exploring their implications for the country’s economic, and fiscal health; (2) a political perspective – broadly aligned with the priorities of second-generation fiscal federal scholars – exploring variation in these measures across federal systems; and (3) and a deeper historical perspective – which might become a key component of a third-generation of fiscal federal research – explaining why the measures have become so prevalent now.

## **Isn’t China Federal?**

**Dr Nick Yao, The University of Queensland.**

Most Chinese scholars categorise the Chinese governance style as unitary, although some argue it is sui genre. While each government is unique in some respects, the distinction between unitary and federal systems remains informative. If federalism is defined as a system in which general and local governments exercise relatively autonomous powers of government that cannot be altered unilaterally by either, there are reasons to claim China’s system is federal in certain important respects. This is particularly evident in relation to the formation of Hong Kong and Macau Special Administrative Regions and the prescribed procedures by which their respective Basic Laws can be formally amended. Furthermore, China exhibits what could be termed “‘super federal’” characteristics, as Hong Kong and Macau maintain distinct political,

legal, social, and economic systems, including customs, tax regimes, currencies, and official languages, based on principles entrenched in their Basic Laws and the Constitution of the People's Republic of China. These differences persist despite Beijing's controversial enactment of the Hong Kong National Security Law.

## **Trade Adjustment in Autocracies: Social Compensation and PTA Design.**

**Dr Evgeny Postnikov, University of Melbourne. Dr Jonas Gamso, Arizona State University**

Domestic adjustment to trade-induced social dislocation is a notorious policy challenge. Traditionally, states increase social spending as they form preferential trade agreements (PTAs) to compensate workers whose jobs become threatened. Yet research on trade policy adjustment has primarily focused on democratic nations in the OECD, leaving autocratic countries unexplored even as they form PTAs frequently. To address this gap, we theorize that autocratic regimes are less inclined to provide extensive social spending in response to their formation of PTAs, as doing so would require progressive tax and redistribution regimes not favoured by the elites that provide regime support in these nations. Instead, they use PTA-based measures, such as the inclusion of labour protection and labour mobility clauses, to reduce trade-based job losses that would otherwise occur. These clauses, originally promulgated by the Global North, are favoured by autocratic leaders joining PTAs with both democratic and autocratic nations. Thus, the diffusion of PTA templates can serve the political needs of autocrats by buying support among workers. Importantly, autocratic PTAs are resistant to the diffusion of other social, environmental and anti-corruption clauses that could threaten regime stability. We test corresponding hypotheses quantitatively using data from the Design of Trade Agreements (DESTA) dataset.

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### **Political Theory I**

### **Democratic Resilience: Definition and Applications**

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## **Democratic resilience redefined: A deliberative perspective.**

**Prof Selen Ercan, University of Canberra.**

This paper offers a novel definition of democratic resilience drawing on the theory and practice of deliberative democracy. Deliberative democracy is a normative theory of democratic legitimacy, based on the idea that those affected by a collective decision have the right, capacity and opportunity to participate and deliberate in the making of those decisions. In practice, this approach is often equated with structured forums, known as deliberative mini publics, where participants engage in a dialogue with each other to reach common ground. However, as a normative political project, deliberative democracy extends beyond these forums encompassing multiple other sites and the broader public sphere. This paper focuses on this broader understanding of deliberative democracy and defines the public sphere as the engine room of democratic resilience. It defines democratic resilience as the ability of the public sphere to respond to adverse events and threats without losing its key deliberative qualities: inclusion, critical reflection, learning and adaptation. The paper discusses the role of these qualities in the contexts of threats that seek to undermine them, offer theoretically informed suggestions for strengthening these qualities. Empirically, the paper draws on insights from an ongoing Discovery Project (funded by the Australian Research Council), examining democratic resilience in the face of violent extremist attacks.

## **Deepening democratic resilience: Civil society responses to far-right violent extremism.**

**Dr Jordan McSwiney, Centre for Deliberative Democracy and Global Governance, University of Canberra.**

This paper examines the role of civil society in responding to far-right motivated violence, and in deepening the democratic resilience. Drawing on deliberative notions of the public sphere, it analyses and compares the civil society responses to three far-right violent extremist attacks: the 2016 murder of British Labor MP Jo Cox, the 2018 Macerata shooting in Italy, and the 2019 Christchurch massacre in Aotearoa New Zealand. Across the three cases, albeit to varying degrees, civil society actors challenged prevailing political and news media responses, (re) interpreting the attacks not as unforeseeable aberrations in a democratic society, but as the latest event in national legacies of racism and xenophobia. I argue that such bottom-up responses are vital for challenging the status quo that is manifest in most official responses to far-right violent extremism, and facilitating a deeper account of democratic resilience. The paper shows how civil society actors can enable a critical reflection on questions of belonging, and contribute to the construction of a more inclusive and solidaristic notions of collective identity.

## **Income inequality and democratic resilience – Impacts and policy choices.**

**Nicholas Biddle, ANU. Prof Matthew Gray, Australian National University.**

According to Merkel (2023) 'Democratic resilience is the capacity of a democratic regime to absorb external challenges and internal stressors and to dynamically adapt to the changing functional conditions

of democratic governance without falling into regime change and abandoning or damaging democracy's defining principles, functions and norms.' One of the challenges to democratic resilience is perceived economic unfairness, with populations in less equal societies more likely to think that democratic institutions are not working for them. In this paper, we look at: views on inequality, economic fairness, and social spending in Australia; how they have changed through time; how they relate to views on democracy; and policy settings that can both strengthen perceptions of fairness and democratic resilience.

## **The Adaptive Capacity of Democracies: Theory and Institutional Mechanisms.**

**A/Prof Zim Nwokora, Deakin University.**

The condition of many democracies at present has provoked a range of reactions and interpretations. One view stresses the dysfunction of contemporary democracies, with constitutions and party systems often cited as sources of malaise. Another view, however, stresses the superior performance of democracies over time, pointing to the strong record of consolidated democracies in weathering all kinds of challenges. Although democratic performance is presented strikingly differently in these two narratives, they together prompt the question of why some countries and constitutional systems seem more able to adapt – that is, navigate changing social and governance challenges – than others. This paper engages this question by fleshing out a framework to understand and compare such adaptive capacity. To do so, it builds on the notion of “adaptive efficiency”—coined by Douglass North (2005) to analyze economic performance over the long run—but recasts it to study democratic performance in a dynamic setting. It considers a range of institutional mechanisms that may foster or frustrate adaptation, opening up a new approach to the analysis and evaluation of political systems.

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**Media + Politics I**

**Extremism, Online Narratives, & Digital Radicalisation**

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## **Andrew Tate and the breakdown of consensus reality: investigating the phenomenology of online extremism.**

**Mr Paul Sutherland, Curtin University.**

Phenomena including QAnon, the manosphere, conspiratoriality, ‘post-truth’, and schizoposting demonstrate the importance of considering online visual culture within extremism research. Attempts have been made to theorise politically extreme online culture through the ‘weaponisation of affect’; the contention that subjects retroactively adopt rationalised political positions subsequent to their felt affective resonances with influential figures, symbols and ideas, and that influential individuals deliberately employ affect as a rhetorical device towards defined political and ideological goals. Attempts have also been made to address politically extreme online culture through ontological security theory, which asserts that the threat of ambiguity posed by globalisation, neoliberalism and an unending state of unresolvable crisis have provided the backdrop for feelings of widespread existential anxiety which directly shape politics. My paper aims to reconcile these theories—one concerned with the individual, and the other with the societal structure—by synthesising them through phenomenology, which I argue is their common ancestor. Through this analytical method, my paper explores how the manosphere and Andrew Tate recruit followers online towards an extremist worldview, ultimately arguing that the phenomenological experience of the digitally mediated world is inherently conducive towards an increase in both ontological insecurity and the seeming breakdown of consensus reality.

## **Controlling ‘Territory’ to ‘Networking Online’- Islamic State’ search for a Caliphate Continues**

**Ms Priyadarshini Baruah, Centre for Air Power Studies.**

Terrorist Organisations such as the Islamic State (IS), more commonly known as ISIS or Daesh have effectively utilised social media platforms to disseminate their propaganda and attract their targeted audience to join their cause. They leverage cost-effective and user-friendly features of social media to swiftly disseminate their motivations and ideals, and interact with their intended audience sans any obstacles. After ISIS lost control over its territory, it has increased its online presence, employing tactics such as producing high-quality propaganda films and using manipulating hashtags to attract and recruit new followers. Given the ongoing growth of social media, it is probable that terrorist groups will continue to expand their presence online, despite losing territorial ground. Hence, this paper describes how IS is rebranding itself as a “Resurrected Caliphate” in the digital space. However, the shift of IS tactics from ‘controlling territory’ to

to 'terrorist networking (online)' has not in any way diluted the group's penultimate agenda of establishing a worldwide Islamic Caliphate. The narrative and idea of 'Establishing a Caliphate' has been planted and propagated in every tentacle of IS from the very beginning and this dream most likely persists. Thus, the aim and objective of this research paper is to hyphenate the link between IS' change in strategy to original goal of establishing a Caliphate.

### **Tate, Sigmas and Self-Optimisation: The Manosphere as an Online Protection Racket.**

**Ben Rich, Curtin University. Eva Bujalka.**

This presentation centres on the premise that researchers require a systematised understanding of the strategies employed by digital influencers that lead individuals to engage and affiliate with the Manosphere. The paper seeks to contribute to a growing conceptualisation of the complexities of the Manosphere by exploring how influencers like Andrew Tate and Jordan Peterson employ symbiotic cycles of ontological security and insecurity through Social Media in a manner that resembles a protection racket. It argues that these constructed ontological security cycles provide a powerful impetus to not only draw individuals into the Manosphere, but also to extract material and social capital that can be reinvested to strengthen and expand the effects of these same cycles.

### **A marriage of exposure and predispositions? A field study combining panel and webtracking data to understand the emergence of Covid-19 conspiracy beliefs.**

**Dr Tobias Rohrbach, University of Wollongong. Silke Adam. Franziska Keller. Mykola Makhortykh. Ernesto de Leon. Chiara Valli.**

As Covid-19 escalated into a global health crisis, pandemic-related conspiracy theories emerged rapidly. Based on the idea of motivated reasoning, this study combines original data from multi-wave survey panels in Germany and Switzerland with online tracking during the pandemic's onset to explore how individuals' predispositions and exposure to conspiracy content impact the formation of pandemic-related conspiracy beliefs. Our findings reveal widespread exposure to conspiracy-related content across various online media platforms, which is partly driven by predispositions. Individuals with strong populist or nativist views avoid mainstream media when looking for conspiracy narratives, while those with political mistrust gravitate towards alternative sources. Both predispositions and exposure significantly shape conspiracy beliefs: Political mistrust, populism, nativism, and alternative media exposure drive belief formation, while exposure to quality media mitigates it. Mediation analyses reveal two causal pathways to reinforcing conspiracy beliefs: selective exposure to attitude-consonant content or avoidance of attitude-dissonant quality media, followed by counter-arguing.

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## **Concurrent Session 2**

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### **Public Policy + Politics III**

### **Emerging Technologies and Societal Impact in Governance**

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### **What does 'good' look like in national research impact assessments? A comparison of case studies in three nations.**

**Dr Kate Williams, University of Melbourne. Prof Jenny Lewis, University of Melbourne.**

Assessing wider 'societal impact' has become an important feature of modern research systems. Publicly funded research institutions are increasingly expected to prove their worth through detailed reporting of their outcomes beyond the academic sphere. Several nations have introduced national research impact evaluations that rely on narrative impact case studies being constructed and submitted for assessment. Using topic modelling and qualitative coding of a dataset of 7,275 case studies submitted for assessment, this paper compares language patterns around research impact across the UK, Australia and Hong Kong. It explores differences between high and low scoring submissions within each country and between national systems. It argues that while similar forms of performance measurement contribute to constrained patterns of reward and recognition in publicly funded research, there are national differences in the underlying research topics in these case studies. The paper points to the importance of specific national research contexts despite substantial standardisation in the production and assessment of impact case studies. It indicates that national policy settings override the development of a universal understanding of what is highly valued (and less valued) as societal impact.



## **Artificial intelligence, Public Services and Policy – A Value Chain Perspective.**

**Prof Karl Lofgren, Victoria University of Wellington. Prof William Webster, Stirling University.**

The advent of generative artificial intelligence (AI) popularised through ChatGPT has accentuated the governments' ambitions to enhance the quality of public services and public policy. This paper will be based on a value-chain approach explore and summarise the immediate experiences of AI in the public sector, and exhibit some of the hurdles and challenges associated with these innovations. While value-chain approaches traditionally has been associated with identifying sequences in a (commercial) production (manufacturing) Our review of experiences provides an opportunity to reflect on some of the promises, as well as presenting some elements for better diagnostic tools in forecasting and evaluating digital platforms and systems utilising generative AI. This includes value issues associated with data quality, intellectual property, surveillance, privacy, transparency, However, our paper also raises issues about value priorities and not at least, trade-offs between values.

## **Asia's Quantum Divide: Implications for Public Administration and Public Policy.**

**Dr Kim Moloney, Hamad Bin Khalifa University.**

There is limited-to-no public administration and/or public policy research on the implications of quantum computing (Overman, 1996; Moloney 2024, under review). And yet, with “Q Day” fast-approaching many Asian countries will find themselves unprepared for the cybersecurity risks that are unveiled with the advent of quantum computers. Quantum will not only reimagine our scholarly and practitioner spaces but, as the Cloud Security Alliance suggested, “quantum computers will break the cybersecurity infrastructures, at least the one we know today” (Cybernews, 2022). This is no apocryphal claim. It is a claim repeated among multiple national defense and cybersecurity scholars (e.g., Adams, 2019; Gorbanyov, 2021; Herman, 2018; Lindsay, 2020; Parekh, 2019; Taylor, 2020). Although several countries in Asia are investing in quantum (Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Philippines, Qatar, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand) (Qureca, 2024), Asia is largely unprepared. Similar to current and prior disciplinary discussions on ICT, internet, and digital divides, the quantum divide will also separate the “haves” from the “have nots”. However, and unlike the prior divides, the basis of the quantum divide is different. For national entities to engage in serious public or private investment in quantum computing, there must be significant groups of theoretical physicists, engineers, and policy specialists capable of leading a country forward. This capacity gap is often missing in less developed countries. To-date, there are at least six quantum divides that if not addressed, will leave Asian countries behind. This includes a high-level capacity divide, scholarly divide, an access divide, a digital sovereignty divide, an investment divide, and a literacy divide. Each divide will be discussed while being contextualized to the varying developmental statuses of Asian countries.

## **Governance of Intangible Cultural Heritage: Examining Central-Local Dynamics and State-Society Relations in Contemporary China.**

**A/Prof Yu Tao, University of Western Australia.**

This paper seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of the legal, policy, and practical frameworks governing the protection of intangible cultural heritage in contemporary China. It examines the policy dynamics in the area since the latter half of the 20th century, underscoring the multifaceted approach adopted by various Chinese authorities since the country's accession to the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2004. This paper details the spectrum of relevant laws and regulations at central and local levels and explores the distinctive “productive protection” model through specific case studies. In so doing, it explores the Chinese government's approaches to governing the country's cultural fields, illustrating how these approaches function by integrating legislative, policy, and practical measures into a robust multi-level governance system. While acknowledging the significant advancements achieved, this paper also critically addresses the challenges the state-led governance model poses in intangible cultural heritage protection.

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International Relations IV

Grand Strategy

## **Xi and his BRI.**

**Mr Mintu Barua, Murdoch University.**

The BRI has been considered as China's grand strategy. However, the personal motivation of Xi Jinping

played a crucial role in shaping the BRI. After coming to power, Xi abandoned Deng's dictum, 'hide your capabilities and bide your time', which long dictated the course of PRC's foreign policy, and launched a super ambitious project, namely the BRI. Perhaps, Xi realized that the course of world politics is going through a phase of transition, where China needs a bold grand strategy to deal with the emerging challenges of the contemporary world, preserve China's vital interests, and reshape global order and governance. Probably, Xi also realized that apart from serving China's vital interests, such a transformed grand strategy can elevate his image both domestically and globally and serve his political aspirations of staying in power for a longer period. Consequently, the BRI had been launched. Therefore, the BRI can also be viewed as an instrument of serving Xi's political interests.

### **Blockading Taiwan as It May Seem: Confronting International Legal and Military Scenarios.**

**Assistant Prof Winston Yu-Tsang Wu, National Taiwan Ocean University. Dr Shang-Su Wu, Research Coordinator.**

Supposing China is planning military blockades against Taiwan, how do they manage to deal with international legal issues and arrange military deployments after announcing and implementing a blockade? Are there any legal and military difficulties that China may face in preparations and execution? What diplomatic issues may also arise following potential legal and military scenarios? To answer these questions, this paper firstly tries to explore fundamental legal elements concerning the use of force and naval blockades, such as the Charter of the United Nations and relevant rules of naval warfare; with a general scrutiny regarding Taiwan's legal status in applying such international legal rules. Secondly, this paper assumes that China may touch upon a possibility of triggering up the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan, and Mutual Defense Treaty between the Philippines and the United States. As such, how may China's blockades cause external military intervention and how could China avoid this scenario happened? Thirdly, this paper intends to explore contradictory views between legal interpretation and military formation in the blockade. How China could prevent too much involvement of contending legal conundrum and how much risky calculations that China should take into consideration?

### **Suspicion and Entrenchment: The Deterioration of the Sino-Indian Border Relations between 2013-2023.**

**Dr Stephen Westcott, Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs. Dr Amrita Jash, Manipal Academy of Higher Education.**

Between 2013 and 2023, the Sino-Indian relations gradually worsened from sharp disagreements over where their border should be fixed to increasingly acrimonious confrontations between border patrols along the Line of Actual Control, culminating in a lethal skirmish at Galwan Valley in 2020. These escalating border tensions occurred despite the positive trajectory in bilateral relations between 1988 and 2012 and a dedicated diplomatic mechanism to negotiate a solution to border dispute. This raises the question: what explains the deterioration of border relations between China and India over the past decade? To answer this query, this paper draws upon Hassner's border entrenchment theory to argue that the exogenous factors caused the border to rise in importance for both sides. Specifically, as both states have risen in power and sought to assert themselves on the international stage, they have inevitably been encroaching on areas the other deems sensitive. This has heightened their mutual suspicions and prompted them to entrench their positions within the territory they control.

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Public Policy + Politics IV

Commitment and Engagement in Governance

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### **Youth and policy fatalism: the potential from tracing diverse Civic Journeys.**

**Prof Brenton Prosser, University of New South Wales. Dr Andy Mycock, University of Leeds. Prof Gerry Stoker, University of Southampton.**

In western democracies, there has been a perception that younger generations are less interested in traditional politics and democratic activities. In this paper, we introduce the lens of 'policy fatalism', namely, the absence of belief that governments can make a positive difference on key policy issues. We report on a joint UK-Australian study of fatalism in three policy areas to draw out results relating to younger citizens. Results indicate that young people may be less fatalistic than older generations, which suggests the need for renewed ways to understand their relationship with democracy. This is taken up in the second part

of the paper through a report on the UK ‘Civic Journey’ project. This was a transformational youth-led programme that was launched in September 2021 that focuses on illuminating and unleashing the civic potential of youth. This approach highlights the existence of key transition points and helps underline the notion of civic momentum, while it raises questions about the ‘hotspots’, ‘coldspots’ and ‘blind spots’ of civic journeys, which may alternatively lead to engagement or extremism. This study also offers a rare data set on the impact of civics programs, both individually and cumulatively, which is a valuable resource for policy makers and civic leaders. The paper concludes with reflections on how the ‘Civic Journey’ concept might be expanded to an Australian context in a way that celebrates diversity and difference.

### **Antecedents and Differences in Trust in Federal and State Government in the Australian State of Western Australia.**

**Prof Shaun Goldfinch, University of Nottingham. Prof Ross Taplin, Curtin University.**

Examining the little-studied Australian state of Western Australia and drawing on a representative online panel survey, we test three groups of hypotheses on perceptions of ethical government, performance as measured by satisfaction, trust in government, political participation, and perceptions of transparency, and the interrelationship between these variables. We examine variables on state and federal government. Trust in state government is higher than in federal government in WA across a number of measures. Perceptions of performance and ethical government are also stronger, while respondents are more likely to participate in politics at state level. Perceptions of transparency are associated with trust in government at both state and federal level, as well as being related to perceptions of ethical government and performance. A novel contribution is that transparency is not related to political participation at either state or federal level, contra a body of other research.

### **Policy Termination made easy? The emerging trend toward sunseting antimicrobial resistance national action plans.**

**A/Prof Erik Baekkeskov, University of Melbourne.**

While policy termination is usually more difficult than continuity in domestic policymaking, the international process for addressing antimicrobial resistance (AMR) shows that sustaining commitments can be the more difficult path. Addressing persistent crises requires persistent policy responses across multiple countries. Policy coordination among many countries has gained significant scholarly attention whereas analyses of continuing, longer-term commitments of many countries to crisis response are less common. This paper remedies this shortfall by analysing the commitments of different countries to the international policy process against AMR. It triangulates novel evidence in the form of distinct indicators based on global surveys, content analysis of national action plans (NAPs), and publication patterns of second-generation NAPs. The findings suggest that national commitments to the international process initially reached high levels but are now in decline. Countries are effectively ‘sunseting’ their NAPs, and thereby ending commitments to the international process for addressing AMR. Many have refrained from renewing their NAPs, and those that do renew rarely show signs of learning or adaptation from previous NAPs. Hence, in the AMR case, policy termination is proving easier than continuity.

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**Gender/Sexuality + Politics II**

**Gender in Global Politics**

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### **Gender expertise according to WHO.**

**Miss Mariel Verroya, Griffith University and Acknowledge Education. Prof Sara Davies.**

The role of expertise at the international level has been presented as equal parts competition for authority and striving for objectivity on what is seen as valid knowledge. But where does gender expertise sit within these two camps? What barriers do gender experts face in being included in international expert committees? Despite the significance and the increasing emergence of gender knowledge as expertise in various international domains – humanitarianism, peacekeeping, peace processes, climate change, and sustainable development – it is yet to receive the same level of attention from more technical areas of expertise such as telecommunications, environment, sanitation, and One Health. This gap in the recognition and integration of gender expertise in scientific and technical domain warrants further analysis. This paper focuses on experts in the International Health Regulations (IHR) Emergency Committees and how they understand gender expertise. Through a Qualtrics questionnaire, we identify how they perceive gender

representations (i.e. quotas) and gender expertise (as knowledge), and the barriers and biases they self-describe. Our study provides further understanding into how these committees make decisions on when and how gender expertise is included, as well as crucial insight into how gender experts can navigate these spaces which tend to marginalise them.

## **Feminist Finance? A Research Agenda for Gender-Lens Investing.**

**Dr Kelly Gerard, University of Western Australia. Dr Jacob Broom, Murdoch University.**

Gender-lens investing is booming, with capital inflows to public market gender-focused products jumping from US\$100million in 2014 to US\$2.4billion in 2018. Very little, however, is known about the drivers and impacts of this thriving mode of impact investing, with little independent analysis of whether these products deliver on their weighty claims of earning a profit while driving systemic change. This article takes a first step towards understanding the drivers and implications of the spectacular growth in gender-lens investing, through two methods. First, by analysing the small number of studies that exist—the majority of which are produced by practitioners—the article identifies the key discursive frames through which gender-lens investments are advocated, as well as their associated silences and contradictions. Second, the article identifies their key advocates, by analysing attendance at the 2022 GenderSmart Investing Summit, held in London over 18-19 October. This event is the largest gender-lens investment conference, and hence the organisational affiliations of attendees and program materials provide an insight into the social relations through which knowledge on gender-lens investing is constructed. Based on these findings, the article puts forth a research agenda for tracking the utility of gender-lens investing.

## **Sticky Norms: Understanding Anti-Gender Resistance.**

**Ms Renee O'Shanassy, Australian National University.**

There is growing research interest in the rise of the anti-gender, or anti-feminist movement. Much of this literature posits that this is a reaction against the normative progress made in disrupting the operation of hierarchical gender norms in decision making bodies, including the UN. In this paper, I aim to deepen the understanding of this resistance as linked to the sticky underlying norms operating at an institutional level (Kenny 2007)—that is, that gender equality norms, have not yet displaced older masculine notions of state sovereignty. Using a feminist institutionalist lens, I seek to situate the anti-gender trend, not just as a social or political movement, but as a significant rhetorical and narrative driver in illiberal politics operating at domestic and international levels. For illiberal states, gender operates as a kind of “symbolic glue” (Peto, 2021). The literature notes anti gender resistance relationship with illiberalism (Goetz 2020, Cupac and Ebeturk 2022), populism (Sanders and Jenkins 2022), global right (Buss 2003) and posits it as a democratic challenge (Sosa 2021). By highlighting the persistence of masculine norms operating at the level of international politics, I aim to contribute to literature on the normative contestation evident in international relations, with a eye to illiberal trends globally.

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### **Australian Politics II**

### **Democratic Innovations in Australia**

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## **Conceptualising storytelling and storylistening for policy change.**

**Prof Ariadne Vromen, Australian National University. Dr Laura Davy, Australian National University.**

In the last decade there has been a growth in the use of personal stories by civil society campaigners to try and persuade policymakers to change positions. This form of narrative evidence follows a storytelling logic that appeals to emotions of the listener. At the same time there has been an increasing focus on democratic listening as part of innovations in deliberative democracy, which draw attention to whether and how storytellers are heard. More recently, “storylistening” has emerged as a new way of theorising how narrative evidence is collectively used to make sense of the world. We synthesise these different disciplinary traditions of using stories and listening to apply them to the public policy context. We argue that the use of personal narratives and story-based evidence is important, both implicitly and explicitly in creating policy change and focusing attention on marginalised voices. We also point out that creating space for storytelling, without insuring either democratic or collective forms of listening are also undertaken, is often tokenistic or exploitative. Drawing on international examples of storylistening in policy practice, this paper asks: how can Australian policymakers and civil society advocates collect, better include and listen to citizen stories to ensure that the voices of marginalised communities are meaningfully heard and acted upon?



## **Between democratic creativity and institutional stubbornness: The trajectory of democratic innovations in Australia.**

**Dr Adele Webb, Centre for Deliberative Democracy and Global Governance, University of Canberra.**

This article seeks to unpack the conflicting trajectories of democratic innovations in Australia and offer pathways for breaking the resistance of the prevailing institutions to revise and improve the traditional mechanisms of political participation and decision-making. It defines democratic innovations broadly, as interfaces between citizens and government designed to enhance citizen participation. It distinguishes between two types of innovations: electoral (vote-centric) and deliberative (voice-centric) innovations. While Australia is often celebrated as the global leader in electoral innovations, it lags in deliberative innovations, particularly at the federal level when compared to other established liberal democracies. The article identifies three contextual factors that explain the limited adoption of deliberative innovations in Australia: i) the settler-colonial context, ii) the legal participatory infrastructure, and iii) the political culture of non-listening. The article concludes by suggesting pathways to counter these inhibiting factors and highlights creative community innovations that could inspire and advance institutional democratic practices.

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### **International Relations III**

### **Security and Insecurity**

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## **Leveraging Global Distraction: How Turkey and Iran Exploit the Israel-Hamas Conflict for Kurdish Repression with Less Sc.**

**Ziba Akbari, Deakin University. Reihaneh Pourmomen, Deakin University**

Amidst the intense global focus on the Israel-Hamas conflict, other significant regional dynamics, such as the Kurdish struggle for autonomy, receive less international attention. This study utilizes the Security Dilemma framework to explore how Turkey and Iran exploit this distraction to intensify the repression of Kurds, leading to systematic human rights violations and heightened insecurity. By examining policies and actions in Turkey and Iran—ranging from military operations framed as counterterrorism in Turkey to the execution of Kurdish prisoners in Iran—this paper demonstrates how these measures, while purportedly aimed at maintaining state security, perpetuate cycles of unrest and insecurity. The interconnected nature of these actions not only impacts Kurdish activism within these countries but also has transnational repercussions, influencing Kurdish movements across regional borders. This analysis seeks to underscore the need for a more comprehensive international response that addresses the statelessness within the broader context of Middle Eastern geopolitical tensions.

## **Middle Powers as Vanguard of Planetary Democracy: A Comparative Study of Australia and Vietnam's Foreign Policy Strategies in the Indo-Pacific.**

**Mr Minh Hoang Nguyen, Swinburne University.**

As the Indo-Pacific emerges as the epicenter of geopolitical competition, critical challenges have been posed to middle powers in the region regarding their support for planetary democracy. This paper will discuss how an established middle power, Australia, and a rising one, Vietnam, are adjusting foreign policy strategies to maintain a rule-based, democratic regional order in during superpower tensions through the lenses of middle power diplomacy and liberal institutionalism. Middle powers are better placed to play the role of a credible broker, bridge-builder, and facilitators of collective action on transnational problems. In this respect, I argue that both Australia and Vietnam play leading roles in protecting democratic institutions' integrity and resilience during times of geopolitical volatility within the Indo-Pacific. While Australia emphasizes the targeted alliances and niche diplomacy, Vietnam would be focusing on bilateral relationships, diversification, and regional integration. The findings underscore middle power theory regarding the indispensable role played by vanguard middle powers in planetary democracy at a time of global democratic retreat. The same offers helpful insights for policymakers as to what best can be done to support rules-based regional governance and democratic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, undergirding the future of democracy and international relations in the 21st century.

## **Resistance and (In)security at the Periphery: Peace Praxis in the Colombian (Post) conflict Future.**

**Mr Connor Clery, University of Melbourne.**

This paper contemplates how resistance is articulated to the (in)security of liberal peace. Due to the disciplinary statism and essentially conceived state power that continue to dominate IR, the role of 'ordinary' people in their pursuit of everyday security is often overlooked entirely. As a point of departure, the paper critiques

Colombia's provision of liberal peace for reproducing of violence in peripheral places, restricting citizens from access to protection and exacerbating local social inequalities. In other words, I argue, liberal peace is pacifying and (in)securitising, rather than emancipatory, and everyday security relies on local processes of resistance. To support this argument, resistance is theorised as a practice-based and relational process, which emphasises the quotidian labour of securing life in political settings where missteps may result in atomisation, pacification or death. To critical debates in IR concerning security, peace and resistance, this paper rejects the neat ontological categories of individual, state and international, and offers insights on a global politics imagined from the periphery. The paper concludes by emphasising the opportunity for practice-based and relational approaches to resistance to generate a politics of hope, change and emancipation.

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## **Comparative Politics II**

## **Publics Attitudes and Advocacy in Policy**

### **Short-term pains for long-term gains? Examining public attitudes towards long-term policies.**

**Dr Benjamin Leruth, University of Melbourne.**

This paper analyses public attitudes towards political long-termism, which is defined as the conscious choice made by individuals to prioritise the future consequences of today's political actions over their short-term benefits. Attitudes towards political long-termism might vary depending on a wide range of socio-economic or ideological factors, such as gender, household income, education level, and self-placement on the traditional left-right spectrum. In a similar vein, these attitudes might vary depending on the policy area. This analysis relies on an original vignette experiment submitted to over 9,000 respondents in 8 countries (including Australia) to determine what drives political long-termism. It is demonstrated that while some policy areas (such as welfare and climate) tend to yield higher levels of political long-termism, there is no universal trend across all countries covered in this study, hinting at the existence of different cultures of political long-termism.

### **Comparing the Policy Dynamics of Psilocybin in Australia and Canada.**

**Ms Erica Margovsky, University of Sydney.**

This presentation examines the factors that influenced the value acceptability of psilocybin regulation in Australia and Canada. I argue that in both cases, policy entrepreneurs used the media as a venue to shift the national mood towards the value acceptability of psilocybin, transforming the issue's problem definition towards medicalisation or commercialisation and away from deviance. I use Kingdon's Multiple Streams Framework, and Houston and Richardson's problem definition analysis, as adapted heuristics to examine the factors surrounding the psilocybin policy process in Australia and Canada. Through a discursive analysis of 50 news media articles across Australian and Canadian online publications, I identify three key problem definitions for psilocybin in these countries: medicalisation, commercialisation, and recreationalist/deviance. Australia maintains a legacy of punitive drug policy responses in which drug users are stigmatised, while Canada has opened avenues towards the commercialisation of psychoactive substances through the precedent set by cannabis regulation. I find that, in both instances, there has been a contestation of psilocybin's discursive narratives, with evidence-based medicalisation now found to be the most common drug policy rhetoric by 60%. This paper covers new territory through a comparative analysis of drug policy reform and builds on a wealth of analyses comparing these two nations.

### **Navigating Advocacy Landscapes in ASEAN: Challenges and Strategies in Human Rights Advocacy Across Indonesia and Thailand.**

**Lalu Ary Kurniawan Hardi, Universitas Airlangga.**

This research explores the complex engagement strategies and multifaceted challenges encountered by civil society organizations (CSOs) engaged in advocating for human rights across the diverse socio-political landscapes of Indonesia and Thailand. Through in-depth qualitative interviews conducted with representatives from prominent CSOs, a nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics shaping advocacy efforts emerges. The interviews reveal a spectrum of advocacy approaches within civil society, ranging from collaborative engagement with governmental institutions to more confrontational abolitionist strategies, reflecting varying perspectives on the efficacy of engagement versus radical change and leading to tensions and fragmentation within civil society. Notably, the role of democracy as a catalyzing force for human rights

advancements is underscored, particularly in Thailand, where collaboration with progressive political parties is highlighted as a strategic priority. Key challenges identified include navigating the intricacies of complex political systems, managing divergent advocacy goals within civil society, and adapting strategies to respond to evolving societal and political climates. Despite these challenges, CSOs demonstrate unwavering commitment to their human rights advocacy missions, leveraging various avenues such as parliamentary engagement, grassroots mobilization, and collaboration with democratic movements. This study contributes significantly to a deeper understanding of the nuanced realities of human rights advocacy in Southeast Asia, emphasizing the imperative of fostering dialogue, collaboration, and solidarity within civil society to advance human rights agendas and foster positive social change in the region.

## **Civic Participation and Legitimacy of Trade Agreements: How Input Matters.**

**Dr Evgeny Postnikov, University of Melbourne. Dr Ida Bastiaens, Fordham University**

Increasingly free trade agreements (FTAs) include civic organizations in their negotiation, design and implementation. How does this inclusion affect public perceptions of the legitimacy of free trade deals? The effects of these mechanisms are not well understood and are not obvious. On one hand, involving civil society actively in trade negotiations could enhance the legitimacy of the agreement process as the public feels their voices are heard. On the other hand, civil society could express dissatisfaction with the negotiation process and agreement design, spurring public sentiment against FTAs. Using data from an original survey experiment, we explore the effect of civic participation in FTAs on public perceptions of FTAs in two European Union member states, Germany and Ireland. The EU is the focus because of the marked difference in public acceptance of trade deals across member states and because it has pioneered civil society inclusion in FTAs. We expect greater public support and legitimacy associated with trade agreements when the EU signs FTAs that involve civil society, although it is mediated by civil society's satisfaction with the negotiations and concessions made. Ultimately, our study indicates that public voice can be a means to change the growing backlash against free trade.

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Political Theory II

Justice, Decolonisation, and Normative Frameworks

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## **Migration, Historical Injustice, and Reconciliation.**

**Dr Gwilym David Blunt, University of Sydney.**

This research paper explores the relationship between migration and historical injustice in the case of settler colonialism. It is grounded in the debate in political philosophy on the ethics of migration, which has a significant gap on the duties owed by migrants to the victims of historical injustice, in this case indigenous peoples in settler colonial states. The migrants this paper is interested in are primarily legal and voluntary migrants who enter through regular channels with the possibility of addressing conventional refugees as well. It argues that migrants have distinct duties from individuals born into these states. This is because migrants have voluntarily chosen to join societies which have been built on profound injustice and to benefit from the fruits thereof. The duties generated by this are positive and negative. On the positive side there are duties of solidarity, self-education, and reconciliation and on the negative side a duty of non-interference in the promotion of restitution. These are demanding duties that can require the sacrifice of advantage and opportunities for migrants, but can also be indeterminate and match the capabilities of particular migrants.

## **Democracy on the Brink: Neoliberalism and Social Pathologies as the Flip Side of Democracy.**

**Dr. Octaviano Padovese, The University of New South Wales**

This presentation seeks to grasp the understanding of the democratic crisis through the comprehension of social pathology of paranoia and neoliberalism as the management of suffering. Finally, this presentation will address how neoliberalism is the engine of the democratic crisis, producing sufferings that alienate individuals from their desires, and consequently, these individuals organize around regressive solutions to produce a new management of suffering instead of promoting emancipation. For this reason, we must debate how a political theory that discusses the place of desire, symptoms, and affections is essential to create new democratic possibilities. In this sense, the formal conditions that organize life towards a democratic orientation are destined to fail, as there is no logical condition that provides a relationship between neoliberalism and democracy. As Margareth Thatcher categorically stated, "Economics is the method; the

object is to change the heart and soul.” In this sense, neoliberalism is a form of deep intervention in the individual’s subjectivity and regulation in social life. Thus, in the neoliberal state, the individual becomes the bearer of conflict because the subject is now seen as the “entrepreneur” of their own destiny, no longer relying on the collective or the state. This requires the extension of market values and guidelines to all forms of social life (which obviously implies the distortion of democratic ideals). Through the new domestication of life forms, neoliberalism implies the domestication of desire. Hence, we move to a stage where the subject experiences the maximum efficiency of their body with the aim of ensuring productivity and usefulness, rather than striving for a democratic ideal that would require controlling their desires to ensure collective well-being.

## **Feasibility in terms of rationality.**

**Dr Will Bosworth, Australian National University.**

The concept of feasibility has received a lot of attention in political theory recently. The hope is that it might clarify how empirical facts constrain our normative argument. Given ‘ought’ seems to imply ‘feasible’, and the truth-conditions of ‘X is feasible’ appear empirical, this is certainly understandable. But I argue the focus on the terminology of feasibility rather does the reverse. It obscures a decision situation important for specifying how empirical facts factor into normative argument. I outline the decision problem with Leonard Savage’s framework in his *Foundations of Statistics* (1954) and argue we should be open to rephrasing questions of ‘feasibility’ in these terms. Four reasons for scepticism are addressed: (1) the belief that it would be circular because decision theory itself depends on the concept of the feasible set, (2) the belief that it is vacuous because an already assumed value function will be doing all the work, (3) the view that it rules out justified inferences from the social sciences by reducing everything to highly individualistic priors, and (4) linguistic intuition.

## **William Thompson, John Stuart Mill, and Nineteenth Century Feminist Political Thought.**

**E/Prof Jim Jose, University of Newcastle.**

While much analysis on the effects of automation has occurred from the perspective of labor in commercial and industrial sectors (Benanav 2020, Steinhoff 2021, Eubanks 2018) I depart from this context to discuss the outcomes of automation on symbolic forms of labor that are foundational to conceptions of the state, namely military labor. Drawing upon critical labor theory, nationalism studies, and psychoanalysis, I examine how increasing automation of military labour influences the symbolic basis of the nation-state and its future politics. I argue that in conjunction with the forces of capitalism and a militaristic technological rationality that increasingly integrated into political governance, the symbolic role of the citizen-soldier has functioned as an important anchor for nationalist values and a projected narrative of state cohesion. Further, I submit that the changing nature of warfare and military labor itself reconceptualizes the soldier, rendering historical narratives untenable, and presenting challenges to their political coherence in the present.

## **The Chronopolitics of the Cultural Interface: tempus nullius and sovereign Indigenous futures.**

**Mr Callum Stewart, University of Melbourne.**

Recent analyses of racialised time argue that settler colonialism is founded not only on the doctrine of terra nullius, but also tempus nullius - uninhabited or unused time. This paper returns to Torres Strait Islander theorist Martin Nakata’s Cultural Interface theory to further elucidate the chronopolitics of the political landscape in Australia. Cultural Interface theory has largely been taken up in education to understand Indigenous standpoints at the intersection of Western and Indigenous knowledge systems. I argue that Cultural Interface theory may also be read as a critical response to the doctrine of tempus nullius that restores sovereign Indigenous futures to the living now. The doctrine of tempus nullius constructs Indigenous peoples as primitive peoples oriented towards an unchanging past. Nakata argues, ‘To the contrary, we [Torres Strait Islander peoples] are outward-looking, and future-oriented’ (Nakata 2007, p. 204). On my reading, the Cultural Interface is the land where Westerners and Indigenous peoples meet, a place of Indigenous sovereignty. Cultural Interface theory displaces the racialised ‘natural’ histories of colonialism, opening chronopolitics up to Indigenous temporal sovereignty and agency. I conclude that Cultural Interface theory recentres possible futures that account for colonial constraints, but nonetheless begin and emerge from sovereign Indigenous lifeworlds.



## **Representations of genome-engineering biotechnologies in New Zealand's public arenas: political and science communications.**

**A/Prof Valentina Dinica, Victoria University of Wellington, School of Government.**

This study examined how actors favourable to re-regulating genome-engineering biotechnologies (GEB) portrayed them in the public sphere, in New Zealand, between 2017 and 2023. The aim was to understand the scope and veracity of GEB representations that may affect public and political regulatory preferences. The innovative framework proposed integrates discourse analysis with agnotology perspectives. The corpus contains 88 media items, political party programs and official documents. The study found that the majority of the 233 actor contributions came from scientists developing GEBs and conservative politicians. Inductive research identified 772 discursive units, shaping 21 discursive devices across three discourse domains: regulatory regimes domestically and globally, science and applications/products, and public engagement. Discourses in the realm of environmental and cultural implications were missing. While only five discursive devices were found to misinform (through omissions, errors of fact or distortions), they represented 47.2% of all discursive units. Misinformation regarded mostly representations of science and applications (safety, benefits), but affected also portrayals of regulatory regimes. All actor categories communicated misleadingly, including officials and journalists. Reflections on findings are offered, considering that the government aims to re-regulate GEB, by the end of 2024. The new legal frameworks aim to emulate the Australian approach.

## **Soft Power versus Sharp Power – The Role of Attraction and Emotion in Disinformation and Influence Campaigns.**

**Angela Palmer, University of Sydney.**

The purpose of this paper is to examine the manner in which emotion is used in the construction of disinformation and influence campaigns, specifically as a tool in influencing opinions in foreign policy. This paper will build on the idea of attraction as a coercive force (Bially Mattern, 2005), where attraction is encouraged via a communicative exchange and 'reality' constructed through representational force. Representational force is a form of power that operates through the structure of a narrative representation of 'reality', which is constructed in such a way that it threatens an audience with unthinkable harm unless it fully submits to a particular viewpoint. In this context, soft power tools that have been instrumental in encouraging external political awareness, such as international broadcasters, have transitioned over time to adopt an overt 'sharp power' agenda. The same media platforms used as soft power tools are instead appropriated to spread disinformation, amplify conspiracy and discredit western democracies in pursuit of broader strategic goals. The focus of this paper will centre on Russian use of official news services to disseminate disinformation, using narratives that directly connects with identities or emotions as a means of cultivating support.

## **The Role of Twitter in Agenda-Setting During India's General Elections: An Analysis of Political Communication Dynamics.**

**Pratyush Paras Sarma, Australian National University. Mr Swarn Rajan, IIM Kozhikode. Ms Tanaya Hazarika, IIT Guwahati.**

Over the past decade, political communication in India has evolved with the rise of social media, particularly Twitter. This platform has become crucial for political parties to shape media narratives and influence journalistic coverage, especially during elections. This study addresses the limited research on Twitter's impact on media agenda-setting during elections, focusing on the Indian general elections of 2014, 2019, and 2024. The methodology involves analyzing tweets from major political parties and leaders using advanced natural language processing techniques for sentiment and thematic analysis. We utilized a dictionary approach supported by Dynamic Topic Modeling and Structural Topic Modeling. Additionally, the study examines press releases and media coverage from five leading news outlets during the eight weeks leading up to election day. Our findings indicate a significant shift towards Twitter-centric agenda-setting, particularly by the BJP, followed by the Indian National Congress. The results suggest a punctuated nature of agenda-setting. The correlation between political tweets and media content underscores Twitter's substantial role in framing electoral narratives. This research is crucial for understanding the interaction between social media and

traditional journalism in South Asia's digitizing society, emphasizing Twitter's influence in contemporary political communication and election strategizing.

## **The global politics of Netflix Original Films produced in India.**

**Dr Diane Colman, University of Western Sydney.**

International Relations is a discipline that seeks to explain and understand world politics. Globalisation and digitisation has introduced a diversity of cultural actors with significant global reach, empowering a broad range of agents to the mediation of the world politics of today. One of the most powerful new non-traditional media producers is the hugely successful streaming platform Netflix, with 270 million subscribers worldwide. Netflix's internationalisation strategy is to bring content from different countries to a worldwide audience. A database of all 853 2015-2023 Netflix Original films includes 54 Indian films. By examining the worldview inherent in this set of films from India through a carefully selected set of ontologies, we can understand what cultural and ideological perceptions of this rising global superpower are being mediated to international audiences. This study will consider the question of whether Netflix is intermediating a new transnationalism via a sense of shared interests rather than geo-political allegiance. Or is it clearly an informal agent of US power.

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### **Concurrent Session 3**

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#### **Public Policy + Politics V**

#### **Shifts in Population: Policy Implications**

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### **Adapting the local state to demographic distress.**

**Prof Pierre Landry, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Dr Zheng Zhang, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Ms. Xiaoyu Zhang, The Chinese University of Hong Kong.**

While most studies of development have focused on the relationship between economic growth and the demographic transition, several important economies such as Japan and China have begun to experience absolute demographic decline, thus raising deep questions about the sustainability of the growth model, including among East Asian developmental states. This paper explores how the Chinese state has been restructuring local administration in response to demographic pressures, seeking to continue to concentrate and urbanize the population in order to maintain overall economic growth despite strongly negative macro-demographic trends and increasing scarcity of human capital. Chinese reforms after the 1970s resulted in the largest and most rapid wave of migration from rural to urban areas in human history. This transition occurred as the state deployed and strictly enforced the "one child policy" (abolished in 2015) while emphasizing the concurrent development of urban areas and even the creation of entirely new cities. The combined effect of these policies has severely undermined the viability and governance capacity of rural villages and small townships and led to drastic reconfigurations of territorial administration and has compelled authorities to restructure the political organization of the local state drastically.

### **Effective but Malign Policies or Ineffective but Benign Policies: Focusing on South Korean Population Policies.**

**Underwood Distinguished Prof M. Jae Moon, Yonsei University.**

Proposing malign policy which is extended but differentiated from policy failure, this study examines South Korea's population policy from its historical fertility policies to recent pronatalist policies. Designing population policy as part of economic development policy, the South Korean government introduced successful birth control measures in the 1960s and 1970s, which are characterized as effective but malign because of the potential violation of human rights and infringement of socially disadvantaged groups while historical drop of the fertility rate decreased from 4.53 in 1970 to 1.66 in 1985. In contrast to the effective but malign policy of birth control, the failure of recent pronatalist policies, despite extensive government efforts and incentives, is analyzed. This study calls for going beyond policy failure studies and paying attention to malign policies to better understand and mitigate the long-term implications of policy measures for society.

### **Rethinking Uganda's refugee settlement policy on self-settled refugees.**

**Dr Beatrice Alupo, Acknowledge Education. Ms Mary Adoi, Griffith University**

This paper explores Uganda's refugee policy's tendency to exclude refugees who leave the refugee settlements.

It achieves this through the lens of social inclusion. Due to the rise in the refugee numbers entering Uganda, the government adopted the 2006 Refugees Act to admit and regulate the refugees in the country. Even though this Act has received global recognition as the most generous policy, it does not cater for about 10% of refugees who often leave the designated refugee settlements due to overcrowding, remoteness, and limited resources. This decision leaves them struggling to fend for themselves in a country with limited availability and distribution of resources, as well as exposing them to brutality and exploitation from the locals and enforcement officials. With the perspectives of the refugee policymakers, program implementers, and self-settled refugees, this paper establishes the debate on the adequacy of Uganda's refugee policy to promote inclusiveness while maintaining its current globally "framed status" as a successful model.

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International Relations V

Global Linkages

## **Democracy or De-Linking in the DRC? An insight into Samir Amin's theory and the state of democracy within the Democratic Republic of Congo.**

**Mrs Frances Hajama, Macquarie University.**

Cobalt and coltan are essential minerals for crucial clean energy transition and technological innovation. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has the largest stocks of cobalt and coltan in the world. Despite this 'resource wealth' the DRC remains one of the poorest nations on earth. Mainstream global political economy currently relies on neoliberal principles such as global trade liberalization, privatization, deregulation and Ricardo's theory of comparative advantage in the hope that nations like the DRC will economically prosper. However, to date no evidence indicates economic prosperity for the people of the DRC deriving from cobalt and coltan extraction. The recent revival of dependency theory allows for stimulating and convincing insights into the DRC's dilemma. The late Samir Amin's theoretical framework is particularly relevant and perceptive. This research paper will employ Amin's Marxist dependency theory to analyze the cobalt and coltan mining industries within the DRC which ultimately reveals the implementation of clean energy transition and technological innovation through imperialism.

## **How US Military Keynesianism Reproduces Dollar Hegemony: The case of AUKUS.**

**Dr Ian Lovering, Te Herenga Waka - Victoria University of Wellington.**

This paper will investigate the link between US militarism and dollar hegemony through a post-Keynesian International Political Economy (IPE) analysis of the 2021 AUKUS security partnership. The dollar hegemony literature emphasises a multi-directional relationship with US militarism. Dollar hegemony grants the US privileged fiscal space for outsized military expenditure. Security factors, in turn, reproduce dollar hegemony through, for example, pivotal security agreements trading military protection for dollar support. While convincing, these perspectives less clearly reveal the mechanisms through which US militarism endogenously (re)produces dollar hegemony. My paper turns to the post-Keynesian literature on 'military Keynesianism' for answers. Doing so, however, reveals a paradox. Militarism plays a uniquely crucial role driving economic growth in the US. Puzzlingly, though, the US is the one country in the world where its monetary hegemony makes this unnecessary. In conversation with the IPE dollar hegemony literature, my paper will address this paradox through an analysis of AUKUS and the mechanisms through which US military exports reproduce dollar hegemony. In doing so, the paper will show how, beyond being a reciprocal security exchange of guns for dollars between two sovereign states, dollar hegemony is a structural feature of the global circuits of US military Keynesianism.

## **Regional Cooperation in the Mekong.**

**Dr Shintaro Hamanaka, IDE-JETRO.**

The process of regionalism or the establishment of regional institutions is highly political. However, institutional dynamics differ between regionalism at the two different levels: subnational regionalism and supra-national (international) regionalism. "Institutional bricolage" seems to be the norm of institution building at the subnational level, as several existing studies show. Concerned parties often re-use and re-shape existing institutional elements, rather than creating new ones. In contrast, "institutional bypass" seems to be more powerful at the international level, as this study demonstrates. There is a large incentive to create an alternative pathway that bypasses existing institutions. Institutional bypass explains the proliferation of international regionalism in the Mekong, while institutional bricolage explains subnational regionalism in the same region.

## **The research impact agenda in Australia and around the world: What does it value?**

**Dr Kate Williams, University of Melbourne. Prof Jenny Lewis, University of Melbourne.**

Governments around the world have made significant investments in the assessment of publicly funded research. Research policy in Australia, the UK, and several other nations, now includes a focus on the 'impact' of research (i.e. relevance to external actors, public value or societal benefit). This is an expansion to assessments of 'quality', which prioritise academic merit and attempt to capture the value of new knowledge. A focus on what is regarded as valuable beyond the academy has been growing, driven by multiple factors, including rising scepticism about the worth of universities and the research they produce. In this roundtable, we will open the discussion by uncovering the values that underpin national assessment systems based on an analysis of policy documents from five national research assessment systems. We will discuss the following questions: 1. How do you understand the value of your work and how does that differ from national/university policy and guidelines? 2. What are the most positive and negative effects of an increasing focus on societal 'impact'? 3. How does the discipline of political science in Australia understand and engage with 'quality' and 'impact' of research? What about in other nations? This project is funded by an ARC funded discovery grant (ARC DP240101834).

## **Embodying the freak: Tattooed resistance and Feminised subjecthood.**

**Mr Kegan Mannell, University of Newcastle.**

This paper builds on the works of queer and feminist scholars such as Judith Jack Halberstam (2004) and Victoria Pitts (1994) towards the possibility of non-productive or transgressive acts to birth utopic senses of subjecthood and community weaving. This paper does so by putting a counter-genealogy of body modification within the contexts of the US, UK and Australia between the 19th and 21st centuries in dialogue with queer and marxist feminisms. This paper looks at the histories of traveling femme freaks, baffling butches and cutting queers and how these subjects resisted patriarchal-capitalism from the borders, but also existed simultaneously inside, and outside the borders of hegemonic capitalist-liberal democratic senses of whiteness. In doing so, this paper rejects both mainstream Australian law-and-order discourse and mainstream readings of body modification that speak to a generalised sense of rebellion and/or (re)produce a sense of deficiency/deviancy within the (sub)altern tattooed-subject.

## **Decolonising the rajaduras of the barbed wire fence of the colonial divide in our loving, love-making and eroticism.**

**A/Prof Sara Motta, University of Newcastle.**

In this piece I grapple with some of the ways the colonial frontier can criss-cross our internal communities and how rajaduras can become articulated in such pain-filled ways in our forms of intimacy, eroticism and love/sex. I of course, don't limit myself/ourselves to this as this could reproduce our sense of there is no way out. Instead, I explore the ways in which we might enfold together protocols, pedagogies, practices otherwise with which we can heal and flourish and all that this involves as it is such deep yet necessary works of decolonial and revolutionary love. I do this in dialogue with the works of Audre Lorde and Kim TallBear exploring conceptualisation and pedagogies of collective healing in relation to the erotic as articulated by Lorde and making love beyond settler sex as articulated by TallBear.

## **The Solidarity Dilemma: a decolonial feminist analysis of Australian Climate Movement.**

**Ms Sadiya Binte Karim, The University of Newcastle.**

Ongoing devastating impacts of global climate crisis has exposed the flaws of neoliberal progress narrative and its escalating exploitations of historically marginalised communities across the Global South. This continuing exploitation also reproduces colonial, racial, patriarchal violence on Global South communities through reinforcing 'climate coloniality' (Sultana 2022, Whyte, 2014). Mournfully, a not so recent global crisis known as the COVID-19 pandemic came into our lives as a litmus test for the state of global solidarity movements across different nation-states (Brown and Rosier, 2023; Motta 2022). This paper aims to connect /co-weave with the decolonial feminist literatures on global social movements to investigate the current



preparedness of the modern-day global movements at times of global crisis by focusing on Australian climate movement and its public response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this paper, two steps were followed to gather data to inform its analysis. First, content analysis of 15 major large scale Australian climate movement organisations' publicly available campaign information during COVID-19 pandemic and following global climate reparation claims from Global South communities at international climate summits. The second step consists of in-depth interviews with climate justice campaigners who identify either as a female or as a non-binary person. The findings of the paper show how dominant section of the Australian climate movement have been struggling to develop framing resonance with the Global South climate justice campaigns and establish just solidarity to encounter colonial patriarchal (re)production of marginalisation and violence during and the aftermath of COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, by co-weaving connection through the previous loose strands of two global crisis and its reproduction of colonial patriarchal violence/saviourism, this paper offers opportunities to (re)frame and (re)claim a just world narrative by climate movement organisations in the colonised land of Australia.

## **Brazilians and Pakistanis in Australia: New policy paradigms for DV prevention and strategies in the fight towards violence against women.**

**Dr Flavia Bellieni Zimmermann, University of Melbourne.**

This paper draws from 30 interviews conducted with Brazilian and Pakistani women in Perth, Western Australia and Sydney, New South Wales, between 2019 and 2020. The paper develops a scale between "moderate" and "extreme" experiences of honour, religion, and gender in the diaspora. "Moderate" experiences encompass high levels of agency, women's political participation, contribution to the workforce, advocacy for women's rights, having a voice within households, holding moderate religious views, and making compromises to look after their husbands and children. Conversely, extreme experiences comprise women's oppression, lack of agency, lack of political participation or economic emancipation, religious fundamentalism, subjection to their husbands as the head of households, and victimisation to domestic violence. The paper explores the nuances between these women's views and experiences of gender in Australia. In this work I propose cutting-edge evidence-based policy design, new public policy practices and new approaches to DV policy implementation. The paper endeavours to contribute to more substantive policy impact in the fight towards violence against women in culturally linguistic diverse communities in Australia.

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Australian Politics III

Government and Governance

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## **Government Formation in Australia.**

**Dr Richard Reid, Australian National University. Prof Keith Dowding, Australian National University.**

**Dr Marija Taflaga, Australian National University.**

There have been 40 Australian governments since 1946, 26 coalition governments and 14 single-party (Labor) governments. Almost all governments have had a majority in the lower house but not in the Senate since the late 1970s. There have been 17 prime ministers in this period, with great stability until recent years when there was a period of high turnover (2007-2018). Coalition governments in Australia do not conform to coalitions seen in most other places, with the near-permanence of a coalition only between two parties, working closely in and out of government at the Federal level. The Coalition agreements have been conducted at a personal level with a heavy reliance on norms in terms of how the Coalition will formulate policy and govern. It is often put, that within the Labor Party the leader has less discretion over the formation of cabinet and the formulation of policy than Coalition prime ministers due to the importance of caucus and its factional structure. This paper discusses the formation of governments in Australia comparing and contrasting the processes across the Coalition and Labor in recent years using evidence from a comprehensive set of elite interviews with politicians from the three parties of government.

## **Cabinetisation or a Westminster solution? Understanding the employment of public servants in Australian ministers' offices.**

**Dr Maria Maley, Australian National University.**

The paper tracks the proportion of Australian ministerial advisory staff over time who are drawn from the public service. Using a mix of parliamentary and employment data, biographical data and interviews (1984-2018), it tests the view that there has been a dramatic decline in the number of public servants in ministers' offices, and the argument that the Australian ministerial office is evolving towards the cabinet ministerial

model found in Napoleonic countries, a concept known as cabinetisation. It finds the proportion of Australian advisers who are public servants on leave is lower than in the past and since 2010 has been around 30%. It argues Australia's model of ministerial office has critical differences from Napoleonic ministerial cabinets and there is no evidence of cabinetisation. Australia's Westminster variant arises from institutional architecture which produces some paradoxical dynamics.

### **Addressing Democratic Disparity: Reform in NSW's Local Government.**

**Dr George Greiss, Western Sydney University. Dr Awais Piracha, Western Sydney University**

The NSW Minister for Local Government has highlighted the need to reform the NSW Local Government Act 1993. In this article we argue that any Local Government reforms must address the democratic disparity in councils. A critical element of democratic government is equitable representation. The principle of "one vote, one value" aims to provide all community members with equal access to their elected representatives. To ensure equal representation, the Commonwealth and State seat boundaries are periodically redrawn to maintain population parity. However, a significant disparity exists in the number of constituents represented by local government councillors across different Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Greater Sydney. Hunters Hill, with a population of about 14,000, has 7 councillors, each representing about 2,000 people. In contrast, Blacktown City, with a population of about 411,000, has 15 councillors, each representing about 27,000 people. As such, a person in Hunters Hill benefits from 14 times the representation compared to someone in Blacktown. This significant democracy deficit in Sydney needs to be addressed by any local government reform. An easy solution is to implement council amalgamations, which were previously abandoned. However, that is not enough, real reforms must address the true nature of democratic representation.

### **ACT self-government: lessons from a troubled birth.**

**Mr Gary Humphries, Australian National University.**

This research paper addresses the conference theme "the prospects of a more representative and diverse democracy at the local, state and federal levels", and takes the case study of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory. The ACT's is the most recently-created Australian polity, incorporating unique constitutional features. It faced intense community hostility to its establishment in 1989, including the election of MLAs committed to its abolition. Since that time, the Territory has been governed almost exclusively by coalition or minority governments – setting it apart from other jurisdictions where majority governments (in lower houses) have been the norm. This paper – the result of a doctoral project undertaken by a former MLA and Chief Minister – argues that self-government's rocky birth has produced two unusual democratic phenomena, each responding to community anxieties: the electorate's choice (by referendum) of a proportional representation electoral system; and the installation, at almost every election, of a powerful crossbench to regulate or moderate the government of the day. The paper examines the historical trends which have led to this outcome and its implications for ACT parliamentary practice. It postulates that the ACT experience may constitute a marker for the survival and evolution of Australia's democratic system.

### **Managerial models in the Prime Minister's Office: An Exploration of the 'Standard Model' and deviations in Westminster democracies.**

**Dr Heath Pickering, University of Melbourne.**

Managerial models matter, especially for prime ministers. A "good" managerial model is thought to contribute to a prime minister's political longevity and policy effectiveness. However, the question remains: how do prime ministers manage their office? While there's a prevailing view, supported by both academic literature and practice, that a hierarchical managerial model with a partisan professional chief of staff leading the prime minister's office is the "standard" and therefore the best approach, there have been deviations from this model in the classic Westminster democracies. For instance, Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull appointed senior public servants to his office, UK Prime Minister Theresa May opted for a dual-Chief of Staff structure, and New Zealand Prime Minister Jenny Shipley didn't appoint a Chief of Staff at all during her first year. This article will delve into both the "standard" and "deviant" managerial models adopted by prime ministers from 1990 to 2024. Supporting the analysis is a dataset listing 62 chiefs of staff who served prime ministers in Australia, Britain, Canada, and New Zealand. The analysis suggests that considering managerial models is crucial when examining issues of political performance and policy making.

## **Context Matters: Undecided Voters in Australian Elections and Referendums.**

**Dr Sarah Cameron, Griffith University. Prof Ian McAllister, Australian National University.**

In both general elections and referendums, many voters will know how they are going to vote far in advance of polling day, while other ‘undecided’ voters will make up their minds closer to the election. Undecided voters are key players in both elections and referendums, as while campaigns may have little influence on those who have already made up their mind, an effective campaign can sway the choices of these undecided voters. The behaviour of undecided voters helps to explain how election and referendum outcomes can differ from polling results. This raises the question of who these undecided voters are and how they differ between political contexts. Are the characteristics of undecided voters similar in elections and referendums? And how do the vote choices of these undecided voters vary between referendums and elections? To investigate these questions, we use national survey data from 1998 to 2023 to analyse two Australian referendums and compare them to national elections. We find that while the profile of undecided voters is similar across both elections and referendums, in referendums undecided voters are more likely to vote no, while in general elections they are more likely to vote for minor parties.

## **Volunteering programs and civic engagement of young people.**

**Dr Zareh Ghazarian, Monash University. Dr Ben Lyall, Monash University. Laura Woodbridge, Monash University. Dr Jacqueline Laughland-Booy, Australian Catholic University.**

The role, power, and impact of young people on politics in liberal democracies has been a topic of much attention. Young people have been at the forefront of political action and have led significant global movements in areas including social justice and climate change. Young people have also been highly active in volunteering and have contributed important resources and knowledge to their local communities. The onset of COVID-19, however, had a major impact and the rate of young people volunteering fell sharply. This paper seeks to explore how structured programs at university may help to equip young people with the knowledge and confidence to undertake volunteering in the community. It will do so by focusing on existing literature to identify the key enablers and barriers for young people to volunteer and also present insights from a study of the experiences of young volunteers. For young people with existing volunteer experiences, we found a new and bespoke program offered systematic ways to understand their civic contributions. For new volunteers, the program brokered new connections and a desire to maintain these in the longer term.

## **The Role of National Identity in Electoral Discourse: A Comparative Analysis of Left and Right Parties in Western Democracies.**

**Sofia Kalashnikova, Australian National University. Prof Annika Werner, The Australian National University. Mr Adriano Giuliani, The Australian National University.**

Various political actors narrate distinct stories about society. The crucial aspect is the presence of these narratives and their accessibility to citizens, enabling them to perceive themselves as part of a unified group. Political parties could engage in discussions about national identity to foster a connection with voters: this involves presenting a vision of the nation and aligning party’s promises with what is perceived to be the core of a particular country’s life. Similarly, parties’ descriptions of national identity might be utilized to mobilize voters and bring citizens to their side. Our main research question is: How do left and right parties in Western democracies use themes related to national identity in their electoral discourse? We use topic modeling in machine learning to test this. The comparative analysis of the data takes into consideration: a) a comparison of right and left parties in each country; b) a cross-country comparison; and c) an analysis of the change in rhetoric over the last 10 years both within and between countries. To sum up, through this paper, we contribute to the literature on national identity by identifying common strategies for the use of national identity-related themes typical for parties, as well as their unique characteristics.

## **Multiple Populisms in a Single Polity: An Examination of Left-Wing, Right-Wing, Military, and Judicial Populisms in Pakistan.**

**Mr Muhammad Omer, Deakin University.**

The paper investigates the supply-side drivers, ideological foundations, and the discursive construction

of multiple populisms in a single polity (Pakistan). The research puzzle is informed by the overarching conceptualisation of political leaders and parties as the primary employers of populism in the extant literature and the diverging dynamics of the countries in the Global South. The study employs a comparative case study to analyse the discourses of four populist actors in Pakistan: Pakistan People's Party (left-wing actor), Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaaf (right-wing actor), Pakistan Army (military actor), and Pakistan Supreme Court (judicial actor). Using discourse analysis (DA) and process tracing to analyse 40 texts, ten from each case, the paper argues that the absence of strong democratic structures and the fragmentation of political power have reduced Pakistan's political landscape to competition between different populisms. The study also argues that in countries with weak democratic traditions and constitutional certainty, supposedly non-political actors and institutions can also harness populism. Collectively, this research not only advances theoretical knowledge on the understudied subject of multiple populisms in a single polity but also builds groundwork/foundational knowledge on military and judicial populisms, two critically understudied populisms (and by extension, making a novel contribution to understanding non-party-based populisms).

### **New Zealand after Ardern: Populist revolt or par for the course?**

**Dr Luke Oldfield, Victoria University of Wellington.**

In October, 2023, New Zealanders voted to change their government. The incoming coalition was branded 'populist' for committing to unwind a swathe of post-materialist advances in areas such as indigenous rights and environmental protection. A populist style has long been a feature of New Zealand's political culture, however, with an identifiable lineage of populist leaders dating back to the establishment of colonial rule in the 19th century (Oldfield & van Veen, 2023). Indeed, both major political parties in New Zealand's contemporary democracy, the Labour party and the National party, have laid claim to the shrewdness of the nation's preeminent populist, Premier Richard Seddon, and the policies of his Liberal government. Following the return of a Labour-led government in 2017, Vowles et al., (2020) branded New Zealand a 'populist exception'. Others such as Arda (2023) have suggested the inclusive posturing of Labour and its then-leader, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, was representative of a 'left populism'. However it might be described, the progressive cosmopolitanism for which New Zealand became renowned for internationally now appears to be at a crossroads. Preliminary data from the 2023 New Zealand Election Study is used to provide insights into whether voters have begun to abandon the mainstream populism of successive governments in favour of a more exclusionary pitch.

### **Internationalisation and Party Responsiveness to Voters on Environmental Issues.**

**Mr Nathan Fioritti, Monash University/University of Melbourne.**

This paper examines how internationalisation influences party responsiveness to voters on environmental issues. Past studies of party responsiveness to voters largely explore multiple rather than single issue areas and tend to focus on the impact of domestic, and not international, factors. The paper establishes, through a series of time series cross-sectional models examining 32 states between 1973 and 2017, that parties do respond with modest increases in environmental emphasis when environmental issue salience rises among voters, and that this response strengthens with internationalisation. Through a case study of environmental issue responsiveness for Australian parties, it is demonstrated that while parties do respond to increased issue salience, this response can fall short of voter expectations. Finally, by examining governing parties that increased environmental emphasis even when issue salience was low – the National Party in New Zealand and Labour Party in the UK – this paper also demonstrates that parties will at times opt for democratic responsibility over responsiveness.

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Political Theory III

Round Table

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### **Exploring the Promise and Reach of Deliberative Democracy.**

**Dr Nardine Alnemr, Murdoch University. Dr Adele Webb, Centre for Deliberative Democracy and Global Governance, University of Canberra. Dr Anne Schwenkenbecher, Murdoch University. Prof Anthony Langlois, Curtin Centre for Applied Ethics, Faculty of Business and Law, Curtin University. E/Prof Janette Hartz-Karp, Curtin University. A/Prof Tael Harper, Murdoch University. Dr Rob Weymouth.**

Deliberative democracy is a branch of democratic theory that is also influential in practice. It offers a promising framework not only to empower and engage communities in decision-making practices, but also to address multiple other issues contemporary democracies are facing. But the very issues deliberative democracy can



respond too may also limit its potential e.g. the problem of mis/disinformation, the rise of far-right extremist politics, and the risk of co-opting participatory processes. This roundtable will explore the reach, potential, and limitations of deliberative democracy in tackling contemporary challenges. What lessons can be learnt from the application of deliberative democracy in various contexts? How can deliberation be integrated with the existing participatory approaches and practices? What institutions are needed to further the key aspirations of deliberative democracy across local and global levels? This roundtable will bring together diverse perspectives on the challenges facing democracies and consider how deliberative democracy can address them. By combining insights from the theory and practice, the discussion will reflect on paths forward for more deliberative politics.

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## **Open Track I      Identity Politics: The Intersection of Belief, Power, and Public Perception**

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### **White Christian Nationalism: Identity Politics in the United States.**

**Dr Laura Welty, Australian National University.**

In the US, White Christian Nationalism (WCN) sanctifies the conceptualization of the 'nation' as a conflation of 'Christian' with 'American' and defends deeply entrenched hierarchical racial and social structures. WCN believes whiteness and Christian heritage are central to the nation's character. WCN often view themselves as victims of societal changes, which fuels their support for authoritarian measures and distrust of democratic institutions. This perceived victimhood, combined with reinforcing racial and religious identities and support for conspiratorial information sources, exacerbates their support for political violence. It threatens diverse democracy and promotes a vision of America that is at odds with pluralistic values. This paper analyses the impact of WCN on US public policy and political behavior. It creates a framework for understanding WCN identity and its political implications by drawing on Schmitt's (1932) friend-enemy distinction, Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) hegemony theory, Tajfel and Turner's (1986) Social Identity Theory, and Rabinowitz's (2023) defensive nationalism. It will define and explain the 'us vs them' narrative forged by WCN politicians and evaluate how they have weaponized the identity on a national scale to influence public policy in the US, resulting in reinforcing narratives stemming from perceived policy successes and failures.

### **The Crime-Terror Nexus: An Integrated Approach to Preventing Crime and Extremism.**

**Bella St Claire, Curtin University**

One of the ways in which crime and extremism are combated is through preventative programs that target individuals prior to their engagement in criminal activities. Individuals are assessed using a risks-based approach where the culmination of their limitations are used to determine the likelihood that they may engage or re-engage in crime. This carries the assumption that the psychological propensities of individuals who engage in crime and extremism are the same. Applying a theory born from criminological research that was developed to combat criminals, to violent extremists', overlooks significant differences such as motivations and ideologies. These differences require greater consideration to effectively counter and prevent extremism and support the need for a strength based as opposed to risk based approach. This research papers seeks to juxtapose these differences to highlight the need for a strengths based protective-factor approach tailored to the intricacies of extremism. Two current pilot programs are discussed to exemplify how the theory can operate in practice.

### **The Effect of Use of Pronouns on Voters in Campaign Flyers for Scottish Independence.**

**Dr Kyoko Otsuki, Nara Prefectural University.**

Pronouns in political speeches have been studied to find out how personal references are revealed and how this could be reflected in the relationship between speakers and their audience (Fairclough, 2000, 2001; Hillier, 2004). Political flyers can be, similar to advertisements, categorized as 'persuasive text' (Hillier, 2004) which is designed to influence audiences to take particular political actions. In this study, rhetorical effects of pronouns in political campaign flyers are examined, using flyers distributed prior to the referendum on Scottish independence in 2014. Especially how the use of pronouns in flyers contributes to establishing relationship with voters. The flyers published by pro- and anti-independence include description of policies, statistic data, and personal stories. In qualitative analysis, following Leech (1966), who introduced the basis for providing linguistic descriptions of TV commercials in Britain, participants addressed directly and indirectly in political flyers are identified. Quantitative analysis shows that pronouns are distributed in text

with deviation; while first person singular and plural pronouns are favourably used, second person pronouns are scarcely observed in flyers. The analysis reveals the differences and similarities in the use of these pronouns between pro- and anti-independence flyers, especially in respect of ways of establishing solidarity with voters.

## **Political Islam and Religious Nationalism in the Context of the Post-Colonial Society of Bangladesh.**

**Jahid Hossain, University of Dhaka. Redwan Uz Zaman Reham, University Of Western Australia.**

This paper examines the rise of political Islam Bangladesh and its impact on the postcolonial polity. This study explores how Islamic ideology has been incorporated into national identity and state mechanisms, transforming political and social structures. Utilizing Hamza Alavi's theory of the "Overdeveloped State" and Slavoj Zizek's Lacanian theory of ideology, the study reveals the role of state patronage in institutionalizing Islamism. Historical institutionalism is applied to trace the influence of colonial and postcolonial legacies on communal politics. The analysis highlights the interaction between ideology and institutions, revealing how fundamental Islamist ideals have been naturalized in Bangladeshi society. The paper underscores the relationship between state activities and the dominance of Islamic principles in national life, demonstrating the complex dynamics between secularism and religious nationalism in Bangladesh's political landscape.

## **Mapping the anti-trans politics of the Australian far right.**

**Dr Jordan McSwiney, Centre for Deliberative Democracy and Global Governance, University of Canberra. Kurt Sengul, Macquarie University.**

This chapter maps the mainstreaming and normalisation of anti-trans politics in Australia. The Australian far right plays an increasingly prominent role in the global right's anti-trans activism. Through critical discourse and case study analysis, we explore the multifaceted project of anti-trans mobilisations in Australia. We demonstrate how the radical right has relied primarily on rhetorical and policy interventions, focusing on education initiatives, parents right, and the ridicule of trans and gender diverse people through exclusionary humour. Concurrently, the extreme right has intensified their attacks on queer activism and scholarship, employing violence, intimidation, and harassment, including the assault of trans people and their supporters and the shutting Drag Story Time events. Indeed, the spectre of violence and intimidation is increasingly a very real threat for trans and genderqueer people in Australia. We conclude by arguing that the anti-trans discourses and mobilisations on the far right provide a legitimising effect for the "mainstream" centre-right, who are able to present their own anti-trans politics as moderate and 'sensible' by comparison.

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Wednesday 27 November

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**Keynote Address**

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**How global deliberative politics can transform today's privatized public sphere.**

**Prof Nicole Curato, University of Canberra.**

Democracy does not stand a chance in techno-feudal times. When private corporations control our public sphere, citizens, lose the power to assert equal voice and demand accountability. This keynote address presents a bold normative and political agenda to transform today's privatized public sphere through global deliberative politics. Drawing from global sociology, critical historiography and decolonial practice, it outlines an ambitious but plausible political project that brings subjugated knowledges from the margins to the centre of global public deliberation. Concrete examples from hyper-local to transnational levels will illustrate the radical potential for alternative futures.

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**Concurrent Session 4**

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**Public Policy + Politics VIII**

**From Leeds to Port Lincoln: Diverse Perspectives on Multi-Level Governance and Academic Engagement**

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**Lessons from expert brokering organisations: addressing 'wicked problems' at the interface of policy and evidence.**

**Adjunct Prof Libby Hackett, James Martin Institute for Public Policy.**

Expert or knowledge brokering organisations are a relatively new feature in the public policy ecosystem, emerging worldwide to translate and mobilise knowledge to inform policy and practice. While significant variation exists between these organisations, they share a common purpose of emphasising the centrality of evidence and impact in policymaking. In 2021, a new 'intermediary' institute was launched in Australia as a joint-venture between the NSW Government and a coalition of universities, the James Martin Institute for Public Policy (JMI). Its unique, collaborative, and mission-based model harnesses expertise and evidence from universities – as well as industry and the broader community – to generate pragmatic, timely solutions to intractable public policy challenges. Through its workstreams, it leverages multisector and multidisciplinary collaboration to deliver tangible outcomes for the public good. This presentation will share insights and lessons learned from the first three years of its operation.

**Multi-partner networks supporting university policy engagement in England: Lessons from the Yorkshire and Humber Policy Engagement and Research Network (Y-PERN).**

**Dr Andy Mycock, University of Leeds.**

Devolution of the UK state over the past decade has increasingly focused on the decentralisation of powers to regional (combined authority) and local government in England. At the same time, policy engagement has emerged as a distinct and significant element of universities' wider civic commitment to knowledge exchange and evidence-based policymaking. The Yorkshire and Humber Policy Engagement and Research Network (Y-PERN) is kindly funded by Research England and is a novel network-based approach to inclusive and place-based university policy engagement, involving the 12 constituent university members of Yorkshire Universities and all sub-national combined and local authorities across the region. Y-PERN's team of Policy Fellows seek to broker and disseminate university research and expertise across an increasingly complex, multi-level government policy landscape. This paper will explore the history and current work of Y-PERN, focusing on its development and programmes of work, and the challenge of supporting collaborative policy engagement across multi-university network. It will consider the lessons learnt in seeking to establish inclusive, resilient, and impactful multi-level government policy engagement systems, and the practices and procedures that underpin them, to create shared value across a diverse network of higher education and policy partners.

**Up, Down, Sideways and the Hole in the Middle: A service delivery perspective on navigating social policy development and impacts in rural Australia.**

**Dr Jen Cleary, Flinders University**

Social policy, and the way it is developed and implemented across the vastly different geographies and demographics that reflect the reality of the Australian landscape is problematic. We see a dependence on

policy approaches that are largely driven by and derived from thinking applied in other OECD nations. For Australia, however, there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ policy solution to support the funding, delivery, and desired outcomes from social and welfare supports across the ‘patchwork’ of difference that is Australia. This presentation will explore some of the practical challenges for on-ground service delivery that highlight the consequences of current social policy development and implementation in thin markets, e.g. competitive tendering; inclusivity and choice. The presentation will reflect on navigating multi-level governance in a federal system and the challenges this presents e.g. differing organisational structures; contract management processes; duplication of effort and the achievement of outputs vs outcomes.

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## **International Relations VI**

## **Global Engagement**

### **Panda Diplomacy Revisited: State Interests and Public Emotions.**

**Dr David Smith, University of Sydney. Dr Minglu Chen, University of Sydney. A/Prof Jingdong Yuan, SIPRI.**

Existing scholarship on China’s “panda diplomacy” emphasises that it is a form of modern public diplomacy, whose intended effects are not to impress or placate rulers, but to encourage positive feelings among the publics of the receiving countries. In this paper, we show that it is not just the feelings of receiving publics that matter in panda diplomacy. When a country allows the transfer of an animal that serves as an emotionally potent national symbol, the feelings of the sending public can also matter. We examine the recent case of the illness and death of a panda at Memphis Zoo that caused outrage on Chinese social media when disturbing photos of the apparently suffering animal were posted by an American animal rights group. The Chinese state did not join in the nationalist outrage, instead offering a measured response that exonerated the American zoo. While this response helps to maintain panda diplomacy as a tool, public outrage over the treatment of pandas in foreign countries is likely to arise again in the future. The panda is a uniquely vulnerable animal for a national symbol, and its vulnerability reflects an increasing sense of both human and environmental insecurity.

### **Geostrategic Impact of Indonesia’s Military Modernisation under the Jokowi Administration.**

**Dr Shang-Su Wu, Research Coordinator.**

Since the announcement of the strategy, Global Maritime Fulcrum, in 2014, the Jokowi administration has considerably invested in military procurements which reflect more concern on its archipelagic strategic environment. Jakarta’s various project including fighter jets, aerial early warning and transport aircraft, frigates, amphibious ships, and submarines would improve its naval and air power. The succeeding Prabowo administration would continue these projects with potential in adding more. Indonesia’s progressing military might lead to a question: whether it is sufficient for defending the largest archipelago in the world? It is necessary to answer this question by reviewing the state of the Indonesian armed forces before 2014, examining constraints on military modernisation, and analysing the potential challenges in the currently volatile geostrategic environment. After evaluating its military modernisation, this paper will evaluate Jakarta’s role in the regional stability and beyond in the near future.

### **Shifting Dynamics in China-Australia Bilateral Relations: Navigating Uncertainty Amidst Global Turbulence.**

**Tao Chen, Griffith University.**

This paper examines the deterioration of China-Australia bilateral relations within the context of broader global and regional challenges. It analyses the interplay of economic, political, and strategic factors that have eroded the once-stable partnership between these two Pacific powers. The study explores how China’s domestic economic pressures, including slowing growth and rising unemployment, intersect with global trends of de-risking and de-coupling to reshape the bilateral dynamic. Furthermore, it investigates the impact of China’s assertive regional posture, exemplified by its stance on Taiwan and territorial disputes in the South China Sea, on Australia’s strategic calculus. The potential resurgence of Trump-era policies in the United States is considered as an additional variable influencing the geopolitical landscape. By synthesizing these multifaceted elements, this research offers a nuanced understanding of the forces driving change in China-Australia relations. It contributes to the broader discourse on power dynamics in the Indo-Pacific region and provides insights into potential trajectories for bilateral and multilateral engagement in an era of heightened uncertainty.



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**The politics of vaccine mandates in Vietnam: Mandates in a non-mandatory setting from the Multiple Streams Framework perspective.**

**Dr Hang Duong, School of Social Sciences, The University of Western Australia. A/Prof Katie Attwell, University of Western Australia.**

COVID-19 vaccination was not mandatory by law in Vietnam and declared to be voluntary at the national level. However, COVID-19 vaccine mandates for various activities such as travelling, employment and accessing public spaces were still implemented by local authorities. Using the adapted Multiple Streams Framework (MSF), this study investigates why local mandates were applied in the official non-mandatory setting. Using document analysis, this study finds that vaccine mandates were adopted thanks to the coupling of the three streams – problem, policy, and politics. The problem stream sees widespread attention to and acceptance of lacking community immunity as a problem leading to increased infection and transmission, and consequently life and economic sufferings; the policy stream recognizes vaccine mandates as a feasible and acceptable solution among others; and the politics stream highlights the significance of political factors that support mandates. The window of opportunity opened with the central government's strong decentralization approach giving much autonomy and authority to the local governments in crisis. Mandates therefore do not go against the central government's goals, but instead help to achieve these goals. The study proposes a flexible application the MSF in the context of authoritarianism, where divergence from the central government's policy agenda is rare.

**COVID-19 vaccine mandates policymaking in California – Bounded rationality and room for manoeuvre.**

**A/Prof Katie Attwell, University of Western Australia. Dr Hang Duong, School of Social Sciences, University of Western Australia.**

The COVID-19 pandemic prompted diverse policy responses worldwide, including vaccine mandates. Mandates' design and operation varied across jurisdictions, determined by contextual factors. Literature on attitudes towards and impacts of COVID-19 vaccine mandates is flourishing, but the process of making mandates remains under-researched. This study investigates the process of developing COVID-19 vaccine mandates in California at state and county level. Grounded in the policy process theory, this study finds that mandates were advanced by a multitude of actors with contingent policy ideas shaped by institutional factors, and with a design and timing influenced by events, context, and networks. The study finds significant policy variation at county level. The policymaking process was constrained by political factors including parties, governance structure, funding, the intensity of opposition in the community, and legal contestation. Perspectives on introducing and removing mandates also changed amid the constantly evolving conditions of the pandemic and the efficacy of available vaccines. However, this bounded rationality also created room for manoeuvre where the process of making mandates involved consultation, consensus, coordination, and policy learning. This facilitated the design of policies that worked in the crisis to drive vaccine uptake and helped officials to manage enforcement issues in a complex institutional setting.

**Keep or chuck? Examining the duration of COVID-19 vaccination mandates in the US.**

**Dr Joshua Lake, University of Western Australia. Dr Hang Duong, School of Social Sciences, University of Western Australia. Mr William Yap, UWA. A/Prof Katie Attwell, University of Western Australia.**

This study investigates the interplay between the political status of US states and the implementation, duration, and removal of COVID-19 vaccination mandates, using a mixed methods approach. We first compiled an index of the 21 states implementing mandates and the political affiliation of their legislature and governor across the timeframe. No mandate states were under complete Republican control, meaning subsequent analysis centred on states that had either Democrat or divided governance, including states where control over the legislature or governorship changed. Mandates in states with Democrat legislatures lasted longer on average than other states; however, mandates in states with Democrat governors did not. Survival analysis of mandate durations provided a method to account for changes in governance over the period, and yielded comparable results. Survival models suggested that mandates persist significantly longer

under Democrat legislatures than in Republican or divided legislatures, but there is no significant difference between mandates under Democrat or Republican governors. Informed by these analyses, we identified five typical patterns of mandate duration and state political control. We will conduct in-depth interviews with policy elites in states which exemplify each pattern to gain a more comprehensive understanding of key drivers of mandate implementation, duration, and removal.

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## Gender/Sexuality + Politics IV

## Gender and Power in Politics

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### **Finding the White Male: The Prevalence and Consequences of Algorithmic Gender and Race Bias in Political Google Searches.**

**Dr Tobias Rohrbach, University of Wollongong. Dr Mykola Makhortykh, University of Bern. Maryna Sydorova, University of Bern**

Search engines like Google have become major information gatekeepers that use artificial intelligence (AI) to determine who and what voters find when searching for political information. This project proposes and tests a framework of algorithmic representation of minoritized groups in a series of four pre-registered studies. First, two algorithm audits of political image searches across 60 countries delineate how search engines reflect and uphold structural inequalities by under- and misrepresenting women and non-white politicians. Second, two online experiments show that these biases in algorithmic representation in turn distort perceptions of the political reality and actively reinforce a white and masculinized view of politics. Together, the results have substantive implications for the scientific understanding of how AI technology amplifies biases in political perceptions and decisionmaking. The article contributes to ongoing public debates and cross-disciplinary research on algorithmic fairness and injustice.

### **Reforming parliamentary workplaces post MeToo: Comparing Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the UK.**

**Dr Maria Maley, Australian National University.**

Seeing parliament as a workplace radically changes how these spaces are viewed. A new focus on the role of parliamentarians as employers, and the status of staff as employees, has challenged the sense of entitlement held by many parliamentarians, their seeming untrammelled power within the employment relationship and the fact their offices appeared to be unregulated, with many lacking professional practices. The term 'toxic parliaments' (Sawer and Maley 2024) captures workplaces where people do not feel safe, and are not protected from harmful conduct. This new way of thinking led to major institutional change. This paper analyses how Australia's federal parliament approached the task of reform since 2021, in the context of reform trajectories in Canada, the UK and New Zealand. It highlights several distinctive and innovative features of Australia's response.

### **Love, Money and Safety: Narratives of Vulnerability, Desire and Resistance for Women on the Disability Support Pension.**

**Ms Molly Saunders, Australian National University/University of New South Wales.**

Drawing on qualitative interviews with 24 women with disability, this presentation explores women's narratives of vulnerability, desire and resistance within the context of the Australian Disability Support Pension (DSP): an income support payment for eligible people with disability. To begin, I explore how the DSP enacts vulnerability upon women with disability, as it may limit payments to partnered recipients according to the couple's combined income. This can render recipients financially dependent upon their partner, increasing their vulnerability to domestic violence and creating significant barriers to them leaving abusive relationships. Within this context, fear of financial vulnerability may lead some women pensioners to choose security from abuse over romantic relationships, sexual satisfaction and opportunities for child-rearing, by remaining unpartnered. Other women may resist this choice by falsely representing their relationship status to the Australian government. This presentation subsequently explores these narratives through the lenses of desire and resistance, before concluding that they also exemplify how the DSP confers a sociocultural perception of responsibility onto these women for their own safety. This as the women are exposed to a pervasive logic of service-user responsabilisation which characterises them as autonomous agents 'willingly' exposing themselves to moral wrongs such as fraud and financial vulnerability.

## **Political engagement and representation at the point of near parity.**

**Dr Elise Stephenson, Australian National University. Mr Jack Hayes, Australian National University.**

The 2022 federal election in Australia demonstrated a shifting landscape of women's candidacy in politics, with record numbers of women both running for and succeeding in election to political office. This raises important questions as to whether gender inequalities in politics are in decline when gender parity in politics is achieved. As such, this paper draws on two studies set in Australia involving 270 women and gender non-binary individuals who are engaged in or considering career pathways to political office to understand women's experiences, their understanding of political engagement and the barriers that remain despite achieving or making significant gains towards parity in national representation. The paper asks: is gender inequality no longer an issue in politics? Applying intersectional feminist institutional theory, our findings indicate that achieving near parity or at least a critical mass of women in politics does not de-toxify political leadership. The paper ends by discussing the ramifications of the current trends on similar representative democracies.

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Australian Politics V

Political Discourse

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## **The War on Woke: Old and new in Australian anti-elitist discourse.**

**E/Prof Marian Sawyer, Australian National University. Dr Kurt Sengul, Macquarie University.**

The current 'War on Woke' includes a number of elements, such as the role of the Murdoch media, already analysed 20 years ago in *Us and Them: Anti-elitism in Australia*. There are also new elements, such as the role of the online campaigning organisation Advance, established in 2018 in response to so-called 'woke politicians and elitist activist groups taking Aussies for a ride with their radical agenda'. The organisation – backed by high profile conservative former politicians, activists and businesspeople – claims that 'mainstream Australia is under siege by stupid laws and woke ideologies...cooked up by elites that have no idea what it's like to work for a living'. The War on Woke is waged against these inner-city elites accused of promoting the interests of overindulged minorities and having contempt for the values of ordinary Australians. It is also central to the digital strategy of far-right populist party, Pauline Hanson's One Nation (PHON). Hanson rails against the 'woke mind virus' in her satirical animated series *Please Explain!*, which includes everything from renewable energy, to LGBTQIA+ issues, gender equality, and Indigenous rights. This paper analyses the content and form currently taken by anti-elitist discourse in Australia, including the spatial elements historically linked to rural populism.

## **Philanthropy in the Colony: On the use of big giving to defend and entrench 'Western Civilisation'.**

**Dr Matt Wade, La Trobe University.**

Philanthropy's relation to power is strangely understudied in Australia, particularly given its growing influence in shaping public policy and ideals relating to citizenship. In this talk I will discuss recent case studies – including Gina Rinehart and Australian sporting representatives and the Ramsay Centre for Western Civilisation – that reveal Australia's often uniquely clumsy, paternalist, and jingoistic approach to philanthropic giving. These cases are united in revealing forms of epistemic injustice in their outsized power to impose 'common sense' claims upon others, and an insistence upon the primacy of 'Western Civilisation' rather than 'black armband' views of history. At their most pronounced, this giving is motivated by a desire to correct pathological deficiencies in our character and waning sense of shared identity, which are framed as threats to social cohesion and even our very sovereignty. Philanthropy is vitally important to Australia's prosperity, but currently it is too often captured by a reactionary impulse ill-suited to our collective futures. Given the intergenerational lifespan of perpetual foundations – meaning the 'dead hand' of giving continues long after individual donors have passed on – the anti-democratic implications of growing philanthropic power in Australia warrants urgent consideration.

## **Global Pulls and Local Pushes: The Impact of Gaza War on Multiculturalism In Australia.**

**Dr Arshad Abbasi.**

Hamas's Operation Al-Aqsa Flood on October 07, 2023 in Israel resulted in more than 1200 casualties and 3000 injuries. In response Israel launched operation Swords of Iron which has claimed more than 38,000 lives on the Palestinian side. In addition to lives lost, most of the infrastructure in Gaza has been levelled to

the ground. There is a sharp polarization about Hamas's incursion and Israel's retaliation. Like elsewhere in the world, this polarization is also playing out in Australia. Be it university campuses, major squares in cities, federal and state parliaments in the country, political parties or various ethno-religious components of Australia's multicultural mosaic, heated debate and exchanges round the issue of Gaza war have resulted in ruptures previously not seen here. This paper sets out to explore the fault lines emerging in Australia's multicultural social fabric caused by Gaza war and attempts at redressing this situation. The paper considers both, government and non-government responses to the Gaza situation. The paper mainly relying on secondary and tertiary sources of research explores the currants and cross-currants in Australia regarding Gaza conflict and remedies to safeguard budding multiculturalism in the country.

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## Comparative Politics IV

## Enacting Contemporary Political Representation

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### **Representative Practices of Australia's Community Independents.**

**Prof Carolyn Hendriks, Australian National University. Dr Richard Reid, Australian National University.**

This paper advances understandings of how political representation is enacted in a period of democratic flux. Elected officials are increasingly viewed as disconnected, and low membership and support for political parties is raising concerns about their capacity to act as effective vehicles of collective representation. In response to these pressures some politicians are seeking to build and demonstrate 'connections to community' by experimenting with novel approaches to constituency and community engagement. For empirical insights into this phenomenon this paper examines how elected 'community independents' in Australia are practicing representation. Claims about connection to their community are central to community independents and their critique of the party system, and consequently they have strong strategic interests in building and performing connections with constituents and supporters. Drawing on diverse qualitative data we examine the representative practices of Australia's community independents in three sites: the electorate; the legislature; and, public debate. We find that each site is accompanied by different performances and role expectations, resulting in different kinds of representative practices. The analysis demonstrates the diverse ways in which contemporary non-party elected representatives in Australia are enacting political representation. More broadly the paper informs scholarly debates on the study and interpretation of practices of political representation.

### **Theorising Party Organisation in the Pacific Islands.**

**Dr Kerryn Baker, Australian National University. Romitesh Kant, Australian National University.**

Parties have long been considered fundamental to democracy and political representation. Yet, the way parties operate in the Pacific Islands, as in much of the Global South, bears little relation to the Western contexts in which party organisation has traditionally been theorised. In the region, parties are flexibly structured, loose in ideology, and often primarily function as vehicles for the leadership aspirations of individual politicians, rather than as a means for collective representation. These dynamics persist despite attempts – through legislative measures and electoral reform – to institutionalise party systems. However, this does not mean that parties and how they operate are irrelevant to understanding Pacific politics. In this paper, we argue that the parties of the region, often characterised as disorderly and chaotic, in fact, serve distinct representative functions and purposes. Using case studies of Fiji and Solomon Islands, we examine the internal logic of these party systems. Our findings challenge conventional theories and contribute new insights to the global understanding of modern party organisation, underscoring the importance of context-specific analysis, and the value of engaging with area studies, in political science.

### **The Nationals and Representative Claim-Making.**

**Prof Anika Gauja, University of Sydney. Dr Richard Reid, Australian National University.**

Drawing on the constructivist approach to political representation, this paper explores the representative performance of the Nationals at the federal level. It considers the place of the Nationals within the federal Coalition both in government and now in opposition. It reflects on their representative claim-making about what regional Australia is, what its interests and values are, and how to represent this constructed constituency of 'regional Australia'. It also considers tensions within the Nationals and the differences within the parliamentary party over how best to represent regional Australia. This paper argues that due to the enduring presence of the Nationals at the heart of government and their enduring appeal in parts of non-metropolitan Australia, more scholarly attention is needed to understand their place in contemporary Australian political representation and its implications for Australian democracy.



## Sortition for parties.

**Dr Will Bosworth, Australian National University. Prof Keith Dowding, Australian National University. Mr Adriano Giuliani, ANU, LUISS.**

Democrats are becoming increasingly aware of the virtues of sortition. The random selection of legislators is in many important ways fairer than other electoral systems and teases a system that might reverse aspects of democratic decline around the world. It has been objected, however, that sortition will lead to unpredictable legislatures with the dissolution of political parties and established voting blocs. In this paper we propose an alternative: sortition for party pre-selections. This, we argue, has the advantage of preserving the value of partisanship (e.g. White and Ypi, 2016). It is also more feasible than other proposals given it is incentive compatible with rank-and-file members and political elites. This has been seen with its limited and hedged use by the (now) governing party MORENA in Mexico for its pre-selection process.

## The Presence of Indigenous Sovereignty.

**Mr Callum Stewart, University of Melbourne.**

Decolonisation is often dismissed as an impossible, utopian demand in a world built on the theft of Indigenous lands, and the forced disappearance of Indigenous lives and futures. This article turns to sovereign Indigenous theories to open up decolonial possibilities. White settler disciplines tend to reify the White settler present of Modernity; they foreclose the decolonial possibilities that emerge from Indigenous sovereignty. Sovereign Indigenous theory, however, begins from the presence of Indigenous sovereignty. I argue that the presence of Indigenous sovereignty unsettles the White settler present and leads towards otherwise futures beyond Modernity. Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg theorist Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's radical resurgence project re-presents the sovereign Indigenous land, bodies, and orders that settler colonialism attempts to disappear. Through the story, *Binoojiinh Makes a Lovely Discovery*, Simpson argues that *Binoojiinh*, an Indigenous queer child, 'is a vessel of resurgence' (Simpson, 2017, p. 158). This paper applies this radical resurgence framework to analyse White settler disciplinary constructions of Modernity, drawing on analyses of Freud, Kant, and sixteenth century Spanish colonial theorist Jose de Acosta. I conclude that Indigenous queer childhood appears in White settler accounts of Modernity's birth, degeneration, and end as an avatar of futures beyond Modernity.

## What Can the State of Nature Justify?

**Mr Arthur (Hongyang) Yang, Australian National University.**

There are many attempts to justify the authority of the state using the state of nature as a starting point. Political theorists often use fictional accounts but to justify our actual state we need to start from empirically plausible state of nature accounts. Distinguishing social authority from political authority, I argue that extant state of nature accounts can justify social authority but not the top-down political authority as we see in modern states. Social Contract theory is best understood as a justification for bottom-up social conventions rather than state authority.

## Two Strands of Utilitarian Democracy.

**Dr Tsin Yen Koh, National University of Singapore.**

This paper sketches out two strands of utilitarian democracy in the political thought of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. The main claim is that there are two aspects to Bentham's theory of government, as found in his later political and constitutional writings: a 'radical democratic' aspect and an 'epistemic' aspect. Both aspects are necessary to good government: a government that aims at the greatest happiness of the greatest number is more likely to succeed if it has the form of a representative democracy, and securities for sufficient expertise (or appropriate aptitude) in all branches of the constitution. However, there is an ineradicable and perhaps irresolvable tension between these two aspects: they can come apart, and pull in different directions. I suggest that we see in Mill's political thought a glimpse of the different directions they develop in: the 'radical democratic' strand takes a 'socialist' turn, in its emphasis on the materialist basis of social and political equality; and the 'epistemic' strand takes (what one could anachronistically call) a 'technocratic' turn, when its emphasis on expertise shades into an emphasis on experts.

## **Military (In)Operative: The Shifting Nature of Military Labour and Technology in the Modern Nation-State.**

**Mr Sean Rupka, University of New South Wales.**

While much analysis on the effects of automation has occurred from the perspective of labor in commercial and industrial sectors (Benanav 2020, Steinhoff 2021, Eubanks 2018) I depart from this context to discuss the outcomes of automation on symbolic forms of labor that are foundational to conceptions of the state, namely military labor. Drawing upon critical labor theory, nationalism studies, and psychoanalysis, I examine how increasing automation of military labour influences the symbolic basis of the nation-state and its future politics. I argue that in conjunction with the forces of capitalism and a militaristic technological rationality that increasingly integrated into political governance, the symbolic role of the citizen-soldier has functioned as an important anchor for nationalist values and a projected narrative of state cohesion. Further, I submit that the changing nature of warfare and military labor itself reconceptualizes the soldier, rendering historical narratives untenable, and presenting challenges to their political coherence in the present.

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**Open Track II**

**The protracted crises of social democracy: Putting the Albanese government in context. Panel 1: The logics and agendas of Labor and Labour**

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## **The Party of the Future (Fund): How Labor uses speculation as a political technology.**

**Dr Jacob Broom, Murdoch University.**

Since entering government, Labor's approach to social policy has regularly invoked the Future Fund (Australia's version of a sovereign wealth fund) as a vehicle for funding new programs and improving old ones. The Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF) stands out as the loudest and largest example of this, becoming the centre of heated debate in parliament in 2023 over the Albanese government's commitment to responding to the housing crisis, but the idea of a Higher Education Future Fund has also been floated. This paper argues that the Albanese government's embrace of the Future Fund as a social policy tool, particularly in the way the HAFF is talked about as 'an ongoing, secure source of funding', suggests a concomitant embrace of the logic of speculation as a rationality of government. Through a discourse analysis of debates around the HAFF, the paper suggests that state financialisation is in train here not only in the obvious sense that government is funnelling money into financial markets, but in the sense that an underlying assumption of the HAFF debate is that speculation is the path to cheap and secure flows of value. Seeking to move beyond moralistic critiques of speculation as inherently dangerous, the paper considers what this analysis tells us about the status of centre-left and social democratic politics in financialised times.

## **This mess they're in: The Albanese Government, neoliberalism and labourism.**

**Dr Elizabeth Humphrys, University of Technology Sydney.**

In the four decades since Bob Hawke came to power in 1983, in a landslide election win 'Bringing Australia Together', the opposite has occurred. Purporting to synergise liberal economic policy with social democratic values, Hawke and Keating marched Australia down a neoliberal (or economic rationalist) path. Notwithstanding some window dressing stressing the opposite, the Rudd and Gillard Governments remained deeply committed to similar policy frameworks, as has the Albanese leadership team to date. This is despite neoliberal policies having proved deeply unpopular with voters. These decades also coincide with the collapse of the ALP's primary vote, declining party membership, and a significantly weakened relationship to Labor's social base via a noteworthy breakdown of trade union density. Politicians are also more generally on the nose, as is the democratic political process itself —with populist and anti-political sentiment commonplace. Australian labourism is, quite frankly, in a mess. This paper will offer a way of considering the present Albanese Government malaise, via an examination of Labor's neoliberal trajectory and the rise of anti-politics.

## **Political Myths and Social Democracy: Comparing Starmer and Albanese's Agendas.**

**Dr Rob Manwaring, Flinders University.**

Traditionally, we can understand how a political party changes by focusing on its electoral sociology, its policy preferences, its change of leadership and related approaches. A different approach is to explore ideological and policy change of a party through the concept of 'political myth'. According to Midgely, myths 'are imaginative patterns, networks of powerful symbols that suggest particular ways of interpreting the world'. Political myths are generally an under-explored concept in political science, but they can yield important

insights into political phenomena. Myths can represent public imaginaries of a specific phenomenon. The various social democratic traditions are infused with a number of political myths, often linked to specific leaders (Hawke), specific events (1997 landslide win in the UK), and specific policy outputs (the creation of the NHS). By drawing upon political myths this paper has three main aims. First, it seeks to compare the policy agendas of the ALP under Albanese, and the UK Labour party under Keir Starmer. There is striking policy convergence between the two. Second, it seeks to ask which myths can help us understand the performance of the two sister labour parties at their most recent elections. Third, it employs the idea of political myth to examine the ongoing ideological struggles and ‘identity crisis’ of the centre-left more broadly. The future of the centre-left more broadly might well be tied up in how it can create new myths and reinterpret or escape older ones.

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## Concurrent Session 5

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### Public Policy + Politics IX

### Governance and Policy Dynamics

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## **To MoG or not to MoG? Why the Premiers of VIC and NSW keep restructuring their governments.**

**Ms Monica Pfeffer, Australian National University.**

The Machinery of Government, or MoG as it is popularly known, refers to the way government functions and responsibilities are allocated and structured across departments and agencies. A MoG change is the reorganisation of these structures by establishing, renaming, merging or abolishing departments and agencies or transferring functions and responsibilities from one department or agency to another. Australia’s national and sub-national governments continuously tweak or disrupt their MoG arrangements, to the detriment of capacity to deliver effective, expert and accountable government. MoGs happen secretly and as a First Minister’s Crown prerogative, without Cabinet input. They are frequently announced immediately following election of a new government or First Minister, forming part of the performance of the ‘first 100 days’. Despite their importance to the work of governing, they are among the blackest of black boxes of elite decision-making. Can we unpack the black box of Victorian and NSW MoGs in recent decades to compare the beliefs, practices and dilemmas shaping these decisions? What role do their traditions of public management and public administration play in explaining the differences between two adjoining jurisdictions which otherwise share strong family resemblances? Drawing on Rhodes’ interpretivist approach and utilizing interviews with elite bureaucratic and political actors, the presentation provides early results and ongoing puzzles from doctoral research.

## **The role of empathy in the work of government employees in Australia.**

**Dr Assel Mussagulova, University of Sydney. Dr Andy Asquith, University of Technology Sydney.**

Understanding how empathy works in the work of government employees is highly relevant given a recent surge in conversations about relational governance and the need to implement an affective turn in public administration. There are currently very few research studies that empirically explore how empathy is understood and used by public servants in their work, especially if their responsibilities do not include routine interactions with the public which are essential for empathy to be sparked. We aim to address this gap by conducting a series of qualitative interviews with Australian government employees on their experiences of empathy in government work. We find that public-facing employees mainly channel empathic concern into providing better service outcomes for their clients. The experiences of non-public facing government employees is different – they leverage their feelings of empathy for the public into providing relevant policy advice, however they aim to “package” it in ways that are politically attractive to decision-makers. There is space for empathy in non-frontline roles, however the tension between empathic concern and competing priorities is pronounced. Our findings have implications for the implementation of the government’s “people first” agenda and offers a complementary approach to the 3 E’s of policy making.

## **Evidence-based policy practice: a model for research engagement as professional expertise.**

**Dr Joanna Mason, Menzies Centre for Health Policy and Economics, University of Sydney.**

How policymakers engage with academic research is frequently steeped in normative arguments that align with the evidence-based policy debate, such as that ‘what works’ should underpin policy solutions. Derived largely from survey and interview research, there is a huge body of literature that seeks to bridge

the (research) knowledge to (policy) practice chasm. Little understanding of this field, however, has been generated using in-situ research techniques which document the evidence-based practices of policy staff. Based on ethnographic fieldwork with the Australian Public Service, this paper presents a theoretical model of research engagement through a heuristic of what policy staff do, know, make/use, suggesting that this entails three elements: constructing research and evidence engagements such as commissioned research and evaluation projects and then coordinating the process that follows; conducting desk-based research and consulting disseminated learnings from academic research; lastly, the model accounts for how these efforts constitute the various ways that staff consolidate information and contextualise the learnings against their policy responsibilities. This model illustrates that while knowledge-based expertise is sought and harnessed by staff, evidence-based practice equally relies on professional expertise to synthesise information from a range of sources and integrate knowledge and understandings from across the policy domain.

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## **International Relations VII**

## **Regional Leadership**

### **Intensifying Naval Competition in the Indian Ocean: Pakistan-China attempt to balance India.**

**Mr Muhammad Faisal, University of Technology Sydney.**

As naval competition in the Indian Ocean has accelerated, the Pakistan-China naval cooperation has deepened. Pakistan has actively encouraged China to expand its naval footprint across the Indian Ocean Region to balance India's naval reach. Meanwhile, Pakistan navy is undertaking modernisation of its surface and sub-surface fleet with active Chinese support. Conversely, India has sought to expand its maritime security cooperation with both the United States and neighbouring Asian states, except for Pakistan. An aspect of India's strategy is to operationalise a sea-leg of its nuclear triad. As India introduces sea-based deterrent platforms, Pakistan and China will come under pressure to respond for maintaining a regional balance. This paper will explore how will Pakistan and China jointly respond to India's growing naval footprint across the Indian Ocean? And what impact will it have on naval power balance in IOR as great-power competition under US-led Indo-Pacific strategy intensifies across IOR?

### **Is Indian Foreign Policy in its transformative years? A study of India's growing leadership in the Global South and its impact on the Indo-Pacific Region.**

**Dr Marilyn Kwan Kharkongor, University of Sydney.**

A nation's foreign policy is not determined by a single factor alone; several influences exist. The focus on systemic structures in traditional approaches is frequently studied, which is also true for India. However, with the changing leadership ideology, Indian foreign policy appears to be entering a transformative period, requiring a focus on agential approaches. India's leadership in the Global South and its increasing role in the Indo-Pacific prompts a close examination of Indian foreign policy decision-making in recent years. This analysis is crucial in determining whether India is reshaping its foreign policy formulation or if previous policies and strategies are finally being implemented. Hence, this paper emphasises the need for a close examination of Indian foreign policy decision-making and analyses the ideological transformation of Indian foreign policy by studying India's leadership of the Global South in recent years and how that influences India's growing position in the Indo-Pacific region.

### **Unintended Consequence of Aukus for India: Future China-Pakistan Nuclear Submarine Collaboration?**

**Mr Anubhav Shankar Goswami, PhD, Murdoch University.**

From India's National Security perspective, AUKUS aims to deter China, which has demonstrated expansionist ambitions towards India in recent years. Therefore, it is unsurprising that India would support AUKUS at the IAEA, defending the planned transfer of nuclear propulsion technology. Nevertheless, a potential concern for India lies in the precedent established by AUKUS, whereby the United States supplies technology and materials for nuclear-powered submarines (SSN) to Australia. AUKUS has the potential to pave the way for other nuclear weapons states (NWS) to extend similar offers. A sub-surface nuclear cooperation between China and Pakistan could likely result from this precedent. Pakistan's desire to provide reliable platforms for its sea-based nuclear deterrence is widely known. Therefore, this paper aims to explain how AUKUS could, over time, increase the likelihood of a new security dilemma in the Indian Ocean. The aim and objective of this study is to argue that AUKUS may not ultimately help address New Delhi's 'China threat' as Beijing could try to respond against Washington by offering Islamabad something similar.



## **The Experiences of Young Hospitality Workers in Enforcing COVID-19 Public Space Vaccine Mandates.**

**Miss Eliza Keays, University of Western Australia. Dr Shevaun Drislane, University of Western Australia. A/Prof Katie Attwell, University of Western Australia.**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the WA Government employed public space vaccine mandates to promote vaccine uptake. Individuals had to show proof of vaccination to enter service and hospitality venues, including restaurants, bars, and cinemas. Checking proof of vaccination became the duty of venue employees, many of whom were young workers. The impact of this operational responsibility for vaccination governance upon young hospitality workers has not been explored. This paper presents findings from a qualitative interview study conducted in WA exploring how being functional public health governance officials impacted young hospitality workers. Using the theoretical lenses of political opinion formation and the sociology of risk, it analyses how experiences with mandate implementation shaped young workers' perceptions of public health and other risks; their attitudes toward mandate policies; and their broader political perspectives. The study contributes insight as to how certain experiences - in this instance the chain of risk communication between government, young workers and the general public, and experience of conscripted vaccine governance duties - influence the evolution of one's political views. It further contributes knowledge to inform potential future mandate policies by recommending how to minimise/mitigate negative consequence to the welfare of those enforcing them.

## **COVID-19, the judiciary and public health policy: Judges as policy actors in making decisions on vaccine mandate challenges.**

**Ms Amy Thomasson, University of Western Australia.**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the level of judicial deference to the executive and public decision-makers in the context of vaccine mandates was unparalleled. While public policy scholars generally separate courts from other branches of government involved in policymaking, judges became indirect policy actors, with emergency conditions and a precautionary approach seeing their decisions align closely with public policy goals. Judicial officers were restricted in their remit by the breadth of powers given to public decision-makers and ministers. Public health legislation is a perfect example of the uncertainty that accompanies the policy process – a legislature cannot foresee every potential context in which a law will be applied and how, requiring lawmakers to remain purposefully vague in legislative drafting. This requires courts to make choices in how they apply laws to novel real-world situations, like the COVID-19 pandemic, and therein make decisions on complex and potentially controversial issues of public policy. This paper explores how courts behaved during the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to vaccine mandates to further public health goals and defer largely to executive decisions, a policy decision in and of itself.

## **Facilitating Knowledge Transfer during Australia's COVID-19 vaccine rollout: An examination of 'Functional Dialogues' as an approach to bridge the evidence-policy gap.**

**A/Prof Katie Attwell, University of Western Australia. A/Prof Tael Harper, Murdoch University. Dr Samantha Carlson, Telethon Kids Institute. Dr Jordan Tchilingirian, University of Bath. Mr Darren Westphal, WA Department of Health. Professor Christopher Blyth, Telethon Kids Institute.**

Our interdisciplinary "Coronavax" team initiated a project to inform (Western) Australia's COVID-19 vaccination program. We developed a novel research co-creation approach, sharing emerging findings from our community and social media research with state / federal governments whilst simultaneously collecting data on pandemic policymaking. Our Functional Dialogues (FDs) were two-way meetings, giving time for research dissemination and in-depth conversations whilst exploring stakeholders' attitudes, beliefs, experiences, roles, and observations. This paper identifies the factors that helped us to put the FDs together and considers their effects on the research program. We draw out key moments of impact, weaknesses and challenges, and identify how future FDs might be enhanced in business as usual or crisis settings. Between January 2021 – June 2022, we conducted 14 FDs with state and federal government. FDs and research team debriefs were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analysed thematically. Analysis demonstrates that FDs

proved invaluable to the timeliness, impact, and flow of our research project, creating systems that helped to bridge the evidence-policy gap. Relationships and reciprocity helped, but other professional commitments of our government partners posed challenges and produced fluctuating engagement. FDs built the capacity of the research team, creating opportunities to contribute to pandemic policies and public discourse.

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## Gender/Sexuality + Politics V

## Challenges to Women's Political Participation

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### **Gender and Political Attitudes in the Pacific Islands Region.**

**Dr Kerry Baker, Australian National University.**

The Pacific Islands has the lowest levels of women's political representation of any world region. Popular attitudes data has been an important tool for examining the intersection of gender and politics. Yet until recently, the dearth of rigorous and representative popular attitudes data in the Pacific Islands has been a significant barrier to understanding the dynamics of political participation and representation in the region. This paper uses data from the Pacific Attitudes Surveys in Samoa (2021) and Vanuatu (2023), the first ever large-scale popular attitudes surveys carried out in the region, to explore perceptions of political leadership and the gendered dynamics of political participation. It finds that the interplay between traditional gender norms and modern gender roles complicates access to political spaces, but at the same time the 'non-traditional' nature of formal politics opens potential windows of opportunity for women's participation.

### **Navigating the Complexities: Challenges and Impact Measurement for Women Changemakers in Iran After the Women, Life, Freedom Movement.**

**Ms Afsaneh Seifinaji, University of Melbourne. Prof Shahram Akbarzadeh, Deakin University**

The socio-political, financial, economic, and cultural context of Iran presents unique barriers for women changemakers who aim to run local campaigns to raise awareness about various forms of violence against women. This study addresses two critical themes that are of relevance to this context. First, it examines the challenges that women changemakers face when creating and running local campaigns on combating violence against women in Iran questions. Then, in collaboration and through 20 qualitative interviews with women changemakers, the study looks at how impact is defined and measured despite these challenges. Information coming from this research aim to provide nuanced perspectives that inform policymakers, donor NGOs, and foreign policy experts. The findings are intended to bridge knowledge gaps and facilitate more effective strategies for stakeholders and donors working in, on, or with Iran.

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## Australian Politics VI

## Panel: Voiceless

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### **Mapping Influencers and Messages: A study of the 2023 Voice to Parliament Referendum Campaign.**

**Prof Andrea Carson, La Trobe University.**

This paper surveys the state of the contemporary information ecosystem. It does so through a case study of the Voice to Parliament referendum and uses big data to analyze the key debate topics, actors, Yes and No campaign strategies, polls, and the impact of online mis and disinformation. It explores the roles of social and mainstream media in disseminating campaign messages and their inter-relationship to better understand how campaigners and Australians engage with politics in a diverse media environment. Through the case study, an argument will be made that the contemporary media environment be better described as an information environment that includes a complex, hybrid news landscape where citizens receive news mainly online, but from both social and mainstream media outlets. The information environment is somewhat polluted containing low quality information, including disinformation. It discusses the challenges of disinformation for election integrity and trust in public institutions.

### **International Reputation and the Voice to Parliament Referendum.**

**Prof Bec Strating, La Trobe University.**

## **Information and Campaign Effects.**

**Prof Ian McAllister, Australian National University.**

Referendums differ from general elections in the choices that are offered to voters and in the cues that are available to them to reach a decision. This difference makes the quantity and quality of the information that is available during a referendum campaign crucial to the outcome. This paper uses a unique panel survey to examine the role of the campaign in shaping the outcome of the October 2023 Voice to Parliament referendum. We find that the political cues offered to voters—reflected most prominently in voters' views about the major party leaders—were the most important campaign effects shaping the result. Interpersonal communication also mattered, but government-supplied information and mass media exposure had no effect. The findings highlight the central role that a campaign driven by elites plays in shaping the outcome of a referendum.

## **Issue Agenda-Setting in the Voice to Parliament referendum: Using big data to explain Voice discourse on traditional and social media.**

**Justin Phillips.**

This paper explores issue agenda-setting in Australia's 2023 Voice to Parliament referendum, analysing the intricate dynamics of Yes and No campaigns in a diverse media ecosystem. Unlike typical election campaigns, the referendum involved various campaigns, actors and messages. We tackle the challenge of identifying influential messages across this complex media environment using soft clustering of sentence embeddings from large language models (LLMs). Drawing on 3.3 million documents and over 10 million Voice specific sentences from mainstream and social media sources we identify the narrative configurations of the campaigns, their audience size and engagement. Overall, the Yes campaign dominated with more diverse messaging (i.e. topics) and greater audience size and engagement than No. And yet, the No case prevailed. Utilizing an innovative methodology using big data we draw on agenda-setting and negativity bias theories to help explain the nature of Yes and No Voice campaigns. We find the negative No campaign was a factor in sustaining specific narratives online and offline, influencing the issue agenda by forcing Yes to respond to it. The findings also challenge echo chamber theory, revealing most unique topics contained content from both #Yes and #No perspectives, indicating robust public engagement rather than isolated filter bubbles.

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**Australian Politics VII**

**Parliament and MPs**

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## **Assessing trust, praxis and wellbeing amongst Members of Parliament.**

**Dr James Weinberg, University of Sheffield, Department of Politics. Prof Brenton Prosser, University of New South Wales.**

According to the World Health Organisation, societal well-being helps create active, resilient and sustainable communities. Australia has been proactive in assessing the social wellbeing of its general populace through its national wellbeing framework which will track progress towards a more healthy, secure, sustainable, cohesive and prosperous nation. However, there remains very little, if any, research on the health and wellbeing of national legislators in Australia or elsewhere. In response, the CANPOL project ('Comparative Analysis of New Politicians project') leverages comparative case studies to build understanding of the challenges that new politicians experience in 21st Century political office. In particular, the project focuses on three key areas of democratic work: trust and relationships, leadership praxis, and personal wellbeing. This particular presentation focuses on wellbeing, its relationship to distrust as a political stressor, and its impact on decision making. The high proportion of independent and cross-bench MPs in the federal parliament means that Australia provides an important comparative case within this wider analysis. Drawing on survey and interview data with politicians across cases, the paper reports preliminary findings on the state of wellbeing among politicians in Australia and elsewhere, and concludes with reflections on resulting future directions for research.

## **Changing Career Structures of Political Elites.**

**Dr Pat Leslie, Australian National University. Prof Keith Dowding, Australian National University.**

The careers of politicians, public servants, media professionals, and business elites are increasingly intertwined. While parliamentary careers were once seen as somewhat distinct from non-political aspects of public life, transitions between the political and other professions in the public sphere are becoming more

fluid. We argue that the cause of this change is due in part to a collapsed distinction between the role of executive agents and the role of non-state and legislative agents in Westminster democracies. Careers in the public service and industry were once seen as entirely separate from electoral politics. Now, not only are industry figures parachuted into the executive, but increasingly executive experience is seen as valuable for elite positions within industry. To test these claims, the paper conceptualises parliamentary service as a function, taking as inputs members of parliament and their various backgrounds, and as outputs their lives post-parliamentary service. We show how pre- and post-parliamentary career profiles have changed since 1945, tracing the increasing interconnectedness between parliamentary careers and other professions in the public sphere.

## **Addressing Democratic Disparity: Reform in NSW's Local Government.**

**Dr George Greiss, Western Sydney University. Dr Awais Piracha, Western Sydney University.**

The NSW Minister for Local Government has highlighted the need to reform the NSW Local Government Act 1993. In this article we argue that any Local Government reforms must address the democratic disparity in councils. A critical element of democratic government is equitable representation. The principle of "one vote, one value" aims to provide all community members with equal access to their elected representatives. To ensure equal representation, the Commonwealth and State seat boundaries are periodically redrawn to maintain population parity. However, a significant disparity exists in the number of constituents represented by local government councillors across different Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Greater Sydney. Hunters Hill, with a population of about 14,000, has 7 councillors, each representing about 2,000 people. In contrast, Blacktown City, with a population of about 411,000, has 15 councillors, each representing about 27,000 people. As such, a person in Hunters Hill benefits from 14 times the representation compared to someone in Blacktown. This significant democracy deficit in Sydney needs to be addressed by any local government reform. An easy solution is to implement council amalgamations, which were previously abandoned. However, that is not enough, real reforms must address the true nature of democratic representation.

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### **Comparative Politics V**

### **Constitutional Conventions: New Research Directions**

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## **Morality versus Strategy: Political Motivations in the Study of Constitutional Conventions.**

**A/Prof Zim Nwokora, Deakin University.**

This chapter surveys the treatment of conventions in literatures on American politics, Westminster democracies such as the United Kingdom, and new and developing democracies. The discussion focuses on how politicians have been presented in this research, seeking to understand how base assumptions about political actors have shaped investigations into conventions and the accounts of their operations and dynamics. It argues, on the basis of this review, that political motivations and behaviour have been interpreted through two prisms, one grounded in morality and the other in strategy. While studies of conventions build from theories of politicians so conceived, the two approaches have not previously been brought into dialogue with each other. The chapter fleshes out and compares the moralistic and strategic approaches to conventions; considers how they have infused research; and argues that they can be brought together in novel ways to generate new insights and lines of inquiry into conventions.

## **How do Constitutional Changes affect Conventions and Constitutional Identity? A Case Study of a Republic in Australia.**

**Prof Sarah Murray, University of Western Australia.**

Constitutional reform can disrupt established constitutional conventions and practices. Uprooting engrained and understood constitutional practices and norms can leave a state with the predicament of how to embark on constitutional change without breaking or fundamentally altering its moorings, when this is not necessarily the intention. Drawing on a case study of how the reserve powers, and the conventions associated with their exercise, are to be treated in a shift to an Australian Republic, this chapter unpacks the challenges of adopting new governmental models against the backdrop of entrenched conventional practices. One of the key questions for an Australian Republic is whether to codify conventions and compromise their current flexibility and what such transformations may ultimately mean for the nation's constitutional identity and political way of life.



## **Why Conventions Stretch but Rarely Break?: The Case of the UK's Salisbury Convention.**

**Prof Narelle Miragliotta, Murdoch University.**

How do conventions change? While conventions are generally understood to be flexible properties of the constitutional order, there remains a presumption that they adapt without necessarily breaking. In fact, the abrogation of conventions in established democracies is typically an unusual event. Much more common, however, is for constitutional actors to resist applying the convention in some way. But when and on what grounds do actors choose to resist a convention and what happens to the convention when confronted by resistance? Drawing on a case study of the UK's Salisbury-Addison convention, we identify every instance of resistance to that convention in the period between 1945 and 2021. We find that when actors have resisted the convention, they have done so by invoking those same principles that the convention was formulated to defend. In doing so, this has allowed aspects of the convention's parameters to change without weakening the constitutionality of the convention. The findings suggest that not all acts of resistance weaken a convention and, in fact, may strengthen it by ensuring its ongoing relevance.

## **Constitutional Conventions and the Challenge of Populism.**

**Dr Nicholas Barry, La Trobe University.**

One of the main aims of a liberal democratic constitution is to constrain the power of the government, reducing the risk that it will violate the rights and freedoms of citizens and undermine democracy. Although most modern liberal democratic systems have a codified and entrenched constitution that performs this function, they also rely on a set of constitutional norms or conventions to guide and constrain the government. However, because conventions are generally non-justiciable, critics question whether they are an effective restraint on government power. This is a particular concern at a time when populism is resurgent, as there is a long-standing fear that populist politicians will abuse the power of government and erode democracy if they are elected to office. This chapter will seek to examine whether constitutional conventions are able to constrain populist politicians in office. In order to examine this question, it will consider some of the ways in which conventions might be thought to constrain governments in ordinary circumstances, drawing on rational-choice and sociological explanations of their underlying force. The paper will then develop a theoretical account of the different ways in which these mechanisms are liable to break down under populist government, bringing in a number of illustrative examples. The chapter will conclude by considering the longer-term implications for liberal democracy of different forms of populist convention breakdown.

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**Open Track III    The protracted crises of social democracy: Putting the Albanese government in context. Panel 2: The purposes and lessons of Labor's political strategies**

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## **What's the point of the Australian Labor Party? Power, purpose, and the end of progress.**

**Prof Mark Beeson, University of Technology Sydney/Curtin University.**

Even members of the ALP have been disappointed by the performance of the Albanese government since it was elected in 2022. Not being Scott Morrison is something, but voters, especially younger ones, might be forgiven for feeling underwhelmed by the ALP's performance. The key question is whether this is a distinctively Australian problem or symptomatic of a broader crisis of social democracy. I argue it is both. A mediocre political class that lacks serious ambition about anything other than staying in power was never likely to act decisively on climate change, creative foreign and strategic policy, or even the socially progressive staples of supposedly 'left-wing' political parties everywhere. The alarming reality is that social democrats have failed to develop policies to address the numerous crises of the era, leaving the political field open to capture by right-wing populist demagogues with no interest progressive politics, much less plans to 'save the planet'.

## **A Future Made in the Care Economy? Unpacking the political strategies of Labor's social and climate policy.**

**Dr Ben Spies-Butcher, Macquarie University.**

Labor came to office with a modest program and firm commitments not to move beyond its pre-election promises. Its hesitancy to raise revenue has constrained ambition, leaving it without the new social policy initiatives usually associated with new Labor governments. However, budget emphasis on the 'care' and 'climate' economy suggests a more expansive agenda may be possible within its modest fiscal horizons. This paper connects Labor's spending commitments in social policy to trends evident since the neoliberal turn,

which mobilises a politics of care provision alongside technocratic budget tools to challenge fiscal austerity. Moving out to the ecological politics of the recent Future Made in Australia package the paper argues there is a discernible governance strategy that is responsive to social pressure and egalitarian demands, but which remains politically timid. By placing the executive government in the broader context of a more pluralist parliament, it speculates on the possibilities to strengthen fiscal egalitarianism by building a politics centred on social reproduction.

### **Has the Albanese government successfully challenged neoliberalism and does its experience offer lessons for international social democracy?**

**Prof Carol Johnson, University of Adelaide.**

This paper argues that the Albanese government has made some serious attempts to address issues exacerbated by Australian Labor's past embrace of (watered-down) neoliberalism. The government's efforts to improve the income of low paid women workers, whose wages were detrimentally impacted by the Keating government's embrace of enterprise bargaining, is a major case in point. So are some developments in areas such as industry policy, re-regulation and rebuilding the public service after extensive contracting out. Nonetheless, Labor is still left with traditional social democratic dilemmas of how to manage a capitalist economy, especially in difficult geopolitical and geoeconomic times. Furthermore, the legacies of neoliberalism are creating huge challenges. For example, Labor is often subsidising private providers in order to increase services and women's wages in the carer economy. Given ongoing neoliberal influences, the electorate remains concerned about government debt and Labor is hesitant to advocate increased taxes. Neoliberal-influenced culture wars continue. The paper concludes by asking key questions such as: how far has Labor moved from the neoliberal-influenced policies of the Hawke and Keating era? Does the Australian Labor Party, that so influenced Blair's Third Way, now provide lessons in how international social democracy can emerge from the neoliberal abyss?

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#### **Concurrent Session 6**

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##### **Public Policy + Politics XI**

##### **Enhancing Democratic Participation**

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### **Democracy, deliberation and impact assessment.**

**Dr Nivek Thompson, Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney.**

Strengthening impact assessment's contribution to democracy is not a new concept. Deliberative democracy, in both theory and practice, provides a more democratically robust approach to citizen and stakeholder participation in impact assessment processes, whether conducted by government agencies or project proponents. In traditional approaches to public participation in impact assessment, agencies and proponents seek input from various individuals and organisations, who are often asked to respond to a document prepared by the agency or the proponent. Involving citizens in a deliberative process replaces this agency-led or proponent-led approach with a citizen-led approach. This chapter demonstrates the value of taking an explicitly democratic perspective, in particular, applying a deliberative democracy focus, when designing public participation processes for IA. It provides examples and suggestions for how deliberative engagement processes can enhance the practice of impact assessment and its contribution to democracy.

### **Can deliberative engagement practices 'revitalise democracy'? an exploration of the Victorian Local Government Act 2020.**

**Dr Emanuela Savini, Centre of Deliberative Democracy and Global Governance.**

The past few decades have seen what is described as a 'deliberative wave' (OECD, 2020), with governments increasingly applying democratic innovations that champion public participation as a means to tackling complex policy problems. Alongside employing processes such as citizen's assemblies, mini-publics, and participatory budgeting, there has also been increased interest in institutionalising practices through regulatory frameworks, thereby embedding citizen participation in the formal structures of government decision-making. The Victorian Local Government Act 2020 is one such attempt at institutionalising democratic innovations, with legislators suggesting it would 'revitalise democracy' by putting 'the community at the heart of council decision-making'. This paper presents findings from case study research based on this legislation's operationalisation. It examines how deliberative engagement practices were shaped by both organisational drivers and dominant discourses that rendered them susceptible to co-option. It considers

the impact of the legislation vis à vis its articulated intention to ‘revitalise democracy’, and provides more a nuanced understanding of the cultural shifts needed for democratic innovations to be operationalised in a manner that is more likely to achieve the normative and epistemic aspirations they were conceived to address.

### **Local government in Aotearoa/New Zealand: Fit for purpose?**

**Dr Andy Asquith, University of Technology Sydney.**

This paper examines the current state of local government in NZ some 35 years after the last major reform. The paper argues that the current structure is far from fit for purpose, failing citizens, the councils themselves and the nation as a whole. A significant opportunity to fundamentally overhaul the scope and scale of the sector offered by the Future for Local Government Report has been squandered by the current National led Coalition.

### **How Queensland is losing its fluoride: Critically evaluating the devolution of public health decision-making to local councils.**

**Dr Matt Wade, La Trobe University.**

Water fluoridation ranks among the greatest public health success stories in Australia’s history. However, Queensland is unique in that the decision whether to fluoridate water supplies is decided within Local Government Areas (i.e. local councils). In 2001, less than 5% of the Queensland population had access to fluoridated water, despite strong public support. In response, in 2008 the Labor Government implemented a policy to ensure all communities with more than 1000 people would have fluoridated water. Within four years, 90% of Queenslanders had access to fluoridated water. However, in 2012, the incoming Liberal Government altered the policy dramatically, stating that the decision would be given to local councils. The result has been a steady decline in fluoridation across Queensland, with many councils – all in rural and regional areas – deciding to cease fluoridating water supplies. Focussing on key case studies, this talk explores: how were decisions made to cease fluoridation?; what reasons were given?; was the local community consulted?; were health and medical experts consulted?; and is there even adequate record keeping of all this? In some instances, such decisions are being made with troubling haste, driven by misinformation, without community consultation, nor engagement with relevant health expertise of any kind. Such outcomes highlight the urgent need to develop improved deliberative democracy and health communication strategies.

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## **International Relations VIII**

## **Convergence and Consensus**

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### **Cyber Security Approach of the Quad: Areas of Convergence.**

**Dr Siddhardha Kollabathini, Woxsen University.**

In today’s digital age, cyberspace is a new battlefield. Invisible attacks can cripple infrastructure, spread misinformation, and destabilize nations. Countering these threats, especially state-sponsored attacks, requires international cooperation. State and non-state actors exploit cyberspace for its secrecy, precision, and low cost. These features transform traditional threats into sophisticated cyberattacks, making cyberspace a central national security concern. The interconnectedness of cyberspace with land, sea, air, and space creates a unique dimension to modern warfare. This vulnerability demands prioritizing cybersecurity and integrating it into broader defense strategies. Cyberspace is not a separate entity, but an interconnected domain requiring comprehensive protection alongside physical ones. Even powerful alliances like the Quad face this digital siege. This paper examines Quad cybersecurity initiatives through document analysis. It then employs Joseph Nye Jr.’s cyber power conceptual framework to evaluate the Quad’s cybersecurity approach. Finally, the combined analyses inform the study’s conclusions.

### **“They’re all the same to me”: Great Power Favorability among Global Mass Publics.**

**Prof Benjamin Goldsmith, Australian National University.**

Which members of the mass public distinguish between great powers? Theories of soft power and international status often assume or imply great-power competition for hearts and minds around the world. But how do citizens actually think about the world’s great powers? What structures their positive or negative views? Does great-power competition and rivalry translate into positive sentiment towards one camp and negative sentiment towards another? Are preferences among great powers moderated by political ideology, such as preferences for democracy? In this paper I show that globally, individuals tend not to distinguish among rival great powers such that a person who has a positive view of China or Russia will

tend to have a negative view of the United States. Rather, favorability towards one great power is strongly associated with favorability towards other great powers, regardless of their degree of rivalry or alignment in global economic and security affairs. I examine whether this is moderated by factors such as education and democratic values.

## **Perception of politics: what professional learners think about geopolitics and how they learn about foreign policy.**

**Dr Lisa Cluett, Perth USAsia Centre.**

This paper presentation looks at what learners from business, government and civil society think about geopolitics and how they learn about foreign policy. Over the past 2 years, hundreds of professional learners have undertaken an 8-week fully online microcredential called 'Australia and the Indo-Pacific – understanding our strategic connections to Asia'. The demand from professionals keen to upskills in areas of politics they have never previously formally studied is significant. Learners with established careers in disciplines such as engineering, law, resources, teaching, sciences and business are seeking knowledge and insights into local, regional and global politics. With ever growing popular interest in democracy and elections, the Quad and AUKUS, multilateralism and the rules based order being seen across society, this paper presents what data on what they want to know and how they think about contemporary politics. Specifically, this presentation examines how politics might not be everyone's background but in modern day Australia it is now everyone's business.

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Public Policy + Politics XII

Vaccine Session 3

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## **Policy inaction and contexts of challenge: Insights from Australia's position on no fault compensation for vaccine injury.**

**Dr Shevaun Drislane, University of Western Australia.**

Public policy scholars have long studied why policymakers sometimes 'do nothing' about issues. This paper engages with policy inaction literature, to analyse the absence of a no-fault compensation scheme (NFC) for serious adverse events following immunisation ('vaccine injury') in Australia. Vaccine injuries are rare (Jacobson 2003) but can have significant impacts for those affected. 25 countries around the world have enacted NFC for vaccine injury to provide financial redress to individuals who suffer this type of harm (Mungwira, Guillard et al. 2020). Unlike comparable countries, Australia has not enacted a policy of this type, with the exception of introducing a temporary and specific COVID vaccine claims scheme (currently due to cease accepting claims on 30 September 2024). The Australian context therefore provides a unique case study to compare policy inaction versus policy action. Drawing on data from qualitative, key informant interviews, this work analyses the complex and interrelating drivers of policy inaction for NFC in Australia. It then moves to analyse why and how factors in the COVID vaccine context overpowered those inaction drivers when the COVID claim scheme was introduced, illustrating that policy inaction is not a stagnant or immovable circumstance and that changing conditions can lead to policy shifts. References: Jacobson, R. M. (2003). "Vaccine safety." *Immunology and allergy clinics of North America* 23(4): 589-603. Mungwira, R. G., C. Guillard, A.

## **Shaping HPV Vaccination Policy in Bangladesh: An Assessment of Deep Core Beliefs of Religious Leaders.**

**Mr Md Towhidur Rahman, University of Western Australia. Dr. Sultan Mahmood, University of Western Australia. A/Prof Katie Attwell, University of Western Australia.**

In 2023, the Bangladeshi government introduced free HPV vaccines for girls aged 10-14. The vaccine prevents cervical cancer – primarily caused by Human Papillomavirus (HPV) – the second most common cancer among women. Given past vaccine hesitancy in Bangladesh during the COVID-19 pandemic, similar challenges may arise for HPV. The vaccine has faced barriers elsewhere due to its association with the female reproductive system and religious and cultural beliefs regarding sexuality. In the predominantly Muslim society of Bangladesh, religious leaders significantly influence public opinions. We interviewed leaders from five religious groups – Qoumi, Aliya, Islamic Foundation, Tabligh, and Sufism – to analyse their perspectives on HPV vaccine, vaccines in general, government advice, and potential support. Semi-structured interviews were thematically analysed with NVivo 20, employing both inductive and deductive coding. Findings reveal low knowledge levels about HPV disease and vaccination. These combine with cultural factors to underscore vaccine-specific



concerns about enabling promiscuity, side effects, and STD stigma. At a social and political level, mistrust of foreign vaccination funding and domestic political distrust deterred some religious leaders from supporting the vaccination program. We make recommendations for stakeholder engagement and communication that build upon religious leaders' paternalistic but supportive attitudes towards women's health in Bangladesh.

### **Drivers of noncompliance with vaccination and mandates – the interplay between distrust, rationality, morality and social motivation.**

**A/Prof Katie Attwell, University of Western Australia. Dr Hang Duong, School of Social Sciences, University of Western Australia. Ms Amy Morris, University of Western Australia. Ms Leah Roberts, University of Western Australia. Prof Mark Navin, Oakland University.**

Interdisciplinary literature on vaccine hesitancy focuses on people's vaccine-specific concerns and (dis)trust in governments, but less on moral reasoning. Meanwhile, few public policy and public administration articles focus on compliance with vaccination programs as government policy. This study addresses these gaps by exploring noncompliance with COVID-19 vaccination in WA, using in-depth interviews with committed vaccine refusers, some of whom subsequently (resentfully) vaccinated under the state's mandates. The paper systematically explores the drivers of noncompliance in voluntary and mandatory settings. In the voluntary setting, distrust in government and concerns about vaccine safety, efficacy and necessity (subjectively rational reasoning) drive noncompliance. In the mandatory setting, refusers' reasoning expands to include cost-benefit analyses of accepting the mandates' consequences and consideration of available alternatives. Significantly, moral justification and the perceived immorality of mandates (and governments who employ them) become an important driver in this setting. Policymakers perceive mandates as "morality policies", not regulatory policies as commonly assumed by the government. The study suggests a theoretical framework of vaccine noncompliance drivers, in which distrust, rationality, and morality are interrelated and supported by social motivation. It also provides implications for policymakers in designing and communicating future mandates.

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## **Gender/Sexuality + Politics VI**

## **Queer Politics and Representation**

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### **Man/Woman Enough: How Gender Presentation Shapes Voter Evaluations of Queer Cabinet Ministers.**

**Dr Tobias Rohrbach, University of Wollongong. A/Prof Joseph Cozza, Rice University. A/Prof Amanda Friesen, University of Western Ontario. A/Prof Philip Jones, University of Delaware.**

Increasingly, scholars have focused their attention on how voters evaluate queer, trans, and gender non-conforming candidates for political office. Missing, however, is an examination of how voters evaluate queer individuals serving in executive positions. Past research has documented the gendered pattern of cabinet appointments. In advanced democracies, women have frequently been appointed to lead ministries that oversee "feminine" or low-prestige policy areas. While this pattern has changed in recent years, the question remains: do queer politicians face similar barriers? In this project, we employ a conjoint survey experiment in the United Kingdom to assess how individuals evaluate queer and gender non-conforming cabinet ministers. In doing so, we examine whether queer and gender non-conforming cabinet ministers are punished by voters compared to straight and gender conforming ministers. Additionally, we assess whether voters see queer and gender non-conforming politicians as better suited to lead different ministries than their straight and gender conforming counterparts. To vary the degree to which these ministers conform to typical gender norms, we manipulate the hypothetical minister's sexual orientation, physical appearance, and hobbies. We then explore how these factors affect perceptions of the minister's deservingness and competency.

### **Mobilising gender and LGBTIQA+ issues in Australian Politics.**

**Prof Carol Johnson, University of Adelaide.**

This paper draws on, updates and extends research for my book *The Politics of Gender Equality: Australian Lessons in a Changing World* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2024). The paper provides an up-to-date evaluation of the successes and failures of the Albanese government in respect to gender equality and LGBTIQA+ issues. It also further explores the links between gender equality policy and the ways in which gender and related LGBTIQA+ issues are mobilised electorally in Australian political discourse. As part of that analysis, the paper examines the gendered leadership performances/images of Anthony Albanese and Peter Dutton and their policy implications, including the impact of Dutton's authoritarian populist, strongman image on Albanese's initial attempts to project a kinder, gentler, more woman friendly "new politics".

## **Stale, pale, female? Interrogating Australian political gender parity from a queer intersectional lens.**

**Mr Jack Hayes, Australian National University.**

The 47th Parliament of Australia is the country's most gender equal federal parliament to date (Laing and Hugh, 2023). While achieving gender parity or near parity in representative government is integral to broader gender equality aims, an intersectional feminist theoretical approach prompts further inquiry into the types of representation evidenced in a more gender equal political landscape; for example, while the 47th Parliament improved gender representation, it was also a decline in the representation of LGBTIQ+ parliamentarians. Drawing from two studies set in Australia involving 270 women and gender non-binary individuals, both queer and heterosexual, this paper asks: how do LGBTIQ+ individuals experience barriers and challenges to their political engagement, and how does their experience differ from that of non-LGBTIQ+ individuals? Our findings indicate that queer women and non-binary individuals explicate a nuanced and expanded understanding of political engagement, highlighting the intersectional 'queered' and gendered challenges experienced even amidst increased proportional representation. This paper contributes to ongoing discussions about gender and queer inequality in representative democracies and contributes to global intersectional feminist dialogues.

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**Australian Politics IX**

**Round Table**

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### **Australian Politics at a Crossroads: Prospects for Change.**

**A/Professor Matteo Bonotti, Monash University. Prof Narelle Miragliotta, Murdoch University. Prof Andrea Carson, La Trobe University. Prof Keith Dowding, Australian National University. Prof Anika Gauja, University of Sydney. Prof Ariadne Vromen, Australian National University.**

As the 21st century proceeds apace, Australia faces new and old challenges, both domestically and internationally. These include managing complex governance issues, preventing democratic fracture, balancing an ever-shifting geopolitical strategic order, addressing the recognition and identity demands of marginalised groups, and responding to crises and urgent policy challenges, such as climate change. The book *Australian Politics at a Crossroads: Prospects for Change* (Routledge 2024), edited by Matteo Bonotti (Monash University) and Narelle Miragliotta (Murdoch University), analyses and evaluates the challenges which confront Australia by locating them in their national and comparative context. The various contributions reveal that while these challenges are neither novel nor unique to Australia, the way in which they manifest and Australia's responses to them are shaped by the country's distinctive history, culture, geography, location, and size. This panel, chaired by Zareh Ghazarian (Monash University), will feature commentaries on the book by Andrea Carson (La Trobe University), Keith Dowding (ANU), Anika Gauja (University of Sydney), and Ariadne Vromen (ANU), followed by the book editors' response.

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**Comparative Politics VI**

**Democracy, Electoral Systems and Suffrage**

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### **Securitising Electoral Disinformation: Necessary Conditions for Successful Securitisation.**

**Mr Lachlan Poel, Flinders University.**

The threat of electoral disinformation has been securitised in both the United States and Australian. Witnesses in legislative committees, through their testimony, have created the securitising move, necessary for a successful case of securitisation. However, successful securitisation requires the acceptance of the audience to implement extraordinary measures in response to a constructed threat. Despite being undertheorized in the literature, the audience is a key component of securitisation theory. This paper takes the securitising moves from witnesses in both Australian and American legislative committee hearings from 2016-2021, and examines the response from the legislature, executive government, and the general public to determine under what circumstances successful securitisation has taken place.

### **A Study on the Role of High-Speed Railways in Non-Traditional Politics in Indo-China Relations.**

**Mr Chitresh Shrivastva, CHRIST (Deemed to be University). Ms Timhna Selvaraj, Christ (Deemed to be) University, Bangalore.**

The high-speed railways have been a significant driver of the global economy, starting with Japan's Shinkansen trains in 1964 between Tokyo and Osaka. Other countries joined the foray, with France beginning

the first high-speed rail 1981 between Paris and Lyon, followed by America in 2000 between Washington DC and Boston. The suit was followed by China with its 'Speed Up Campaign' between 1997 and 2007. China expanded towards high-speed railways in 2011 with just 20,000 kilometres of high-speed railway, which has now grown to 40,000 kilometres, accounting for 26.7 kilometres of China's railroad network. The railways have been the focus of development in developed and developing economies. The railways have been considered an efficient means of transport with just 1/3rd of the energy consumed compared to aviation. The role of railways in the post-globalisation context has expanded beyond environmental sustainability. The railways have been looked upon as instruments of geopolitical influence with rivalry between China and Japan, each trying to exert its influence through critical infrastructure investments. Predominantly the high-speed railways. China has been heavily investing in expanding its high-speed railways in the ASEAN nations. At the same time, Japan has tapped the current modernisation of the Indian Railway network by signing an agreement with India for the construction of the first high-speed railway corridor between Mumbai and Ahmedabad while also lending assistance.

### **The State of Democracy in the Quad countries: a critical evaluation.**

**Dr Alica Kizekova, Curtin University. Prof Alan Fenna, Curtin University.**

This paper examines the state of democracy in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) countries: Australia, India, Japan, and the United States. Former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe envisioned the formation of a 'diamond' of democracies to balance China's influence in the Indo-Pacific. However, there are notable differences in the democratic and political systems within the Quad and the health of each has been called into question on various grounds. According to the latest Economist Intelligence Unit rankings, Australia and Japan are considered 'full' democracies, whereas India and the U.S. are seen as 'flawed' democracies. The analysis includes a review of electoral processes and pluralism, government functionality, political participation, political culture, and civil liberties and considers the diagnoses presented in a range of analyses including the forthcoming 2024 Australian Democratic Audit.

### **Democratic Stagnation in U.K. Electoral Administration.**

**Mr Joshua Sunman, Flinders University.**

This paper seeks to operationalize the concept of democratic stagnation by applying it to an analysis of the UK's electoral management regime. Democratic stagnation refers to where a democratic system or institution's lack of response to challenges and changing circumstances can hinder their ability to positively adapt to emerging and future challenges. Democratic stagnation addresses a conceptual gap between democratic backsliding and resilience. Whilst democratic backsliding captures 'fine-grained' and slow-moving declines in democratic quality and character, it is ill-suited to diagnosing potential sources of vulnerability before decline occurs. Likewise, democratic resilience is generally found where democratic institutions maintain their quality and character against challenges. In many cases, a lack of change is seen as an indicator of democratic resilience – the concept of stagnation aims to disrupt this assumption. This paper's goal of operationalisation will be tested through the application of a rubric of stagnation criteria to the case of electoral administration the United Kingdom. It aims to test a framework which will be applied across other most-similar systems in a structured focused comparison.

### **The Logic of the Establishment of Women's Suffrage: A Comparison of Japan, the United Kingdom, and Australia.**

**Dr Shinya Sasaoka, Surugadai University.**

Australia is one of the earliest groups in the world to grant women suffrage in national politics, which took place in 1902. In contrast, it was in 1918 that it was granted with restrictions in the United Kingdom and it was not until 1945 that Japanese women were given the right to vote. In other words, they were not granted suffrage in the pre-World War II period, despite the fact that the political regime was relatively democratic at the time. At that time, the women's suffrage movement, led by Fusae Ichikawa, had a certain influence. In fact, local suffrage bills passed the House of Representatives, the lower house, but were rejected twice by the House of Peers, the upper house. As for the national suffrage, no bill was ever submitted in the Imperial Diet. We will consider the reasons why Japanese women did not get the suffrage prior to World War II by comparing the political process of granting women's suffrage in the United Kingdom and Australia. The variables that are presumed to be important are the women's suffrage movement, the state of main parties in parliament at the time, and the position of the upper house.

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**Rebel Governance of the Environment.****A/Prof Tobias Ide, Murdoch University.**

While a growing literature assesses service provision by rebel groups, almost all studies focus on security, education, and social welfare. Building linkages to research on environmental governance and environmental security, this paper analyses rebel governance of the environment. Specifically, I focus on disaster risk reduction activities by three leftist rebel groups: the CPP/NPA in the Philippines, the CPN-M/PLA in Nepal, and the FARC in Colombia. Disasters represent critical junctures and are well-suited to provide in-depth insights into insurgent behaviour. I find that rebel groups regularly engage in post-disaster rescue and relief activities, particularly in areas where the government cannot or does not want to provide such services. While straining their capacities, rebels can benefit immensely from providing disaster relief. Rebels also conduct disaster prevention and preparation programs, but resources, knowledge, and political will often limit these activities.

**Understanding the dynamics of conflicts and cooperation over shared water resource use in Somalia.****Mr Osman Jama, Murdoch University.**

Despite a growing interest in environmental peacebuilding in recent years, limited research has explored the local pathways driving conflict and cooperation over shared water resources. This study aims to fill this lacuna by examining these dynamics in Somalia, a context characterized by acute water scarcity. Using fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (QCA), we identify the conditions under which local communities either cooperate or experience conflicts over shared water resources. Our findings reveal that traditional resource management, shared interest and strong interdependence, and strong pre-existing trust and cooperation are sufficient conditions for community cooperation over shared water resources. Conversely, unequal power distribution, compounded by the absence of shared interest and strong interdependence, pre-existing trust and cooperation, and state support, significantly increases the likelihood of conflict. These results highlight the importance of addressing the complex interplay of social, economic, and institutional factors for promoting sustainable water management and preventing conflict. By uncovering the conditions that shape cooperation and conflict over shared water resource, this research offers valuable insights for designing effective interventions to enhance water security and peacebuilding in Somalia and similar contexts.

**Climate Change and Voting Behavior: Evidence from US Elections 1898-2022.****Mr Keegan Robertson, Curtin University. Prof Mark Harris, Curtin University. Dr Ranjodh Singh, Curtin University.**

This paper examines the relationship between long-run temperature and rainfall variations on voting behavior in US House of Representatives elections from 1898 to 2022. We examine bespoke and large-scale datasets on climate, voting, and socioeconomic factors at the congressional district level. We find that incumbent parties lost between 1.1% and 3.1% vote share for every 1°C increase in temperature above the district's historical climate baseline. Candidates won between 4.9% and 9.4% of elections in the sample by less than those margins. These findings serve as a sobering incentive for governments to act on mitigating climate change and reinforcing democratic stability.

**Climate Change and Security Reversed.****Prof Matt McDonald, University of Queensland.**

The security implications of climate change are increasingly acknowledged. Climate change appears in national security strategy documents, has increasingly been discussed in UN Security Council debates, and has been the subject of sustained examination in the policy community and academic fields. And it has been flagged as a factor in triggering instability, state fragility, population displacement and even conflict. There has been far less engagement and research, however, with the potential implications of responses to climate change. This paper explores these possible implications, from regional instability connected to a rapid transition away from fossil fuels (in the Middle East, for example), to displacement associated with new energy infrastructure, projects to social and political contestation linked to the disruptive effects of projects



aimed at facilitating both mitigation and adaptation. And using the example of solar geoengineering, it identifies potential implications (or even perceptions of them) of the use of technological interventions to address the climate crisis.

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## **Open Track IV    The protracted crises of social democracy: Putting the Albanese government in context. Panel 3: Social democracy in the global political economy**

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### **The crisis of social democracy and its effects on Australian security.**

**Prof Bec Strating, La Trobe University.**

Australia's security policies and discourses are too often focused on military spending and capabilities. While the Albanese government talks about a joined-up approach to a broad range of security issues in its declaratory defence policy, this is rarely followed through with substantive action. This paper asks: How can "security" be conceived of using a social democracy lens? And how has the hollowing out of social democratic thinking and institutions affected Australia's pursuit of security?

### **Australia, Labor, Foreign policy and militarised neoliberalism.**

**Trissa Wijaya, Ritsumeikan University. Dr Sian Troath, Australian National University.**

The Albanese government has engaged in foreign policy characteristic by activist industry policy. This industry policy we argue reflects a militarised neoliberalism of the Albanese government as well as Bidenomics. Geopolitical tensions, the urgency to decarbonising the economy, and the race to lead AI and leading-edge-chips have placed energy transition minerals (ETMs) central to the great power competition. A rush to secure ETMs supply chain has resulted in the emergence of a whole-of-government grand strategies, including Bidenomics with its combative policies – Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and CHIPS Acts Australia and Indonesia, with their respective lithium and nickel reserves – among the most critical of ETMs – have increasingly been the hotspots of contention especially relative to their reliance on Chinese capital and technology in mineral extraction and processing. A closer examination of these dynamics, however, shows how a combination of heated geopolitical competition that overlaps with Bidenomics-driven shifting accumulation regimes resulted in the emergence of state activism both in Australia and Indonesia. The more activist states take shape in a broader context of militarised neoliberalism (MN), that is characterised by a deeper entanglement of economic-security agenda and renewed domestic industrial bases.

### **The Future Made in Australia Act: Strategic Shift or Political Play?**

**Mr Theo Mendez, The University of Melbourne.**

The Future Made in Australia (FMIA) Act has been marketed by the Albanese government as Australia's shift away from neoliberalism and towards strategic geoeconomic policymaking. Given that the Act is framed as breaking with so many of Australia's established economic traditions, it begs the question: to what extent is FMIA truly a transformative politico-economic project? This research examines the inception of the Act, interrogating its domestic elements whilst also situating it within a broader global deluge of 'modern industrial policies' in the developed world. Through an analysis drawing upon interview and secondary data, it becomes clear that while the FMIA Act targets a new form of 'political settlement' in Australia, it does not fundamentally challenge the neoliberal economic configuration that currently guides the country's economic policymaking. Instead, it seeks to foster Schumpeterian creative dynamism without any accompanying destructive elements. These findings show that the emergence of modern industrial policies globally is not homogeneous, instead being driven primarily by domestic political processes within a broader international context. The FMIA Act, although framed domestically as a transformative political project, is thus best understood primarily as a partisan investment accumulation agenda rather than a genuine shift towards industrial transformation in Australia.

### **Social Democracy and 'Partnership Capitalism' From the Third Way to the Green Transition.**

**Sahil Jai Dutta, University of London. Dr Ian Lovering, Te Herenga Waka - Victoria University of Wellington.**

In a moment of intersecting environmental, economic, and geopolitical crisis, the end of neoliberalism has been widely announced as industrial policy has returned to lead a Green Transition. For many, this moment appears as a renewal for social democracy. Moving beyond the Third Way's accommodation with neoliberalism,

the combined pressure of geopolitical rivalry and climate crisis has seemingly restored social democracy's faith in state activism. Today, the UK Labour Party, the Albanese government, and US President Joe Biden all subscribe to a 'modern supply-side economics' of state-led investment. Our paper counters that such an analysis misconstrues the present and past of social democracy. The 'Third Way' governments were as interventionist as 'modern supply-side economics' propounds to be now. To do so, they 'partnered' with private business, neither disciplining nor succumbing to capital. We argue that such 'partnership' between state and capital is social democracy's enduring form. To demonstrate this, we trace the evolution of the partnership model from the 1960s War on Poverty in the US into the Third Way revolutions of the UK and Australia. Both the UK and Australia were pivotal in creating the current model of Public-Private Partnerships, the managerial infrastructure that runs it, and its distinctive accumulation dynamics. This included the development of the Private Finance Initiative in the UK, and the distinctive asset management 'Macquarie model' created in Australia. We argue that placing today's Green Transition within this longer context gives us a clearer understanding of the evolving political economy of social democracy's 'partnership' with capital.

**‘Get a good job that pays good money’: Drifting from welfare to work on Australian social security.**

**Jacob Priergaard, Australian National University.**

In this paper, I examine one of the fundamental problems of the study of public policy, which is how, when and why do policies and institutions change or remain stable? Drawing on my PhD research, I analyse the case of Australian unemployment policies and how they have changed since the 1980s. Australia’s social security policy regime has continuity with its historic values and policy legacies – it remains a highly targeted system built around categorical payments to people outside paid employment. But it is also substantively different to the past along key dimensions. For example, payments now have punitive conditions attached to them that are enforced by private actors. I argue Australian social security policy represents neither an extreme case of stability, nor one of path-breaking reform, but instead shows characteristics of both. Using a fine-grained historical institutional analysis I examine how an accumulation of administrative and institutional decisions have entrenched a fragmented, complex policy regime that does not adequately serve people who are unemployed. I conclude by drawing out what implications this institutional legacy has for the future of Australian unemployment policy.

**Collaborative governance through financialisation? How Australian social impact bonds fit into a history of community service marketisation.**

**Dr Jacob Broom, Murdoch University.**

The tale of neoliberalisation as the retrenchment of the state in Anglo-American democracies is well-rehearsed across public policy and political economy literatures. It characterises many critiques of social impact bonds (SIBs): financialised funding models for social programs that see private investors fund programs up front, then reap returns paid by the state based on program performance. The elevation of government service providers, intensification of performance measurement, and inclusion of private capital make it easy to draw a connection between SIBs, new public management, and neoliberalisation. This paper seeks to reframe that connection by providing historical context to the Australian SIB landscape. The history of community service provision in Australia has been characterised by political mediation of the relationship between government agencies and nonprofit service providers, principally charities. It suggests that rather than viewing Australian SIBs as the expansion of outsourcing and reduction of state responsibility that predominates in the critical literature, an analysis sensitive to their historical context casts them as a policy technology permitting a limited form of collaborative governance through financial negotiation. Nonprofit service providers are invited to shape their own social programs more actively, but only through a perverse vision of outcomes-driven financial negotiation.

**Digital encounters of welfare-to-work: examining Australia’s online employment services system.**

**Dr Sarah Ball, University of Melbourne. Dr Michael McGann, University of Melbourne. Dr Corey Carter, University of Melbourne.**

There is now a ‘digital turn’ in activation, characterised by the growing use of algorithms, machine learning, and online platforms to deliver public employment services. Recent transformations in welfare governance have shifted from forms of screen-level bureaucracy to new forms of system-level (Zouridis et al 2020) or machine bureaucracies in welfare-to-work (Considine et al. 2022). Characteristic of this is Australia’s Workforce Australia employment services system, introduced in July 2022, which has seen almost half of all jobseeker claimants serviced via an automated online service with no face-to-face contact, or human interaction. This ‘digitalisation’ of employment services – unique internationally for the degree of automation involved – is heralded as potentially reducing the transaction and psychological costs that participants experience but there are concerns that these encounters may be producing a more stringent enforcement of conditionality and restricting opportunities for discretion and adaptation. This study examines how automating welfare

reshapes the balance between the demanding and enabling elements of activation, such that 'digitalisation' constitutes a change not just in welfare-to-work encounters but also in the nature of activation and citizens' experience of social citizenship. The study draws on original empirical research with approximately 60 participants in Australia's new Workforce Australia digital service.

### **Just-in-time border infrastructure at Port Hedland.**

**Dr Ari Jerrems, University of Western Australia.**

There has been substantial interest in the 'makeshift' in recent scholarship in critical border and migration studies. Scholars have noted how informal and transient arrangements are mobilised to govern migration in a wide range of 'crisis' and post-crisis situations. In this paper, I seek to illustrate the value of linking such interventions to just-in-time modes of production via a grounded study of the history of the Port Hedland detention centre in Western Australia. The Port Hedland centre opened soon after detention became mandatory for asylum seekers arriving by boat in the early 90s by repurposing barracks initially built for miners. The town of Port Hedland is located in Northwestern Australia and is notably the world's largest bulk export port, transporting raw materials extracted from the surrounding Pilbara region. I sketch three moments in the life of the centre to outline how it becomes integrated into changing constellations of geopolitics, geoeconomics and forms of extraction. First, I explore the construction of the centre as accommodation for miners during the first mining boom in the 60s and 70s. Second, I trace the emergence of a fly-in, fly-out labour force and the repurposing of the site as a detention centre in early 90s. Finally, I outline the decline of the centre in the context of offshore detention in the early 2000s and the repurposing of the site as real estate.

### **Anticipatory Security Mapping: Color-Coded Digital Mapping Interventions.**

**Prof Nicolas Lemay-Hebert, Australian National University. Dr Ari Jerrems, University of Western Australia.**

Digital mapping is very much about trying to detect risks before they occur, with security mapping apps sold as a flexible and adaptable technology to deal with risks in real-time. However, scholarship on digital mapping displays a tendency to understand technology as an altogether new set of practices, representing a rupture from the past, and the tendency to put all 'non-analogue' technologies in the same basket. We argue that digital mapping represents in many ways a continuity of established practices that tackle opacity by seeking to make space legible for intervention. For this, it seems important to return to the fact that (some) maps produce territory, and are therefore techniques associated with this production of territory rather than concentrate on the purpose of the map – that is whether it is mimetic or navigational. We argue that current digital mapping practices employed in a range of interrelated fields including humanitarianism, climate resilience and peacekeeping can be ordered in three specific clusters: crisis mapping or events mapping; terrain mapping; and zoning. Understanding territory as a technology (Elden, 2010), we argue that the analysis of colour-coding in each cluster of practices can inform our understanding of territory as technology. This paper is based on interviews conducted with digital mapping companies and UN practitioners operating at the frontlines of current interventions.

### **Tourism in the Tibetan borderscapes: maintaining ecosystems.**

**Ms Lois Li, University of Western Australia.**

Tourism in the southwestern borderlands of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) in China mainly relies on the consumption of nature. However, considering the environmental challenges and border disputes, tourism in TAR is entangled with political and ecological issues. Against this background, this paper takes Mt. Kailash and Mt. Chomolungma as case studies that allow us to investigate: (1) How nature is produced through tourism, (2) the environmental challenges that emerge from, and impact on Tibetan tourism and (3) the role that border play in the interaction between tourism and the environment. I argue that theories from post-structuralist political ecology and embodied tourism studies can be employed to examine the production of nature. Meanwhile, the framework of bordering, ordering and othering can be utilized to incorporate bordering into this process. I propose an ethnographic methodology, including archival analysis, netnography and ambulatory ethnography to support the theoretical framework. The approach developed



serves to further interdisciplinary studies that cross tourism geography, political geography, and political ecology. It will contribute to enriching the Himalaya studies by focusing on the understudied Tibetan borderscapes and finally provide suggestions to China's ecological civilization construction and peacebuilding in the broader Himalaya.

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## Comparative Politics VII

## Governance and Political Management

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### **Hybrid Governance in De Facto States: The Case of Somaliland's Integration of Clan-Based and Democratic Institutions for Stability and Development.**

**Dr Moh Farah, RMIT University.**

This study explores the hybrid political order of Somaliland, an innovative integration of traditional clan-based governance and modern democratic institutions, and its role in fostering peace and stability over the past 30 years. Governance is critical for sustainable development, particularly in less developed regions. While the state has traditionally been the central actor in governance, alternative models have emerged where private actors and societal groups play increasingly significant roles. This research critically examines the hybrid political order framework and investigates how de-facto states, despite varying degrees of autonomy and control and lacking formal international recognition, utilize this governance model to influence development outcomes. De facto states typically emerge from weakened or collapsed central authorities due to conflict or political instability. Somaliland's hybrid system, which merges formal and informal governance structures, has achieved notable success in peacebuilding and development. However, challenges such as internal power struggles and lack of international recognition continue to impact its efficacy. This study contributes to comparative politics by elucidating the complexities of hybrid governance and its implications for stability and development in contexts where traditional state structures are compromised.

### **Migrant agency and state's securitisation of migration: Implications for greater political inclusion and participation.**

**Dr Daniel William Szabo, Griffith University.**

This paper seeks to answer how analysing migrants' survival strategy on high-risk migration routes helps us better understand states' moves toward increasingly securitised and extended enforcement regimes. Framed conceptually, it highlights two related elements of migration governance at the supranational and state levels: securitised migration and extraterritorial enforcement. The EU's securitisation of migration—framing and treating migration as a security threat rather than a set of economic and social processes—provides the conceptual context for understanding EU moves to harden enforcement and extend it into Africa. Research offers a better understanding of how the extension or extraterritorial enforcement of the EU migration regime has contributed to intensifying the risks on the Sahara and Mediterranean migration routes. The fieldwork for this research involved open-ended, semi-structured interviews with 101 persons who were or had been migrants on high-risk migration routes through the Sahara Desert.

### **Managerial models in the Prime Minister's Office: An Exploration of the 'Standard Model' and deviations in Westminster democracies.**

**Dr Heath Pickering, University of Melbourne.**

Managerial models matter, especially for prime ministers. A "good" managerial model is thought to contribute to a prime minister's political longevity and policy effectiveness. However, the question remains: how do prime ministers manage their office? While there's a prevailing view, supported by both academic literature and practice, that a hierarchical managerial model with a partisan professional chief of staff leading the prime minister's office is the "standard" and therefore the best approach, there have been deviations from this model in the classic Westminster democracies. For instance, Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull appointed senior public servants to his office, UK Prime Minister Theresa May opted for a dual-Chief of Staff structure, and New Zealand Prime Minister Jenny Shipley didn't appoint a Chief of Staff at all during her first year. This article will delve into both the "standard" and "deviant" managerial models adopted by prime ministers from 1990 to 2024. Supporting the analysis is a dataset listing 62 chiefs of staff who served prime ministers in Australia, Britain, Canada, and New Zealand. The analysis suggests that considering managerial models is crucial when examining issues of political performance and policy making.

## **Realising environmental justice: Strategy and tactics for transformation.**

**Prof David Schlosberg, University of Sydney. Ms Hannah Della Bosca, Sydney. Prof Lauren Rickards, La Trobe University. Dr Rebecca Pearse, Australian National University.**

This paper examines the multiple ways that environmental justice scholars and activists approach the task of creating change. What forms of social movement power, strategy, and solidarity create the enabling conditions for EJ? On what bases do scholars and practitioners agree and where do differences in praxis emerge? Reporting on a large international study that empirically examines the discourses emerging and circulating about EJ, we outline the patterns of thinking and practice emphasised by EJ activists and academics. Our findings highlight strong agreement about the strategic focus on racial and socioeconomic injustices for successful EJ movement strategy. Three approaches within this broad agreement were identifiable. A structural decolonial approach focused on redistributive visions of racial and socio-economic justice in solidarity with indigenous peoples and other marginal social groups. A community-based approach focused on networked power from below as a strategy of disruption. And a third approach emphasises the technologies that enable local knowledge in forums of public engagement. Our data revealed most disagreement among about strategies that target policy frameworks and legal institutions. The paper reflects on the implications for EJ movement praxis when the state is such an ambivalent target for EJ claims.

## **From Non-Decision to Negotiation: Iran's Evolving Water Diplomacy in the Euphrates-Tigris Basin (1999-2024).**

**Mr Ehsan Daryadel, Murdoch University. Dr Oliver Fritsch, Murdoch University. Dr Animesh Gain Kumar, Murdoch University.**

Decades of unresolved water conflicts cast a long shadow over the politically volatile Euphrates-Tigris river basin, a region facing critical water scarcity. Iran, a downstream and partially upstream nation, has historically adopted a passive stance in managing these transboundary resources. This research delves into the evolving hydro-political and legal approach employed by Iran in utilizing and managing its western waters. Understanding Iran's water diplomacy is crucial for several key reasons including: first, the significance of hearing the voice of marginalised actors, second, the possible impact of Iran exclusion and its counter-response, third, the reciprocal modified behaviour of Iran and other riparians and fourth, common threats in the basin and the need for collective action. Employing a rigorous document analysis methodology, we will examine policy documents (domestic laws and current treaties), reports, media releases, and statements made by Iranian decision-making authorities (both official and unofficial) over a 25-year timespan (1999-2024). This research explores the potential shift in Iran's water diplomacy from a non-decision, non-cooperation approach towards a more active and strategic one. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics of water conflict in the region and the evolving role of Iran in shaping future water management strategies.

## **Greens and Coalition Building.**

**Dr Stewart Jackson, University of Sydney.**

Green parties have entered coalitions previously, in attempts to enter government. Success, of course, has usually come at the expense of subsuming some elements of their program to be able to work with their partners. We have seen this in a number of cases over the past two decades: the Mexican Greens supporting the death penalty and elite rule; the German Greens supporting war in Kosovo; and the French Greens supporting the continued use of nuclear power. This should of course come as no surprise, as compromise is the bread and butter of electoral politics, especially when negotiating to form government. The same could also be said for attempting to win seats in parliament in the first place. A coalition might be an effective way to increase opportunities or just to win a seat backed by a joint program between coalition partners. Previous coalitions in Europe demonstrate that such alliances are useful in gaining (and maintaining) parliamentary seats. However, many Green parties also reject electoral coalitions, arguing that to enter them would be to compromise both programs and values. Why then do some parties find it necessary to enter electoral coalitions and what is their experience of entering such coalitions? This paper will explore the usefulness

of electoral and parliamentary coalitions and coalition building in the context of three Asian Green parties, from Korea, Mongolia and the Philippines, which have each either considered or entered into coalition agreements with other parties.

### **The Australian Greens: Realignment re-revisited in Australia (Or how I learned to stop worrying and update the PhD thesis).**

**Dr Todd Farrell, University of Melbourne.**

The Australian Greens have emerged as a significant third force in Australian politics. They have sustained continuous representation in federal parliament since 1990. The 2022 federal election demonstrated unprecedented success, winning four seats in the House of Representatives and retaining their twelve seats in the Senate. Notably, their party support is built upon a durable voter population that aligns with comparable Green voters in Europe and the United Kingdom and an increasing level of self-identified partisans. Their position in the party system lends support to the partisan realignment thesis. This paper revisits the 2020 PhD thesis 'The Australian Greens; realignment revisited in Australia' and updates a multinomial logistic regression model of Greens partisans and voters in both the House of Representatives and the Senate with the most up-to-date elections. It explores Australian Election Study data between 2001-2022 and incorporates subsequent predictors of support that have emerged in the electorate, with a focus on home ownership. It concludes by evaluating predictions made in late 2019 about the Greens and their place within the Australian party system and whether this support will continue.

### **Sex, Guns, and Electoral Rolls: exploring the realignment of Australian politics through the success of non-major party candidates.**

**Phoebe Hayman, La Trobe University. Dr Ben Spies-Butcher, Macquarie University. Mark Riboldi.**

Australian electoral politics has long been dominated by two major party blocks. However, as the proportion of Australians voting for major parties has declined, the number of successful independent and non-party MPs (IMPs) in houses of government has grown. We previously identified evidence that the rise of IMPs went beyond the fragmentation of class-based voting patterns and indicates a realignment of representative politics. This paper advances our understanding of IMPs and Australia's changing political landscape by focusing on the electoral factors associated with their initial success and the longevity of their support. Drawing on our unique and updated data set of successful IMPs across single-member Australian parliaments since 1970, we explore if IMPs are more likely to succeed when governing parties suffer large losses and under what circumstances IMPs are likely to sustain their electoral success once in parliament. We hypothesise that disenchantment with existing parties likely drives initial IMP success but that longevity reflects a deeper realignment of voter attitudes and parliamentary governance. We also explore how geography and gender shape changing electoral outcomes. We ask if the success of longevity of IMPs differs across inner metro, outer metro, regional and rural electorates, which have previously shaped majoritarian electoral politics. Finally, we explore whether candidate gender influences IMP success, reflecting the changing significance of gender in Australian politics. Across our analysis, we reflect on how populism and professionalisation shape election outcomes and what the varied patterns of IMP success might reveal about evolving political cleavages and contestations.

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Australian Politics XI

Panel: Political Party Organisations 2

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### **Inside Party Youth Wings: The YOUMEM Project.**

**Prof Duncan McDonnell, Griffith University. Dr Sofia Ammassari, Griffith University. Marco Valbruzzi. Niklas Bolin. Reinhard Heinisch. Ann-Cathrine Jungar. Carsten Wegscheider. Annika Werner.**

Youth wings fulfil vital democratic functions. They connect parties with young people, socialise them into political life, and train future candidates and officials. Yet, youth wings have been largely overlooked by party scholars. In this article, we present the Youth Wing Membership Survey (YOUMEM) dataset. With responses from over 5,000 members of 12 youth wings in Australia, Austria, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Sweden, YOUMEM is the largest comparative study of youth wing members ever conducted. Using the dataset, we examine some basic questions about youth wing members: who they are, when and why they join. We find that youth wing members are primarily men and highly educated. Many have relatives who were party members, and most are extremely ambitious compared to senior party members. Beyond these

commonalities, we also uncover differences across party families and countries. Our project provides a unique window on the young people in contemporary youth wings.

### **Regulating Australian Political Parties: What ‘problem’ does the category of ‘Associated Entity’ seek to solve?**

**Dr Rob Manwaring, Flinders University. Joshua Holloway. Prof Narelle Miragliotta, Murdoch University.** Regulating the relationship between political parties and money is complex and vexed. Most advanced industrial democracies have a regulatory regime which seeks to set some constraints around political parties and money. A specific difficulty is the relationship between political parties and third party organisations (these include 500 Clubs, think tanks, trade unions, corporate entities, dedicated funding vehicles). Often political parties might seek to circumvent financial regulatory regimes by using such third party organisations to channel campaign funds. Australia is unique in devising a specific legal category for ‘Associated Entities’, a specific type of third party political actor. Associated entities are organisations that are set up or controlled by, or linked with, or affiliated to political parties. In Australia, approximately 200 organisations have registered as Associated Entities.

### **Women more social, men more careerist: How partisan personal ties shape gender differences for joining party youth wings.**

**Dr Sofia Ammassari, Griffith University. Prof Duncan McDonnell, Griffith University. Reinhard Heinisch. Marco Valbruzzi. Carsten Wegscheider. Annika Werner.**

Despite the important role that youth wings play in socialising young women into party politics, we know very little about women’s engagement with these organisations. We investigate this by looking at whether women and men vary in their reasons for joining youth wings and why that might be the case. We theorize that women and men are attracted by different incentives and that the influence of partisan personal ties such as family and friends will influence the gender gap in incentives. We test our argument by using original survey data from over 3,400 youth wing members of the main centre-left and centre-right parties in Australia, Austria, Germany, Italy and Spain. We find that women are more likely than men to join youth wings for social reasons, but less so for material ones. These differences are partly because, before joining youth wings, women have greater partisan personal ties than men.

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### **Politics in Asia-Pacific/Indian Ocean Region I    Religion, Identity, and Political Mobilisation**

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#### **The Influence of Religion on the Voting Attitudes and Behaviour of Educated Middle-Class Electors in Bangladesh.**

**Arefa Sultana, The University of Adelaide. Lisa Hill. Priya Chacko.**

The middle class has historically promoted the ideals of democracy and modern values in Bangladesh, rejecting the rule of political elites and authoritarianism while still retaining their Muslim cultural identity. But it is uncertain whether they are influenced by their religion when they vote. This research aims to investigate the voting behaviour of educated middle-class people in Bangladesh using surveys and in-depth interviews. The main objective of this study is to identify whether educated middle-class voters of Bangladesh are influenced in their voting attitudes and behaviour by their religious ideology. The main research question of this study is: are educated middle-class voters in Bangladesh influenced by their religious ideology when they vote? Although there is a substantial body of literature that discusses the presence of religion in Bangladesh politics and explains how political parties accommodate religion and politics, the influence of religion on the voting behaviour of the educated middle-class people of Bangladesh has not been investigated. Therefore, this study will be significant in understanding the voting behaviour of educated middle-class people in Bangladesh, upon whom the democratic development of the country and its stability may depend.

#### **Mapping Religious Spatial Strategies and its Impact on Religious Contentious Politics in Singapore.**

**Miss Alicia Wang, University of Sydney**

Southeast Asia continues to be, if not the most, one of the conflict-prone regions in the world. Significantly, of the density and variety of contentious politics observed in the region, exertions of religious-based movements contra the state proved a powerful force for regime change or reform. The region, rooted in and replete with religious diversity, is hence no stranger to religious contentious politics. However, presently, in stark contrast



to its Southeast Asian counterparts, there is a glaring absence of religious contentious politics in Singapore. The puzzle is this: What accounts for the sustained religious quiescence in Singapore? I argue that the creation and implementation of religious spatial strategies by the ruling Government after Singapore's independence constrain, and ultimately close, the political opportunities for religious contentious politics. This can be done by historically tracing religious contentious politics before and after independence and how its activity has varied with the consolidation of religious spatial strategies by the state over these two periods. Inserting spatiality, an often-ignored variable in the structural theorization of contentious politics, enlightens us as to why political opportunities does not necessarily lead to contentious politics but sometimes, to its demise.

### **“Drink beer and be seen in the teashops”. Challenges and Unorthodox Approaches Investigating Youth Activism at the Thai-Myanmar Border.**

**Lukas Nagel, Griffith University.**

Fieldwork in an increasingly post-democratic world poses novel challenges for research. This is especially true for studies on younger people. This paper investigates the lessons learned during fieldwork with exiled Myanmar youth activists in the Thai-Myanmar border region between February and September 2024. From the positionality of an outsider, I explore the experiences, faux pas and practical lessons in engaging with youth activists resisting the military in exile. Suspicions about ‘dalans’ (military informers), ethnoreligious fragmentation, language barriers and association of white foreigners with a lack of international support initially presented significant problems in trust-building. Firstly, I will reflect on the importance of investing more time in extensive networking, using instant messengers, and proving my trustworthiness by “giving back”: showing commitment as an ally and hands-on support became crucial. I will also discuss creative strategies for instant messaging apps and data security to resist power. To conclude, this paper extends current discussions on conducting fieldwork in challenging and authoritarian contexts with young activists in the Global South by sharing lessons learned on social media usage and trust-building, at the same time advocating for reciprocal learning, speaking the language of youths and rigorous research ethics in the field.

### **Constructing Contested Chinese Identity in Malaysia’s Kuching City.**

**Ms Yun Seh Lee, Flinders University.**

In 2023, the Federation of Malaysia celebrated the 60th anniversary of its Independence on 16th September 1963. Despite that, discussions involving identity are ongoing and could be sensitive to trigger nationwide political argument, for example the Balik Tong San (‘go back to China’) remark made by a Malaysian Member of Parliament in 2015. The question then is how the local Chinese community in Malaysia identify themselves today, with their ancestral ties to China and at the same time possessing some links with Taiwan since Malaysia established official ties with the Taiwan government from 1964 before normalising ties with the People’s Republic of China in 1974. This research is focusing on what are the components are constructing a local Chinese identity in the contemporary context through a case study of Kuching City in the spheres of culture and language.

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**Gender/Sexuality + Politics VII**

**Author Meets Critic**

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### **The Face of the Nation: Gendered Institutions in International Affairs.**

**Dr Elise Stephenson, Australian National University. Prof Bec Strating, La Trobe University.**

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic and against a background of cascading crises, a rise in right-wing misogyny and anti-women’s-rights backlash, and archaic institutions moving at a glacial pace, women and gender-diverse people remain frequently sidelined, undervalued, and overlooked in international affairs. Despite some progress, international affairs has a gender problem and remains one of the worst-performing sectors of the state. The Face of the Nation, the new award-winning book from Dr Elise Stephenson, Deputy Director of the Global Institute for Women’s Leadership at ANU, shines a spotlight on these issues. In the book, Dr Stephenson traces the evolution of inequalities in international affairs and interrogates why women and gender diverse folk still remain underrepresented (or unequal) in this field. Join Dr Elise Stephenson in conversation with Prof Bec Strating to launch ‘The Face of the Nation’ at APSA, discuss gender representation and diversity in international affairs, reflect on the barriers to participation, and consider how best to advance change.

## **Albanese's Government: A social democratic approach to immigration?**

**Ms Emily Foley, La Trobe University.**

Upon entering government, the Australian Labor Party flagged significant changes to Australia's immigration regime to minimise complexity and enhance fairness for employers and temporary migrant workers. However, temporary labour migration has long been an issue that the ALP has struggled to navigate. The party has been torn between differing social democratic inclinations, on the one hand seeking to address issues of exploitation experienced by migrant workers in the workplace and vocalising concerns about the threat that temporary migrant workers pose to Australian wages and conditions on the other. This policy area also poses a challenge for social democratic parties seeking to embed egalitarianism and fairness in what is an often unfair and exploitative system that fosters job insecurity and workforce vulnerability. This paper will explore the changes in Australia's immigration policy under the first Albanese ALP government, highlighting how the dilemma of labour migration represents a compelling case study for understanding the challenges for contemporary social democratic projects.

## **The Albanese government and the contradictions of its higher education policy.**

**Prof Greg McCarthy, University of Western Australia.**

The Albanese government's higher education policy encapsulated a range of social democratic contradictions, its Accord plan evokes a cooperative style and the government yet aims to impose a top-down control mechanism. The Accord speaks of complex inequality for marginalised students but recommends a narrow skill-based solution. The Accord lauds international students but then proposes cap on student immigration. Further, the biggest contradiction of all is that the Albanese government's Accord proposes the tertiary attainment rate of all working-age people rise to 80% by 2050 without an increase in the proportion of university revenue sourced from Australian Government from its current low 36.1%. The failure to increase based public funding also lays behind why the proposed abolition of the job ready graduate scheme failed. Whilst the government did alleviate the high inflationary rise in the HECS debt the underlying loan crises remains. Lastly, whilst the Albanese government does not share the Coalition government's disdain for universities and academic freedom, nevertheless, there is a lack of funding for academic research, which intensifies the contradiction between research-based universities and their growing technical institutional persona.

## **The chrono-politics of the crisis of social democracy.**

**Prof Kanishka Jayasuriya, Murdoch University.**

In this paper, we situate the crisis of social democracy in a more fundamental crisis of 'the time of politics'. We argue that the current conjuncture is characterised by contradiction between the politics of industrial capitalist accumulation and social reproduction one that is particularly reinforced by the fiscal crisis of the state and the broader towards a post-industrial economy. The paper explores the politics of 'social democratic time' through two lenses: the increasing problematic notion of economic modernisation which was central to both Keynesian and New labour projects and what Esping Andersen calls the chrono-politics of social policy and the generational conflicts over issues such as housing, education, and care economies. He argues that 'chrono-politics' appears to be displacing the old political frontlines when it comes to welfare state support. Not only is the median voter ageing, but as the necessity of financial cuts mounts, the need for trade-offs mounts." It is this chrono-politics of social reproduction that will be central to social democracy in the next decade.

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### **Concurrent Session 8**

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Public Policy + Politics XIV

Regulatory Politics and Policy Implementation

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## **From theory to practice: using democratic functions.**

**Dr Nivek Thompson, Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney.**

Much of democratic theory focuses on different models of democracy, such as representative democracy, participatory democracy, direct democracy and deliberative democracy. Democratic theorist Mark Warren's problem based approach to democracy, and the associated democratic functions provides a way to assess the contribution that different institutional arrangements to achieving democracy (2017). Warren argues that

rather than focus on different models of democracy, asking the question: what problems must a political system solve to count as a democracy? He answers this question by identifying the key functions a democracy needs to solve to function democratically? He identifies three democratic functions: empowered inclusion, collective agenda-setting and will formation, and collective decision-making. Democratic functions supports an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of particular democratic institutions. Doing this allows a broader conception of how to deliver a democratic system than focusing on individual models and their associated institutions and practices. My doctoral research applied democratic functions to deliberative processes. I looked at numerous cases of deliberative mini-publics and considered whether they delivered democratic functions. I determined that democratic functions can be support the design of institutions to maximize their contribution to all democratic functions.

## **The political economy of regulating halal certification bodies in the Philippines.**

**Mr Brian Doce, Indo-Pacific Research Centre, Murdoch University.**

With the increasing relevance of the global halal industry, various efforts were launched to regulate halal certifying bodies across the globe since these actors serve as the third-party verification bodies to ensure that goods are compliant to Islamic religious precepts. In this regard, my research project explores the contested politics of regulating halal certifiers by using the Philippine experience since the late 1990s. I explain the failure of the Philippines to regulate halal certifiers under a state agency from a coalitional perspective rooted from the insights of critical political economy. Specifically, I argue that the neoliberalization of Philippine economy in the 1970s resulted to the emergence of three contesting coalitions advocating their respective regulatory projects legitimized by an ideology borne from the articulation of Islam and neoliberalism. In addition, the success of the coalition promoting a private regulatory project is rooted from its harnessing of several political resources particularly institutional and ideological to exercise structural power to gatekeep the continued operations of the Philippine halal export industry.

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<b>International Relations X</b>	<b>Towards a 'Post-Neoliberal' World? Strategy and Politics in an Age of Rupture</b>
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## **'Progressive' versus 'Populist' American Foreign Policy Thought: Toward Post-Neoliberal Grand Strategies?**

**Dr Michael Clarke, Deakin University.**

The past two decades have arguably seen an extended crisis of American power stimulated by the 'forever wars' of the 9/11 decade, the 2008 Global Financial Crisis (GFC) and the continued rise of China and increased Russian revanchism. One major effect of this crisis has been to generate debate in the United States about the utility of what had been since the end of the Cold War its default grand strategy of liberal hegemony/primacy. This grand strategy had been premised on inter-linked pillars of American military pre-eminence and forward military deployment, commitment to a global network of alliances, and the underwriting of a global liberal economic and institutional architecture. As such it arguably constituted an externalization of the neoliberal state embedded in domestic politics since the 1970s. This paper argues that the utility of each of the pillars of liberal hegemony/primacy for American security has been questioned by emerging currents of foreign policy thought that I define as 'progressive' and 'populist' approaches to redefining American grand strategy. Each of these approaches tackle the challenge of how best to attain security for the United States on the basis of different assumptions about the nature of international politics, what the domestic polity should look like, what the national interests of the United States are (or should be) and what are the most effective means of achieving them. Structured through a focus on these questions the paper provides an initial mapping of the core distinctions between 'progressive' and 'populist' foreign policy thought and applies them to two pressing issues of American grand strategy – the war in Ukraine and 'strategic competition' with China – to demonstrate how each approach would yield a post-neoliberal grand strategy for the United States.

## **Post-neoliberalism or neoliberalism 2.0?**

**Dr Adriano Tedde, Deakin University.**

Today's politics is the legacy of a silent revolution which began over fifty years ago, called 'neoliberalism.' The main immediate effect of the neoliberal revolution was the liberalisation of individual entrepreneurial freedoms, which secured the biggest production of wealth ever generated in history. The return of (timid)

direct state interventions in public life as an effect of the pandemic and the intensification of the US-China great power rivalry (so-called strategic competition), was greeted as the end of the neoliberal era. I argue that the end of that era is not in sight, as the neoliberal ideology still dominates today's international politics. Half a century of neoliberalism has built a global belief system that changed the way societies perceive fundamental concepts such as justice, freedom, and equality and the role of government. While every aspect of life is sacrificed to profit and market logics that supersede states' sovereignty and generate a class of cosmopolitan oligarchs, we witness the numbing down of our sense for democracy, solidarity, common good, and fraternity. As such, neoliberal thought is a breeding ground for authoritarian ideas and practices. Neoliberalism is apt to generate sinister effects of extreme political and economic inequality of Orwellian magnitude. Put simply, along with wealth, neoliberalisation causes "poverty, hunger, disease and despair" (David Harvey, 2005). And against the common assumption that neoliberalism encourages peaceful international relations, the major wars of the past twenty years, including the current one in Eastern Europe, demonstrate how this belief system is compatible with armed conflict. While the world is shifting towards a multipolar balance of power, neoliberalism is alive and well as the sole global ideology, adaptable to any political system, in times of both peace and war.

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## Comparative Politics VIII

## Interpretivism and Political Science in Australia

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### **Conceptualising a case, casing a concept? Two faces of Global Citizenship.**

**Dr April Biccum, Australian National University.**

This paper demonstrates the insights to be gained through a comparison of the use of a politically constitutive concept that delineates unlike but connected 'cases'. Global Citizenship is a concept with increasing currency. This paper compares two different but connected ways in which the concept is being put to work by two different groups to achieve political aims. One is an educational reform movement, the other is a corporate lobby group. Both claim a progressive political platform under the banner of Global Citizenship. Both are trying to entreat people to see themselves as Global Citizens and in so doing change the world through the 'transformation' of the self. The Global Citizen created by this education and elite led mobilisation will solve the world's problems through their knowledge of it and make the world 'a better place'. What methodological issues arise when these two 'cases' are compared?

### **Interpretive political science to understand policy-making in practice.**

**Dr Sarah Ball, University of Melbourne.**

Policy-making involves a complex, often hidden, process of negotiation and mediation between many different actors. This paper speaks to research on this process, drawing on key concepts from Bevir and Rhodes' interpretive political science (IPS) to bring to light how traditions shape this process of meaning-making within the public sector, and how this can explain why some interpretations of policy concepts gain traction over others. In this paper I will explore what IPS brings to research on policymaking and describe its use in my research on the government's adoption of behavioural insights in policy making. I explore three traditions, academic, bureaucratic and citizen-centred, which I argue played a role in shaping how behavioural public policy was understood. In sharing this experience, I aim to encourage future researchers to explore how IPS, and other forms of interpretive research, can lead to insightful and actionable research findings.

### **The (un)lucky country: The problem of the single Antipodean case study & what to do about It.**

**Jack Corbett, Monash University. John Boswell. Rod Rohdes.**

Single case studies, though once the foundation of political science, have become a high-risk strategy in the discipline. The risk is especially acute for scholars who do rich qualitative work about New Zealand and Australia. There is a double bind. On the one hand, the community studying Antipodean politics is not large enough or sufficiently well-defined to function as a self-sustaining epistemic community. On the other hand, Antipodean politics is not exotic or important enough to command the attention of the larger discipline. The danger lies in 'falling off the map'. We consider the problem this poses for academic careers, highlighting the inbuilt biases of international journals and ranking regimes. We then outline a menu of strategies for overcoming using the practices of comparative interpretive research. These practices include: creative case justification; co-publishing; strategic supplementation; meta-analysis; and cumulative analysis. We posit that a more clear-eyed acknowledgement of the problem can lead to the conscious embracing of these strategies and the potential they offer for immersive case research.



## **What's to know about politics? Positivism and tradition in Australian undergraduate program and course descriptions.**

**Mr William Howe, Australian National University. Nick Cheesman, Australian National University.**

How do Australian universities today communicate to potential and new students what constitutes fundamental knowledge in the study of politics? To address that question, this article discusses data generated on eight programs and 108 required or core undergraduate course descriptions in political science; international relations; and, politics, philosophy and economics across five Australian universities. The program descriptions, it observes, treat students as rational actors who want knowledge about politics for high-status employment. The fundamental knowledge that they need, the course descriptions suggest, is traditional and positivist. Few descriptions made reference to interpretive, feminist or critical methodologies; fewer, to indigenous perspectives. Calls to globalise the political sciences and decolonise the production of academic knowledge currently go unacknowledged in the program and course descriptions studied. For it to be otherwise, universities would need to address potential and new students as members of political communities, rather than power-seeking individualists.

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### **Environmental Politics III**

### **Global Energy Transitions and Climate Politics**

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## **Explaining variation in export credit agency energy lending: a longitudinal network approach.**

**Dr Nicholas Frank, Australian National University. Dr Maxfield Peterson, Australian National University.**

The achievement of planetary health equity is intimately tied to an equitable energy transition away from fossil fuels and towards renewable alternative forms of energy. International finance has a critical role to play in driving this transition. Export credit agencies (ECAs), which are publicly-controlled bilateral financial institutions, are a particularly important subclass of financial institutions given their outsized role in fossil fuel financing. The proliferation of ECA energy lending has not been equally distributed – some countries have heavily involved in ECA financial flows, either are creditor or debtor countries, while others are largely excluded. Despite the importance of ECAs, we know little about the political and economic determinants their investment decisions. In this article, we examine the structural determinants of ECA lending decisions for fossil fuel and renewable energy infrastructure using a dynamic longitudinal network-based approach. Our findings suggest that ECA investments are, in part, endogenously driven by path dependence, information asymmetries, economic externalities, and cross-network effects.

## **The political economy of loss and damage in Indonesia.**

**Dr Jacqueline Baker, Indo-Pacific Research Centre, Murdoch University. Dr Oliver Fritsch, Murdoch University. Dr Charan Bal, Binus University. Dr Luqman Aim, Gadjah Mada University.**

Adaptation and mitigation are central planks of global climate governance. However, with ratification of the UNFCCC Loss and Damage fund (LDF) at COP 2023, loss and damage is increasingly recognised as an important means by which communities will experience climate change. Much of the politics of loss and damage has been understood as a conflict between the AOSIS and the G77. Absent from this discussion is an analysis of the domestic politics of L&D governance. Developments at global level often empower some domestic actors, but may at the same time weaken the power base of others, for instance by modifying economic relations and political opportunity structure, de/legitimising programmatic positions and making more or less visible specific actors in the political arena. This is particularly relevant in countries already defined by high degrees of economic, political and social inequality such as Indonesia where global climate goals have been adopted in a selective and elitist fashion. This paper analyses actors and domains within the L&D regime complex with a focus on understanding how competing social forces might harness and mobilise the L&D complex, at different levels of governance, to advance or defend specific agendas and interests. The paper concludes by pointing to the strategic pathways communities in climate-crisis might utilise in order to advocate for restorative justice and future global support.

## **Russia's carbon neutrality: Linking climate change policy and economic interests.**

**Svetlana Khan, Yonsei University. Dr Annie Young Song, Yonsei University.**

In this study, we explore why Russia implemented domestic policy measures to tackle climate change in 2023. Although Russia has been regarded as a global climate laggard, it announced its ambitious intention

to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060 in 2021. While Russia signed a series of international environmental agreements, such as Paris Agreement and Kyoto Protocol, it introduced its national goal to achieve carbon neutrality in 2023. We trace the development of Russia's climate change policy from 2005 to 2023 using publicly available official documents. Through the lens of issue linkage, we argue that Russia considers implementing domestic climate policy as a strategy to pursue its national interest, particularly to mitigate negative economic effects during the Ukrainian war. Our finding has far-reaching implications for the climate change policy of emerging powers. First, the economic motivation of emerging powers can generate unexpected effects in other policy arenas (i.e., the environment). Second, other emerging powers (e.g., China) can potentially demonstrate similar policy actions as they prioritize economic development.

## **Understanding the drivers of debate, division and delay in Australia's renewable energy transition: Introducing a mixed-methods pipeline.**

**Ms Carly Lubicz-Zaorski, Queensland University of Technology.**

Climate change discussions in Australia have long been considered polarised, with studies showing links between conservatism and climate scepticism and highlighting the role of partisanship and elite cues, social identity, trust, risk perception – amongst other factors – in impacting voter appetite for climate action in Australia. This is problematic considering the united effort needed to meet emissions reduction targets, particularly given the social licence required for the extensive renewable energy transition. With the objective to understand the drivers of debate and their alliances in Australia's renewable energy transition, this paper introduces a novel mixed-methods pipeline. I focus on Australian Parliamentary Committee submissions and reports, Facebook posts and comments, and news content from key media actors. Using topic modelling, LLM-assisted discourse analysis, social network analysis and controversy mapping; I will map key actors (coalitions), stances, claims, and tactics over time and across these online communication and policy spaces. These results will be compared with longitudinal survey findings focused on the Australian public's attitudes towards climate change and the energy transition to consider impact. This methodological approach can be used to study discourses of delay and networked discursive alliances at scale across other mediated environmental conflicts, providing valuable insights to policymakers and communicators.

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**Australian Politics XII**

**Panel: Social Movements and Interest Groups**

## **How much advocacy is in group media statements? The search for public interest framing in the Australian print news.**

**Dr Anne Sofie Cornelius Nielsen, Australian National University. Max Groemping. Darren Halpin.**

Arguing that a given policy proposal is in the 'public interest' is assumed to be a powerful strategy for interest groups. This insight has encouraged a growing research program investigating the use of public interest policy framing by interest groups (see de Bruycker 2017), with an empirical focus on the news media. Recent work has developed ways to identify and categorize these policy frames, explored the conditions under which they are deployed in the news media, and even measured their impact on elite priorities. But findings are varied. Some find a lot of frame deployment in the news, others relatively little. There is also uncertainty about how frames groups prefer end up in the news. How proposals are framed in the media –especially with respect to the public interest - matters for groups, yet it is not clear how their advocacy efforts as opposed to journalistic routines shapes this news coverage (cf. Binderkrantz et al. 2023).

## **The income support ecosystem—who cares about people below the poverty line in Australia.**

**Mark Riboldi, UTS Business School, University of Technology Sydney.**

A notable policy intervention in Australia during COVID-19 was the Morrison government's temporary doubling of income support payments through the JobSeeker program. The significant increase in public funding for citizens without paid employment, as well as the relaxation of conditions people needed to meet to receive these payments, took many advocates by surprise, particularly considering the historic resistance from governments across the political spectrum to relax conditions or raise payment rates. Unfortunately, after 12 months, the emergency COVID payments ceased, and even though successive governments have made modest increases to the baseline JobSeeker payments, advocates and other civil society organisations (CSOs) in this space are back to pushing for reforms similar to those they were asking for pre-COVID. Using a typology of activities conducted by CSOs, this paper maps the ecosystem of organisations who are advocating for reform

to the way that Australian governments provide people with income support payments. The research considers organisational types, their primary activities they conduct, as well as the connections these organisations have with each other and the communities for which they are advocating. The results offer insights into the operations of policy networks and advocacy coalitions in this area, including potential barriers to reform.

### **Just a (grassroots) phase? A comparative study of social movement party campaigns in Australia and Scotland.**

**Phoebe Hayman, La Trobe University. Stephannie Luke.**

Despite the advent of modern campaigning methods, including the use of social media, the ground campaign remains a core aspect of political parties' election campaigns. The extent to which political parties use different campaigning methods varies, with some prioritising more data-driven forms of campaigning, while others maintain a strong focus on the ground campaign. We posit that one explanation for this variation could be the party type. While existing research frames the movement party as a transitional phase in party development, we argue that those parties that have started off as social movements retain inherent features of them, including communication and campaigning on the ground. This research compares the use of campaigning methods in Australia and Scotland by analysing the Scottish National Party, the Scottish Greens, and the Australian Green Party, over the period from 2010 (when the Australian Green Party got their first elected federal MP), to the end of April 2024 (when the SNP's leader resigned as First Minister). To analyse the use of campaigning methods we utilise the British Election Study and the Australian Election Study. We explore the form and scale of campaigning efforts, examining party activism on the ground. In doing so, this research has implications for the understanding of party development and political parties as organisations.

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Australian Politics XIII

Panel: Populism

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### **Transnational populist publics in Europe and the United States.**

**Mr Francesco Vittonetto, Griffith University.**

International cooperation between radical right populists has escalated over the last decade. Parties and leaders worldwide are increasingly establishing formal and informal connections with likeminded actors. Although there has been research on the roles of parties and movements in transnationalisation processes, we know little about the role of active publics – that is, those individuals who are highly aware of, and involved in, a particular problem, and who take communicative action, especially over social media. This paper therefore asks the following research question: how do online active publics of the populist radical right (PRR) contribute to its transnationalisation? It draws upon key concepts from the literature on transnational social movements to study the transnationalisation of the online publics' mobilisation. Building on the work of authors who have identified transnational political users among PRR parties' active publics, it seeks to understand what the role of the latter is in the construction of a shared political and communicative framework that goes beyond national borders. By combining social network analysis of social media data and interviews to party officials, the paper studies the transnational connections among four PRR parties' active publics: Rassemblement National in France, Fratelli d'Italia and Lega in Italy, and the Republican Party in the United States. The analysis sheds light on the transnational interactions among online publics, and the communicative strategies of PRR parties when performing their transnational outlook.

### **Beyond nativism: New mobilising issues on the transnational far-right.**

**Dr Sofia Ammassari, Griffith University.**

Transnational cooperation on the far-right is on the rise. From the United States to India, far-right parties and movements are increasingly adopting a discourse which juxtaposes a transnational 'us' with a transnational 'them'. While scholars have looked primarily at nativism, and in particular Islamophobia, as the glue that links these actors transnationally, this paper investigates 'new issues' on which the far-right is mobilising in the transnational arena. To do so, it asks: What issues are prominent in the far-right transnational discourse, and how has the salience of these issues changed over time? The empirical analysis draws on an original corpus of hundreds of speeches of far-right actors at transnational events which occurred between the early 2010s and 2023. Specifically, I examine trends in issue salience by using Structural Topic Models. The paper contributes to our knowledge of far-right politics by uncovering the extent to which the transnational far-right has moved beyond nativism and mobilises on 'new issues' like gender, climate change, and electoral integrity.

## **The rise of the intercontinental populist right.**

**Prof Duncan McDonnell, Griffith University.**

While cooperation between populist parties on the right has been increasing for at least a decade within Europe, a more recent phenomenon has been the rise of such cooperation across continents. This has largely been fuelled by growing links at youth wing and senior party levels between nationalist populists from Europe and the United States. However, we have also seen the participation at events of representatives from countries such as Australia, Brazil, India and Israel. Although cooperation within Europe has been studied by researchers, intercontinental cooperation has received less attention. This paper asks two questions: What does nationalist populist intercontinental cooperation consist of? Why do they cooperate? To answer them, it uses interviews with nationalist populist actors from youth wings, senior parties, and relevant associations, all of whom cooperate across continents. It finds that cooperation reflects not only the conviction that nationalist populists face transnational challenges requiring a transnational response, but also the belief that, by cooperating now, they are finally catching up with the globalist left which has (allegedly) long done so very effectively.

## **Populism, Exclusion, and the Working Class: The discursive and symbolic appeals of One Nation.**

**Ms Emily Foley, La Trobe University. Joshua Sunman, Flinders University.**

Represented in the senate by a former coal miner and fish shop owner, One Nation presents itself as a party for the true blue 'Aussie Battlers' and the 'Australian Worker'. It has been well documented that a core part of One Nation's public appeals involve exclusionary messaging which pits these 'True Australians' against migrants and political elites (See McSwiney & Sengul 2023; Sengul 2024). This paper, whilst acknowledging this context, seeks to explore the 'working class' elements of One Nation's appeals. There are global debates in scholarship about the extent to which traditional 'working class' voters are abandoning their traditional allegiance to social democratic parties in favour of the far right (Abou-Chadi et al. 2024). Whilst there is mixed support for this proposition in scholarship, it has been noted as a pervasive influence on some social democratic parties in Western Europe (See Bale et.al 2010; Salo & Rydgren 2021). This paper addresses the lack of coverage this idea has received in an Australian context in relation to One Nation. It investigates both Parliamentary discourse from One Nations' Senators combined with a broader analysis of the symbols and performative elements Hanson and Roberts use to evoke a connection with, and appeal to, the working class.

## **Whose will? The Selective Construction of 'The People' in Mainstreaming Far Right Ideologies.**

**Mr Lucas Scheel, The University of Adelaide.**

This article explores the mainstreaming of far-right immigration discourses by centrist and progressive political leaders. Despite recent electoral victories by so-called 'moderate' and 'anti-populist' forces, exclusionary policies traditionally associated with the far right have increasingly been adopted by mainstream parties. The analysis of elite discourse focusses on party leaders in the United Kingdom and Germany, which both saw large demonstrations against xenophobia, racism, and far right sentiments took place; but similarly, these were not utilised as opportunity to challenge far right immigration narratives by high-ranking politicians. The article examines how concepts like anti-populism and the construction of 'the people' can help us to unveil the dynamics behind these shifts. The main argument rests on the observation that these leaders often invoke a selective version of popular will to legitimise authoritarian policies while ignoring grassroots opposition movements. By framing their stance as a rational response to populism, mainstream politicians have not only failed to challenge far-right narratives but even reinforced them. The findings raise critical questions about the future of progressive politics, suggesting that the willingness to adopt far-right ideas undermines the possibility of meaningful counterhegemonic responses to authoritarian trends.

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Politics in Asia-Pacific/Indian Ocean Region II

Global Influence, Development, and  
Conflict Dynamics

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## **The Rohingya Tax: Global Order, Non-Governmental Organisations and an Economy of Human Extraction in Myanmar.**

**Mr Connor Clery, University of Melbourne. Ms Sophia Htwe, University of Melbourne.**

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are widely viewed as moral responders of the international community that address humanitarian and human rights crises emerging from civil conflicts. Liberal



institutionalists have long argued that, more than simply providing relief and protection, NGOs are the glue of global order, which deters large-scale interstate conflict and creates possibilities for co-operation. Drawing on a critical political economy approach to peace and conflict, and ethnographic research at the Thai–Myanmar border, we argue, NGOs are responsible for an ‘economy of human extraction’ and the commodification of displaced Rohingya lives. The international community’s financing of the relocation of Rohingya from Rakhine State into Thailand reveals how civil conflict in Myanmar is sustained by funds from the Global North. The redistribution of resources to military and paramilitary authorities in the Global South, that we call ‘the Rohingya tax’, incentivises the perpetuation of conflict in Myanmar. By recognising the relationship between perpetual conflict, NGOs, and the commodification of persecuted groups, this paper exposes the human cost in liberal imaginings of global order and the violence concomitant to statist border politics.

### **Beyond Statecraft: Uneven Mercantilism in Japanese infrastructure development policy in Asia.**

**Mr Aaron Magunna, University of Queensland, Perth USAsia Centre.**

India’s and Japan’s policy responses to China are frequently inconsistent and/or contradictory, with both states combining cooperative and competitive strategies. Why? The IR literature has primarily explained this as reflecting a form of ‘statecraft.’ Building on the state transformation approach, I conversely argue that incoherent policies reflect underlying tensions in India’s and Japan’s political economy. Focusing specifically on infrastructure and technology networks, I show that foreign policy decisions in New Delhi and Tokyo are decisively shaped by domestic state-capital relations. As states now depend on private capital for foreign policy implementation, policy becomes incoherent and ineffective when the state’s objectives, for instance regarding derisking, are not shared by the interests of domestic capital. When the interests between state institutions and private capital align, however, policy can become coherent and effective. Despite a much-discussed return to more statist forms of development, private capital may now become even more important than it was before.

### **How China Dams the Developing World: A Dataset to Understand Chinese Dams and Infrastructure Projects in the Global South.**

**Dr Ruosui Zhang, Australian National University.**

China has emerged as a prominent force in promoting infrastructure development across Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America by financing and constructing railways, seaports, power generation utilities, and telecommunication networks. Notably, in the dam sector, China now builds almost all dams in the developing world. Due to data constraints, prior quantitative studies have predominantly focused on China’s engagement in infrastructure finance. However, a critical question remains: Do China’s financial commitments for infrastructure development materialize into operational projects on the ground? Failing to address this question hampers our understanding of the extent to which China’s infrastructure endeavor expands its political and economic influence in the Global South. To address this issue, I contribute an original dataset on China-financed dam construction projects around the world from 2000 to 2020, including yearly data that tracks the implementation status of each dam throughout its entire life cycle. To facilitate its use, I analyze how the two major approaches to dam delivery – EPC+F and BOT – affect the likelihood of a dam being canceled, suspended, aborted, or stalled during its development. Using the matching technique to pair every BOT project with its nearest EPC+F neighbor, my analysis reveals that the project delivery method is more than just a technical detail.

### **‘Dirty Politics’ as Militarised Ideology in Pakistan.**

**Dr Heba Al Adawy, Australian National University.**

The idea that politics is a dirty affair is prevalent in Pakistan. In this paper, I draw upon 11 months of ethnographic research to theorise ‘dirty politics’ as a set of ideological practices in Pakistan. These practices, I contend, nurture an ideological distrust towards politics and render the military as an indeterminate object of critique. Rather than colonising one’s consciousness, they structure and imbricate existing (nationalist, neoliberal and colonial) anxieties in Pakistan. They erase contingency from the meaning of political activity and render violence as a timeless fact about politics. Finally, they operate through the ‘facticity’ of existing violence on the ground, rather than false consciousness of military virtue. By theorising dirty politics, I offer an interpretive account of militarized ideology from below. Scholars have primarily explained military dominance in Pakistan through structuralist, historical-institutionalist, and materialist approaches, in

which state ideology is either a function of geopolitical anxieties; a foundational problem of political Islam; a colonial legacy of indivisible sovereignty; or a desire for neoliberal 'good life.' Others have explained militarised legitimisation through glorified rituals of heroism and sacrifice. In contrast, dirty politics explains how ideology functions through acts of displacement, rather than affective attachments to military glory, with comparative potential in South Asia and beyond.

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## Open Track VI

## Round Table

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### **Ethics, Trust and Integrity in Democratic Politics: Public Discourse in Australia and Beyond.**

**Prof Anthony Langlois, Curtin Centre for Applied Ethics, Faculty of Business and Law, Curtin University. Dr Nardine Alnemr, Murdoch University. Prof Andrea Carson, La Trobe University. A/Prof Mandy Downing, Curtin. Dr Sian Troath, Australian National University. Prof John Phillimore, JCIPP, Curtin University. Dr Shannon Ford, Curtin University. Dr Rob Manwaring, Flinders University.**

Well-functioning democracies require the practice of key ethical and normative values, the exercise of trust, and the presence of integrity in individuals and institutions. A quick glance at the headlines suggests concern that significant deficits exist across all these domains in many contemporary democracies, including Australia. A catalogue of local concern could include: corporate scandals among the big consulting firms, whistle blower protections, government spending priorities (AUKUS, NDIS, Closing the Gap...), the impact of AI, corporate and regulatory greenwashing, and "fake news." A significant range of behaviours (individual and corporate) and policy settings are regularly called out as un-ethical, or as failures of trust and integrity. While unethical behaviour and failures of trust are perennial, our current conjunction (with climate change, advanced technologies, and the drums of war) brings a sense of urgency and heightened concern. What is the role of appeals to ethics, trust and integrity in this context? What do these appeals mean for institutions? How do such appeals relate to underlying political and social conflicts, and differing ideological interpretations of our time? Members of the panel will address these questions from a range of analytical backgrounds within Political Science, International Relations, Public Policy and Applied Ethics.