



## DIVERSIFYING THE GLOBAL DIALOGUE



Rachel Murphy (right) with Xiaoqian Kuang, Director of the Foreign Office, Jiangxi Academy of Social Science

Welcome to our winter 2017-18 issue of *SIAS News*. We have been enjoying the company and expertise of the five new professors who joined this past term, namely, Professor Wale Adebawo (Rhodes Chair in African Studies; see p5), Professor Christopher Gerry (Political Economy of Russia and Eurasia; p3), Professor Nayanika Mathur (Anthropology of South Asia; p7) Professor Miles Tendi (African Politics; p8) and Professor Yaacov Yadgar (Stanley Lewis Chair in Israeli Studies; p8).

Dr Kate Sullivan de Estrada was also appointed Associate Professor in the International Relations of South Asia to support the new expanded teaching programme, thereby leaving her previous departmental lectureship position. We have also been pleased to welcome the prestigious Visiting Astor Professor, Jeremy Adelman (Princeton University, Latin American Studies; p8) and the Leverhulme Distinguished Professor, Bárbaro Martínez-Ruiz (Cape Town, African Studies Centre).

We are thrilled that this academic year three winners of the highly competitive British Academy Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship Awards have started with us, with their topics covering gender and

family relations in Tibetan regions of China (Dr Hamsa Rajan; p5), robotics and cultural change in Japan (Dr Mateja Kovacic) and governance to combat organised crime in Latin America (Dr Carlos Solar). We now host thirteen early career researchers, supported by prestigious funders such as Leverhulme, Marie Curie, Newton, the Commonwealth Trust and the Sasakawa Foundation, with each of our regional centres represented. The rapid growth of our post-doctoral community is an important development we aim to encourage. In time we hope that our vibrant new doctoral programme will feed into this growing post-doctoral research community.

A further noteworthy point is that SIAS colleagues have become increasingly active in engaging in collaborative efforts with universities in Asia and Eastern Europe to build up the global field of area studies. Professor Matthew McCartney has given lectures in the South Asian Studies programme at Sichuan University, China, and is pursuing further links; Professor Philip Robins has spent the past three summers interacting with the History and Civilisation Faculty in Shanxi Normal University in Xi'an, China, on Turkish and Middle Eastern issues; Professor Robins also leads a Sasakawa funded post-doctoral research programme to build up contemporary Middle Eastern Studies in Japan and the UK; Professor Dan Healey has lectured at Shanghai's Fudan University; Professors Matthew McCartney and Rachel Murphy have presented at events at the Institute for the Study of Strategic Regions (ISSR) at Charles University in Prague, while Professors Jan Bičovský and Olga Lomová from ISSR previously visited SIAS. Meanwhile, Professors Matthew McCartney and Kate Sullivan de Estrada have continued to lead the South Asian Studies student exchange programme between the University of

Oxford and the University of Warsaw, and with the Lahore School of Economics in Pakistan.

This year the African Studies Centre received delegations from African Studies centres in China while the School has also had the pleasure of hosting the African Studies specialist Professor Haisen Zhang from the International University of Business and Economics, Beijing. SIAS has also hosted several delegations and visiting scholars from China working on topics about China. The School warmly welcomes such partners in building up and diversifying the global dialogue around the area studies.

We also welcome friends from further afield than Oxford to keep in touch with us and we encourage you to drop a line to your former teachers if you happen to be passing through Oxford.

With very best wishes to everyone for the New Year, on behalf of the School

### Rachel Murphy

*Professor of Chinese Development and Society  
Head of the School of Interdisciplinary Area Studies*



Professors Jan Bičovský and Olga Lomová of Charles University, Prague, were among the many recent visitors to SIAS



# 10 MINUTES WITH... LEIGH PAYNE

*Leigh Payne, Professor of Sociology and Latin America, is an expert on transitional justice, helping countries emerging from conflict or repression to address human rights violations*

## What's the main focus of your research?

Accountability for past and ongoing human rights atrocities. I'm particularly interested in transitional justice, a set of mechanisms designed to deal with human rights abuses committed by authoritarian regimes or in armed conflicts. These include trials, truth commissions, reparations, institutional reform, customary (or traditional) justice, and memory sites and museums. Some of us include amnesty processes as part of transitional justice since it involves acknowledging past abuses but deciding against trials for those crimes.

Our research finds that the use of transitional justice mechanisms is statistically significant and positive for improvements in human rights and democracy. We find that certain mechanisms – such as trials – are more likely to prove positive for those improvements than other mechanisms. The other mechanisms are not necessarily negative for human rights, but they have a null effect. Their value and impact may be in other areas, such as an official recognition of wrongdoing that restores the dignity of the victim and contributes to their right to truth and remedy.

## Who's interested in this topic?

Transitional justice is a growth industry. Nearly every country in the world transitioning from authoritarian rule and armed conflict adopts some form of transitional justice. Even countries that have not transitioned have used reparations and truth commissions to deal with past atrocity, such as in the cases of atrocities committed against First Nations in Canada and enslaved Africans, civil rights violence, and Japanese-descendent internment in the US.

The UN has a number of units, and a special rapporteur, dealing with transitional justice. There's a International Centre for Transitional Justice in New York. The InterAmerican Commission and Court of

Human Rights has promoted transitional justice mechanisms, as has the African Union. The International Criminal Court could be said to have been created out of the 1998 Rome Statute due to the interest and importance in dealing at the international level with past and ongoing atrocities.

And of course the victims of past and ongoing atrocities around the world are numerous; they have a great deal of interest in seeking truth, justice, reparations, and guarantees of non-repetition.

## How is your research being put to use?

- The UNDP (UN Development Programme)–World Bank commissioned us to carry out a study to examine how transitional justice (and other factors) contribute to sustainable peace.
- The Constitutional Court in Colombia received our *amicus curiae* brief that included our research findings on transitional justice mechanisms for its consideration of the country's post-conflict processes.
- In Argentina and Colombia we're working closely with non-governmental human rights organizations on public policies and strategic litigation related to the role of economic actors in the human rights atrocities in the past authoritarian regime and armed conflict. We are in the process of extending this work to Chile, Peru and South Africa.
- In Mexico we're working with FLACSO-Mexico and a group of non-governmental organizations and victims groups about the ongoing issue of disappearances in the country. We've helped build an Observatory of the Disappeared that seeks to establish patterns of disappearances and victims' access to remedy.
- In Brazil we're working with a Newton Fund grant and UNIFESP on disappearances and killing in the democratic era.
- In Chile we're working with Alberto Hurtado University on the archives

constructed by human rights organizations during the Pinochet dictatorship.

## What are you most proud of?

The most personally rewarding part of my research is the work with victims. To hear, as we did in Mexico, that the work we are carrying out contributes, at least in part, to restoring victims' dignity and advances the quest for truth, justice, remedy and guarantees of non-repetition, is deeply fulfilling.

I'm also proud that our research team has succeeded in receiving funding from a range of sources to carry out important work around the world, that we are training a new generation of human rights advocates, and that we are advancing the notion of action-research to address victims' rights to truth, justice, reparations – and guarantees of non-recurrence.

## How does being part of SIAS support your work?

SIAS's area studies orientation allows me to explore important problems of human rights using a range of disciplinary and methodological tools. While I can focus in depth on a regional (Latin American) approach, my research involves a global comparative approach to enrich understanding of important social problems and to seek solutions.





# RUSSIA'S HEALTHCARE CHALLENGES

*Economics is illuminating the consequences of policy choices*

The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 brought sweeping lifestyle changes across the region, with Russia in particular struggling to confront huge economic, social and healthcare challenges which were exacerbated by the recessions of 1998 and 2008. Assessing the economic implications of government health programmes and policies and predicting their effectiveness is a major area of research for Dr Christopher Gerry, SIAS's new Associate Professor of Russian and Eurasian Political Economy.

Under the Russian Constitution, healthcare is, in principle, free for everyone at the point of delivery. Healthcare provision is funded by social insurance, with both employers and employees paying contributions. Many employers provide additional private healthcare packages and around 5–10% of the population makes extra voluntary health insurance contributions. The ability to pay – often ‘under the counter’ – can help accelerate you through the system

Primary care is delivered through a combination of urban polyclinics and smaller rural health centres, where underpaid and often over-qualified ‘district physicians’ are meant to be the point of access for much of the Russian population. Despite progress in recent years, there are insufficient qualified GPs to act as gatekeepers, so a polyclinic receptionist often directs patients to an appropriate specialist; around a third of all first-contact patients are then referred on to other specialists. ‘Russian healthcare prioritises treatment over prevention,’ says Chris. ‘Our research indicates that specialised doctors are over-used and nurses under-used. Healthcare professionals are poorly paid and there’s a chronic shortage of

staff which recent reforms are failing to address adequately.’

And while reimbursement for drug treatment is given to patients admitted to public healthcare institutions, others must pay. State aid is available for those with specified illnesses or social needs, but overall only about 5% of the Russian population is thought to get free outpatient drug treatment. Chris and his colleagues have been researching the economic



*Russian healthcare prioritises treatment over prevention*

implications of proposals to introduce a voluntary drug insurance scheme. ‘Sadly, we think any such scheme would be likely to collapse financially,’ he says. ‘Our studies indicate that there would be an over-representation of high-risk unhealthy individuals opting into the scheme and that higher-income groups do not yet look favourably on redistribution of wealth to the poor – there simply isn’t the level of trust or social solidarity necessary.’

His interest in Russian healthcare was piqued by the emergence of an unprecedented crisis – falling life expectancy. ‘Fifty years ago Russia was sitting alongside Western Europe in terms of life expectancy, but while longevity has increased elsewhere, in Russia it has declined and stagnated, especially for men. Life expectancy for them is now around 64 – and ten years ago it was just 58.’

Research identified the leading killers

in the 1980s and 1990s as traffic and workplace accidents, suicide and murder. Alcohol-related fatalities were the single biggest killer in the 80s, superseded in the 90s by cardiovascular disease. A declining birthrate and increasing migration forced the Russian government to recognise that it was facing a demographic crisis – an estimated 20–40 million fewer people by 2050 – which President Putin acknowledged in his 2002 Presidential address.

A strong anti-alcohol campaign followed, with advertising bans and strictly enforced restrictions on where and when alcohol could be sold. Many street corner kiosks – previously the place to buy a beer (officially until 2011 a ‘soft drink’) on the way to work in the morning – failed to survive. ‘We can now see clear changes in the pattern of alcohol use, with strong drinks like vodka falling out of favour,’ comments Chris. ‘Whereas traditionally around 70% of men were hard drinkers, today drinking is at a very low level among young people, especially students.’

Similarly, anti-tobacco campaigns have proved successful in Russia’s main cities (although, as with alcohol, the population in rural areas is more resistant). There is a complete smoking ban in public places, tobacco is hidden from view in shops and packets carry graphic health warnings.

‘We’re working with focus groups to understand the determinants of smoking and other health behaviours in Russia,’ says Chris. ‘If the government is going to try to implement health insurance schemes or launch public health campaigns centred around diet or exercise, it needs to understand how such intervention will play out in the Russian context.’





# THE PRESIDENTIAL TOOLKIT

The first cross-regional study of how presidents form and manage coalition governments is to be published in book form on 1 March, following a pioneering collaboration between academics from three SIAS centres. *Coalitional Presidentialism in Comparative Perspective: Minority Presidents in Multiparty Systems* (Oxford University Press) has been written by Paul Chaisty, Associate Professor in Russian Government, Timothy Power, Director of the Brazilian Studies Programme and Professor of Latin American Politics, and Nic Cheeseman, formerly Associate Professor of African Politics at SIAS and now Professor of Democracy and International Development at the University of Birmingham.

The book is the result of the Coalitional Presidentialism Project (CPP), which the three ran between 2011 and 2014. 'Our collaboration had its origins in a SIAS research "awayday" at which everyone talked about what they were working on,' explains Tim Power. 'We discovered that three of us in three different units were all studying political systems in countries where presidents were using a variety of tactics to manage coalition governments.'

Most existing literature is based on understanding a basic two-party system, he adds, but in newer democracies there's

often even as many as thirty different parties, so the probability that an emerging president won't have a majority is high. He or she has to form a coalition and act more like a Prime Minister. In practice, multiparty presidentialism has proved surprisingly sustainable – so how is this happening?

With funding from the ESRC, the CPP sought to investigate and compare how minority presidents built multi-party coalitions to manage their legislative agenda in nine emerging democracies between 1979 and 2014: in Africa (Benin, Kenya, Malawi), Latin America (Brazil, Chile, Ecuador) and the former Soviet Union (Armenia, Russia, Ukraine). A £730,000 grant enabled the researchers to appoint Svitlana Chernykh as their postdoctoral research officer and employ nine researchers (one in each capital city) to carry out interviews, collect data and produce case studies.

'We found that minority presidents have certain tools they use to elicit support from other parties,' says Tim. 'We identified five: their own legislative power (for example, the power of veto or decrees they can issue alone); budgetary power (controlling spending); cabinet powers (satisfying other parties by giving them cabinet appointments); partisan powers (authority within their own party); and informal



Negotiations in the Ukrainian Parliament

powers such as the exchange of favours (perhaps sanctioning a new road bridge, or facilitating the ability to trade).'

He adds: 'The extent to which they use this presidential toolkit is shaped by local factors, but it's surprisingly comparable across the regions. We assume that the presidents are cost minimisers – they do the least they need to satisfy their partners – and that they choose the tool which seems the least costly to use. If a country is experiencing a crisis, they deploy the tools much more obviously.'

All the data collected, including more than 350 interview transcripts, have been archived and are available online. As well as providing high-level research training for the local researchers recruited, this pioneering project is leaving a legacy of information for future investigations in this important new field.



# THE NATURE OF JAPANESE STUDIES

How does research on Japan inform ecological practice that is pertinent beyond the framework of Area Studies, and vice versa? If we were to place nature at the core of our studies of human activities, what new kinds of interdisciplinarity and knowledge would be possible, and how would we reorganize our academic disciplines?

Last October, an international workshop – 'Ecologies of Knowledge and Practice: Japanese Studies and the Environmental Humanities' – brought together 16 postgraduates and early career researchers within the Humanities for an interdisciplinary discussion with guidance from seven established scholars and

practitioners. The workshop was organised by DPhil candidate Eiko Honda and Dr Alice Freeman of the Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies.

In today's world of planetary-scale environmental crises, intellectuals are increasingly urged to cultivate a symbiosis between knowledge and practice and to engage with each other beyond disciplinary divides. Historically, Japan has claimed a uniquely harmonious relationship with nature. Yet this cultural rhetoric of ecology has faced challenges for its apparent discordance with the reality of environmental destruction in Japan.

The field of Japanese Studies outside Japan has also been criticised: on the one

hand, for exoticising Japan as a unique 'other,' yet conversely for forcing Japan into a hegemonic model of universal (Western) modernity. While such ideological controversies are ongoing, the study of Japan in the 21st century is becoming increasingly and inescapably intertwined with the rise of global environmental problems such as climate change, nuclear catastrophe, deforestation and threats to marine life. The challenges of ecocriticism follow hot on the heels of the politics of still-prevailing Orientalism.

In the rapidly changing academic and atmospheric climates of the 21st century, the career paths of current graduates and early career researchers are likely to follow

## FEAR IN THE FAMILY

### *Domestic violence and trauma in the Tibetan community*

**I**'ve been fascinated by Tibet since I first read about it when I was 13 years old,' says Dr Hamsa Rajan, recently appointed as a departmental lecturer in Contemporary Chinese Studies. Her subsequent immersion in life in the Tibetan communities of Qinghai province in China is now allowing her to investigate relationships in Tibetan families, with particular regard to domestic violence and the intergenerational transmission of trauma.

Hamsa began living in China in 2003 and worked for six years in the country, first in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, and later in various towns in Qinghai, home to several officially designated 'Tibetan autonomous' prefectures. During that time she worked for two non-profit organisations – one supporting orphans and disabled children, and the other improving public health knowledge and infrastructure in remote Tibetan villages and nomadic settlements – as well as using her near-fluent Chinese and Tibetan to teach, translate and interpret.

A return to academic life saw her



Hamsa has lived and worked in China among Tibetan families

embarking on an Oxford DPhil in Social Policy, which she completed in 2017. 'I wanted to investigate the very widespread problem of domestic violence and abuse, typically from husband to wife, which seems to be frequently accepted across many sectors of society and levels of education in the Tibetan community,' she explains. 'It's fairly common for women to live in their husband's family home when they marry and become part of that household economic unit. In these cases, economic dependence can make it difficult for a woman to leave. There is also a great deal of social stigma attached to divorce, which adds an extra barrier to leaving an abusive partner.'

Family life is a strong core at the heart of Tibetan society in the areas where Hamsa has lived and conducted research. 'Young people usually show deference and respect for their parents and grandparents. Many

wouldn't dream of criticising their parents in the way we sometimes do in the West,' says Hamsa. 'It is common to consider an individual as almost inseparable from his or her family, and thus similar in character to other family members.' There is also often a strong sense of family history. 'Some of the older people have led very traumatic lives, living through food insecurity or communal violence. We know from studies elsewhere that people traumatised by extreme social upheavals generally live with it for years afterwards. Their stress levels, heightened anxieties and the way they respond to uncertainties or threats can all affect their interpersonal relationships. I want to take my research forward by investigating how in the Tibetan community this trauma may have been transmitted into the lives and attitudes of their children and grandchildren.'



## CHINESE POLITICS TODAY

very different trajectories to those of their seniors. The workshop opened a dialogue among this emerging generation of Japan scholars about how the production of knowledge of Japan may be linked to new forms of engagement with contemporary ecological concerns. Concurrently, it aspired to transcend disciplinary and national intellectual boundaries within Area Studies, whilst simultaneously promoting integration between Area Studies and 'mainstream' Euro-American discourse on planetary concerns.

**Eiko Honda**

*DPhil candidate*



**H**ow is the Chinese political system actually being governed today?

Published in October 2017, *To Govern China: Evolving Practices of Power* (Cambridge University Press) moves beyond the simple Western assessments based on 'authoritarian resilience' or 'democratic transition' to bring together the deeper thoughts of an international team



of specialists on contemporary Chinese politics. The book, which is edited by SIAS's Vivienne Shue, Emeritus Professor

of Contemporary Chinese Studies, and Associate Professor of Chinese Politics Patricia M Thornton, portrays a more fluid and evolving system in which a range of governance technologies are intertwined to create flexible and adaptive responses to the processes of political change. By discussing techniques, logics and the ideas of both the central state and local officials, *To Govern China* challenges current thinking and provides an authoritative insight into the repertoire of power practices operating in China today.



# SIGNS OF THE TIMES

## Renaming South African streets is a desirable but controversial move

The legacies of apartheid and the challenges of creating an inclusive multiracial society are still very much in evidence in South Africa today. The ongoing processes of social mobilisation of interests and power – particularly as manifested through ethnicity, nationalism, racialisation, culture and political power – are a major research interest for Wale Adebawale, SIAS's Rhodes Professor of Race Relations and Director of the African Studies Centre.

'One of the most visible signs of social and political reconfiguration is toponymy – place naming,' says Wale. 'I've been studying street renaming in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban and it's clear there is an enormous investment in the symbolic value of renaming as a potential instrument of de-racialisation.'

But while most of the black population favour 'restorative justice' through the renaming of streets from



apartheid-era names to older or newer names – for example, in recognition of ANC activists – a critical section of the minority white population claims that, if unchecked, this process would lead to the erasure of an important part of the nation's past.

'Examining toponymic practices points to the tensions inherent in the social order as represented by the power to name places and the ability of others – both legal and extra-legal – to challenge the power of renaming,' explains Wale. 'Negotiating the visibility of history in the construction of a shareable past and a common future whilst naming or renaming streets is a crucial process in affirming and contesting what it means to be a post-apartheid multiracial society.'

The tension between traditional and modern ideas is also a theme of Wale's other main area of research – the role of the Nigerian Press in nationalist and ethnic politics. 'Since the 1990s I've been building a private archive of 20th century newspaper articles and looking at the intellectual leadership of newspaper proprietors and journalists in attempting to reconcile the principles of the European Enlightenment with emerging African colonial modernity,' says Wale. 'There's



Street signs in Durban show changing preferences, while (left) Nigerian newspapers debated nationalist politics

a whole spectrum of views, from those who think colonialism is the antithesis of the Enlightenment to others who believe absolutely that the colonial enterprise is the very representation of the Enlightenment. But it seems clear to me that, on balance, the newspaper press played a critical role in representing the interests of indigenous peoples and ensuring that traditional institutions and practices retained a role as modernisation evolved.'



# CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES ON EAST ASIA

As China increases its economic and political footprint in Asia, how is India responding, and how do Japan and China view India's own increasing influence in the region? These and other questions formed the focus of an East Asia Dialogue on 15 November, jointly hosted by Area Studies and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

A visiting delegation of leading academics and influential thinkers from India who work on East Asia and China's regional and international relations joined relevant Area Studies academics working on India (Dr Kate Sullivan de Estrada),

China (Dr Paul Irwin Crookes), and Japan (Professor Ian Neary) in St Antony's College.

The group discussed key dynamics of the political and economic relationships between India and China, Japan and South East Asia. They exchanged views on India's contribution to the geopolitical balance in Asia through its recently re-energised economic and security relations with ASEAN and Japan; Japan's growing engagement with India, particularly through investment but also in view of incremental changes to Japan's security policy; and what China's 're-emergence' under the leadership of President Xi means

for major powers in the region, especially since China's methods of dealing with perceived 'encirclement' in the region vary on a country-by-country basis.

The event showcased the strengths of inter-Area conversations, as well as the School's commitment to engaging with local experts, who in this case generously shared very contemporary perspectives stemming from their proximity to decision-makers in New Delhi.

**Kate Sullivan de Estrada**  
*Associate Professor in the International Relations of South Asia*





# CLIMBING THE PAPER MOUNTAIN

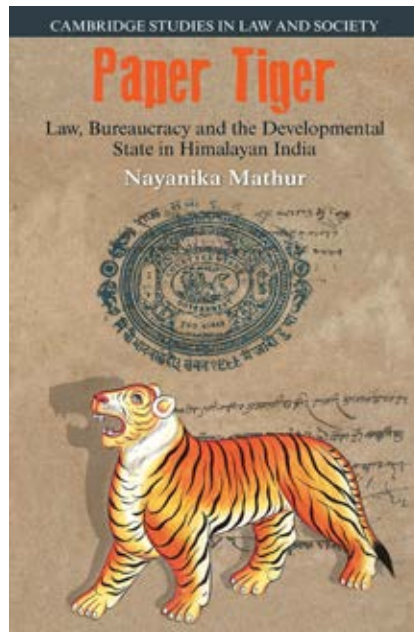
## Government schemes to reduce poverty in India are consistently failing

India is today one of the world's fastest growing economies, yet many of its 1.3bn people live in poverty, particularly in rural areas. In recent years the Indian government has introduced a wide range of anti-poverty measures, intended, for example, to increase employment, enhance welfare benefits and improve transparency and accountability in government bureaucracy. The reasons why these measures are simply not working are being investigated by Dr Nayanika Mathur, Associate Professor in the Anthropology of South Asia.

In 2006 Nayanika decided to work as a participant observer with street-level bureaucrats for 18 months in various government offices in a Himalayan province located on India's border with Nepal and China, Uttarakhand. This region had been deemed a high-priority target for the implementation of anti-poverty welfare schemes. Nayanika studied one particular piece of anti-poverty legislation in great detail by following its execution by the local state. She found the programme to be entirely unworkable, not due to corruption or inefficiency but due to the design and functioning of Indian bureaucracy.

'At the core of the problem is the way bureaucracy functions in India,' she says. 'I saw a world where bureaucracy was obsessed with process and pieces of paper. Government officials read and write letters, produce, file and circulate documents, and hold meetings. They were enmeshed in that bureaucratic culture to the exclusion of anything else. They were conscious of the situation and of their limitations but saw themselves as cogs in the wheel, powerless to change things. They knew that their thoroughness in producing papers and files was how their success was measured and couldn't break out of the cycle.'

She adds: 'It's absolutely endemic in India to blame administrative problems on the bureaucrats being slow and stupid.



They are generally regarded with disdain and as being prone to laziness and corruption. But it's simply not true that this is what's causing the problems and this sneering attitude is seriously impeding the work needed to take things forward.'

Nayanika went on to write *Paper Tiger: Law, Bureaucracy and the Developmental State in Himalayan India* (2016; Cambridge University Press), in which she makes a case



*Politicians are in thrall to the belief that technology will fix all the ills of India"*

for re-thinking what the developmental Indian state is and how it works. The book, which won the American Ethnographical Society's Sharon Stephens Prize for a first book in anthropology, reveals the unintended consequences of reforms and demonstrates the myriad ways the state presents itself through the laws it intends to implement.

But if pushing paper is causing such big problems, what happens if we get rid of the paper? Nayanika's current research is examining how the introduction of new technologies, particularly biometric-based IDs, is (or isn't) changing things. 'The current government is making a big push to do everything online and is very

keen to use biometrics as the basic tool of identification,' she says. 'But although the internet is spreading rapidly and nearly everyone has a smart phone – albeit a cheap local model – the infrastructure to support the technology just isn't there yet, especially in rural India.'

She cites many instances of IT equipment being delivered to villages where no-one knows how to fix it if it goes wrong, or at times there's no electricity. Biometric proof of identity is now becoming necessary for many purposes such as getting married, banking, healthcare and hospital treatment, and applying for welfare benefits such as subsidised food – but often the machines aren't yet in place or have stopped working. 'It's causing havoc, with people unable to get what they're entitled to, and creating an extremely dangerous situation,' says Nayanika. 'These problems are widespread, but the view of the politicians and government ministries in Delhi seems to be that it's just "teething problems". They have no understanding of how difficult the situation is and are in thrall to "techno-utopianism" – the belief that technology will fix all the ills of India.'

Once again, she says, local people feel powerless and unable to change the situation. 'Things on the ground are the most chaotic I've ever seen it due to the ramrodding through of biometric IDs. There's a real need to understand how new government initiatives actually play out and how they are received, so we can find a workable way forward.'



An obsession with process and paper



# ASTOR LECTURE HITS GLOBAL HIGH POINT

What motivates sympathy for people in distress in far-away places? Global integration since the 19th century has produced economic and affective ties between distant places and peoples but what is the nature of the relationship between self-interest and compassion and between capitalism and humanitarianism?

These and other similarly intriguing questions were tackled by Jeremy Adelman (*right*), Henry Charles Lea Professor of History and Director of the Global History Lab at Princeton University, who visited Oxford in October under an Astor visiting lectureship, hosted by SIAS and the Latin American Centre.

Professor Adelman, who took his doctorate in Modern History at Oxford in 1989, is now a leading exponent of global history. The highlight of his one-week visit was the Astor Lecture 'Is there a Global History of Humanitarianism?' and he also



met with students for a Q&A session to discuss his critical essay 'What is Global History Now?' Other activities included a meeting with members of the Re-Imagining Democracy project, focusing on Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1770s to 1870s, and another with selected colleagues and students to discuss the Global History of Capitalism project. He also gave the Latin American History Seminar: 'Where is Latin American History Going?'

'All of Jeremy's presentations were excellent and much appreciated,' says Professor Eduardo Posada-Carbó of the Latin American Centre, who organised the visit. 'His presence here really emphasised the significance of interdisciplinarity for the understanding of global affairs – what SIAS is all about. We were pleased to welcome colleagues from many other departments of the University and also other universities. Jeremy's energetic advice and feedback were extremely valuable.'

And for Professor Adelman? 'It was wonderful to return to Oxford and share ideas with old and new friends – and to explore potential research and teaching collaborations,' he says. 'Oxford is one of the world's most cosmopolitan universities, and given the commitment to area and global studies, it was a thrilling week.'



## ISRAEL STUDIES

SIAS and the Department of Politics and International Relations are delighted to welcome Yaacov Yadgar as Stanley Lewis Professor of Israel Studies and SIAS's new Tutor for Doctoral Students.

Yaacov's research revolves around issues of Jewish identity, religion, politics, and secularism, focusing on placing Israel in theoretical and epistemological frameworks that bear obvious relevance beyond the specific case history. His scholarship is multidisciplinary, encompassing Jewish, political, cultural, religious, and media studies. He concentrates on Israeli socio-politics (especially Israeli Judaism) and on the epistemological, historical, and political dimensions of Israeli identity.

His current research deals with what is commonly known as 'religion and politics' in Israel, challenging a misconceived epistemological framework in which these topics are commonly discussed, and analysing the ways in which the theopolitics of the Israeli nation-state negotiates with Jewish traditions that preceded Political-Zionism and the state.



He also studies the ways in which this issue shapes the broader politics of the Middle East.



## AFRICAN POLITICS

The African Studies Centre is very pleased to welcome Miles Tendi as Associate Professor in African Politics, in a joint appointment with the Department of Politics and International Relations. Miles joins us from the Oxford Department of International Development.

His most recent research focuses on the life history of the Zimbabwean liberation guerrilla-politician Solomon Mujuru, the subject of his forthcoming book. As an exiled leading commander in Zimbabwe's ZANU PF liberation army from 1971 to 1980, Mujuru interacted with a range of key African liberation struggle actors, in the process impacting on regional liberation politics and warfare to create politics that crossed national borders. The book investigates these transnational linkages and provides insight via original interviews into Mujuru's role as the power behind Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe.

Miles's broader interests include: intellectuals, society and the state; civil-military relations; gender and politics; the existence and uses of 'evil' in politics; intelligence studies; and Southern African politics (especially Botswana, Zimbabwe, Madagascar and Swaziland).



For more information about any of these stories or about area studies at the University of Oxford, please contact SIAS's Head of Administration

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