

BUILDING MALAYSIA-IRELAND TIES

By GARETH A RICHARDS, *AEI Senior Research Fellow*

Ireland is a country transformed. Until thirty years ago it was seen as an economic backwater on the margins of Europe and riven by intractable political problems. Today, Ireland is one of the world's wealthiest countries and its economy has grown nearly five-fold since 1973. It boasts one of the world's highest levels of GDP *per capita*, about 20 percent above the European average while 30 years ago it was 35 percent poorer than the average. As a result, Ireland's economic growth model—based heavily on inward investment and technological upgrading—has been hailed as an example of how to do development right.

The emergence of the so-called “Celtic Tiger” has had other beneficial consequences. One of the most important has been the opening up of educational opportunities. As the Embassy of Ireland in Malaysia puts it: “Ireland has become an increasingly popular destination for overseas students where they receive a quality education in a very

friendly environment. They in turn enrich the educational experience of Irish students and bring an international dimension to campuses”.

Malaysians have been quick to take advantage of these educational opportunities. Ireland now has well over 1,000 Malaysian students attending its Universities and Colleges and the numbers are growing by the year. In recognition of this the Malaysia-Ireland Alumni Association was founded in Malaysia in 2003. To date, most students have enrolled in world-renowned medical training courses though Ireland has plans to diversify the range of programmes that are targeted at Malaysian applicants.

In recognition of the close ties between the two countries, the Irish Minister of State for Education, Síle de Valera, recently paid a formal visit to Malaysia. Síle de Valera comes from a famed political dynasty. She is the granddaughter of Fianna Fáil founder, first Taoiseach

Professor Dato' Dr Shaharil Talib welcoming HE Daniel Mulhall, Ambassador to Malaysia, and (left) Ms Síle de Valera, Irish Minister of State for Education



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* Apologies for the late publication of this quarter's issue due to an editorial delay

[Prime Minister] and third President of Ireland, Eamon de Valera. He is best known as a leader of Ireland's struggle for independence from Britain, and is generally regarded as the most influential person in the history of twentieth century Ireland.

Ms de Valera herself has had an outstanding career. Originally trained as a teacher and a psychologist, she was first elected to Dáil Éireann [Irish Parliament] in 1977 for the Dublin Mid-County constituency when she was the youngest member of the Dáil. She held her seat until the 1981 General Election. In 1979 she was elected to the European Parliament for a five-year term. In 1987 she was elected TD for Clare and has been re-elected at every election since then.

In addition to Minister de Valera's formal meetings with officials from Malaysia's Ministry of Education and other educational institutions, the Asia-Europe Institute hosted a briefing meeting with her on behalf of the University of Malaya on 29 June 2005. The Minister was welcomed by the Vice-Chancellor of the University, Dato' Prof Dr Hashim Yaacob, while the Irish delegation



Dato' Professor Dr Hashim Yaacob, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Malaya (right), exchanging gifts with Ms Sile de Valera, Irish Minister of State for Education

was led by the Ambassador to Malaysia, H.E. Daniel Mulhall. Above all, this meeting was seen by both sides as an opportunity to explore new forms of collaboration between Malaysia and Ireland in the field of higher education.

The meeting was framed by two major contributions. On behalf of the University of Malaya, the Executive Director of the Asia-Europe Institute, Dato' Prof Dr Shaharil Talib, offered an overview of the Institute as an exemplar of educational collaboration under the auspices of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) process. He highlighted the demand of the recent ASEM Foreign Ministers Meeting, held in Kildare, Ireland, in April 2004, "to reinforce higher education cooperation and exchanges" as part of ASEM's commitment to the dialogue of cultures and civilisations.

This mandate has been translated into a working reality through the Institute's efforts in two complementary areas. First, there is the commitment to high quality international postgraduate teaching programmes, working in partnership with Asian and European universities to assure the highest levels of quality, innovation and flexibility. Second, there are the practical outputs of interdisciplinary research in the social sciences that has special interest for the countries of Asia and Europe. The highlights of this research include such diverse fields of inquiry as integrated approaches to lifelong learning, the historical national accounts of Malaysia, issues of cultural and religious identity, strategic and legal studies, and national competitiveness and innovation.

Prof Shaharil went on to signal exciting new developments in the Institute's mandate including the efforts to advance the idea of an Asia-Europe University. The task now, he said, was to uncover ways to widen the commitment to the AEU so that it receives the full endorsement of all the ASEM member states. In this regard, Ireland has been approached to co-sponsor a major international workshop next year under the theme of "Learning Through Partnership: From AEI to AEU".

In her own response, Minister de Valera picked up on many of the themes alluded to in the opening presentation. Drawing on her previous experience as Minister for the

Arts she highlighted the important of cultural dialogue as a means for deepening mutual understanding. She also went on to note a number of priorities in Ireland's education policy that should resonate with Malaysia's own strategy of internationalisation. These included issues of lifelong learning, educational inclusion and access, and international accreditation in higher education. In addition, the Minister touched on the proposal to launch an "Institute of Asian Affairs" in Dublin—and opened up the possibility of links and exchanges with the Asia-Europe Institute.

The meeting with Minister de Valera was marked by a palpable sense of warmth and purpose. There clearly exist many opportunities for deepening collaboration

between Malaysian and Irish higher educational institutions across a whole range of policy innovations and this cordial meeting of minds was an important step in identifying the challenges that lie ahead. Though geographically half a world apart, what is much more striking are the commonalities between Malaysia and Ireland at this juncture. Both countries have experienced a remarkable period of economic growth and social change. Both countries have an enviable reputation for hospitality. And both countries are determined to make their mark on the global stage. Closer educational ties will surely allow both tigers to fulfil their ambitions in innovative and creative ways that bode well for Asia-Europe relations. ■

New Synergies in Higher Education: UTAR Meets AEI

By GARETH A RICHARDS, *AEI Senior Research Fellow*



Visitors from UTAR with AEI staff

For many years now the idea of competition has been presented as the magic bullet for higher education institutions operating in an increasingly globalised world. Universities are told that they have to come to terms with the rigours of the market. They contend over scarce public resources. They struggle to win the battle for students and research funds. The orthodox dogmas proclaim that the bracing winds of competition will enhance efficiency and reward the "winners" so that the best and the brightest will prevail.

But this is surely only part of the story and, arguably, competition of this sort is a very flawed strategy by which

to advance sustainable provision of higher education. Indeed there is something profoundly dispiriting when these competitive nostrums are applied to the world of university education.

Historically, higher education has always been held to serve purposes other than those of mere market efficiency. Research, the bedrock of any University, depends above all on collaboration and teamwork, the combined efforts of scholars engaged in discovery and rigorous debate. Similarly, excellence in teaching relies on the long-term accumulation of knowledge and its dissemination through innovative and stimulating pedagogical practices. Above



Senior Management Teams from AEI (foreground), and UTAR convened a pathbreaking meeting

all, Universities help to shape a wider sense of community and social solidarity that cannot be reduced to the mere imperatives of the market.

It was in this spirit of collaboration and cooperation that representatives of the senior management teams from the Asia-Europe Institute, University of Malaya, and Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) convened a pathbreaking meeting on 27 June 2005. The idea was first mooted by the dynamic President of UTAR, Tan Sri Datuk Dr Ng Lay Swee, who expressed a desire to explore complementarities between the two institutions. This is an opportune moment to put into motion some real synergy through shared ideas and cooperative projects that would be mutually beneficial. As such, it is a fascinating experiment in collaboration over competition.

The Executive Director of the AEI, Dato' Prof Dr Shaharil Talib, welcomed the initiative as a vehicle to advance a number of fields in which the Institute has gained recognised expertise. These include the internationalisation of educational provision with a special emphasis on regional dynamics; the question of how to widen access to higher education; methods of improving the quality of teaching; and, means of enhancing research in the relatively new field of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) which is one of the Institute's core research pillars.

The discussions were frank and far-reaching. In the end, five major areas of potential collaboration were identified.

- *The deployment of AEI's Visiting Professors to UTAR.* Over the past three years AEI's International Masters programmes have made use of Visiting Professors, all of whom have global reputations in their specialized fields. This ensures that students have the benefit of learning from leading scholars who bring with them outstanding pedagogical practice and research insights. It was agreed that Visiting Professors could be contracted to conduct outreach activities at UTAR such as seminars and training sessions for faculty members.
- *Co-opting of UTAR faculty onto AEI's Advisory Committee.* The AEI has long advocated an ethos

of collaborative links with other higher education institutions in Malaysia. It was agreed that one means of formalising this arrangement would be to co-opt senior members of UTAR's faculty onto the Advisory Committee that deals with both research and teaching/learning.

- *UTAR Graduates.* UTAR has quickly established a good reputation for the quality of its graduates, especially in fields such as information and communication technology (ICT) and accountancy and management. It was agreed that UTAR's Alumni Office would highlight the opportunities for its students to apply for the International Masters programmes taught by the AEI. In addition, UTAR graduates would be considered for Research Assistant posts as they became available at AEI.
- *Curriculum Development, Design and Delivery.* It is widely recognised that the AEI has accumulated a deep well of experience in the development, design and delivery of interdisciplinary programmes of study in the social sciences. It was agreed that this expertise could be put to good use in the widening and deepening of the courses offered by UTAR. In particular, areas such as globalisation studies and specialist modules in SMEs taught by Visiting Professors would add value to UTAR's existing provision. These new areas of the curriculum could be most effectively delivered through UTAR's Centre for Extension Education.
- *Consultancy.* Less formally, AEI and UTAR could act as consultants on a whole range of inputs to enhance their respective teaching/learning provision. It was agreed to explore areas such as links with international universities, the identification of industry-based placements, the promotion of business start-ups, the consideration of the legal and intellectual property implications of business ideas, and the sharing of ICT facilities.

It is true that all higher education institutions face challenging times. The opening of a new dialogue between the AEI and UTAR represents a triumph of rather old-fashioned virtues of cooperation in the name of a greater public good: the delivery of world class education to students; and the chance to explore research opportunities through collaboration between scholars, research hubs, policymakers, and other relevant stakeholders. The first steps have been taken. A great deal of goodwill and new thinking already exists. The real test will be to translate the good intentions that emerge from dialogue into the practical synergy that delivers results. Both the AEI and UTAR are looking forward to meeting that challenge. ■

AEI–The Centre for Entrepreneurship

By M. ASOKKUMAR, *AEI Senior Research Assistant*

As a significant contributor of jobs and innovations, entrepreneurship is vital to the stability and growth of the Malaysian economy. While entrepreneurship is widely accepted as the driver for future growth, there are many barriers in the path to establish this culture in Malaysian society. In an increasingly competitive global economy Malaysia's long term prosperity is threatened if this faculty is not opened, explored, built and nurtured. There are frontiers to introduce and establish this culture to compliment the already existing initiatives and the Asia-Europe Institute (AEI) is well-equipped to expand this opportunity for everyone.

The power of entrepreneurship to exert a positive impact on the economy is a view that is receiving wide subscription throughout the world. Small businesses, it is suggested, stimulate employment and diversification of the economy as they move individuals from being job seekers to becoming job creators, and ease the pressure of the traditional employment avenues. In the context of an economy that is crying out for diversification, a healthy attitude towards job creation and the cultivation of an entrepreneurial spirit is one that ought to be encouraged. It was this thinking that influenced the establishment of *AEI's Centre for Entrepreneurship*.

VISION OF THE CENTRE

The vision of the Centre is to become a leader in inculcating entrepreneurship in Malaysia.

MISSION OF THE CENTRE

The mission of the centre is to increase the viability of SMEs in Malaysia through the application of sound management and organizational practices, and to foster a competitive, innovative private sector across the country.

PHILOSOPHY

The Centre subscribes to the time-tested approach of guidance, education and empowerment. The client must have a strong personal commitment to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities and implement solutions to issues and concerns. The Institute's staff subscribe to the highest standards of professional conduct. All information will remain confidential.

SERVICES OFFERED BY THE CENTRE

The services provided by the Centre and their expansion will be driven by the demands of the entrepreneurial community. The proposed repertoire includes:

- Entrepreneurial Training Programme

- Small Business Development Training Programme
- Collegiate Entrepreneurship
- Business Plan Evaluation and Preparation
- Youth Entrepreneurial Development Programme
- Small Business Research & Development
- Academic Entrepreneurship Module
- Mentoring Programme and
- Technology and E-Commerce Programme

The Centre's training programmes are divided into two components, the Entrepreneurial Training Programme and the Small Business Development Programme. The Entrepreneurial Training Programme comprises two modules: (a) Entrepreneurial Awareness and (b) Introduction to Entrepreneurship. The Small Business Development Programme is comprised of three modules: (a) How to Organize and Start a Business Venture (b) How to Set-up and Run Your Business and (c) Growing Your Business.

ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING PROGRAMME:

- **Entrepreneurial Awareness** is a presentation designed to increase the awareness of entrepreneurship and simultaneously promote the Centre's other programmes. The presentation will be made to groups of 20 persons or more and is free of charge.
- **Introduction to Entrepreneurship** is a one-day seminar designed for participants to assess their entrepreneurial readiness and their willingness to become entrepreneurs.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TRAINING PROGRAMME:

- **How To Organize And Start Your Own Business Venture I** is a three-day programme designed to show participants how to identify and develop a business idea, identify entrepreneurial opportunities, understand the necessary skills needed to develop a business.
- **How To Organize And Start Your Business Venture II** is a three-day programme designed to encourage participants to commit to one business idea, begin the business plan process and to understand how to set up and start a business.
- **How To Set Up And Run Your Business** is a one-day seminar designed to be interactive; participants will be able to effectively complete

licence application, understand the necessary steps involved in obtaining a business licence.

- **Growing Your Business** is a three-day programme designed to assist participants with communicating effectively in the business world, provide a quality product/service, track cash flow, understand the importance of strategic planning, and to address other relevant and current concerns affecting the growth of small business.

COLLEGIATE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

AEI plays a central role in transferring knowledge, ideas, and cultural values from one generation to the next. This entrepreneurship programme is now building on the need to refocus our university programmes to achieve greater impact. By providing grants over an extended period to selected students/entrepreneurs who have the best plans for bringing entrepreneurship out of their business schools and making it a campus wide experience, many more students will be exposed to an entrepreneurship curriculum.

BUSINESS PLAN PREPARATION AND EVALUATION

The Centre's approach is one of guidance in preparation of business plans. Clients are expected to work consistently on their own business plan in order to articulate clearly their vision and nature of business. The Centre will evaluate the plans to determine the feasibility and practicality of the plans.

YOUTH ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Centre will develop and encourage creative initiatives for enhancing entrepreneurship awareness, readiness and application experiences for children, youth and college students. Through strategic alliance and partnership, we will develop and promote initiatives both in schools and outside the traditional education system to promote entrepreneurial thinking and behaviour for young people and their educational delivery agents and institutions. We believe development is a shared responsibility that occurs as young people assume increasingly complex roles and responsibilities through involvement in relations and activities in school and communities.

EXECUTIVE EDUCATION

The Executive Education Programme is designed to provide training for top and middle managers in various businesses and organizations in order to enhance productivity.

SMALL BUSINESS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The Centre continuously builds information to assist with the growth and development of entrepreneurship in

Malaysia. The Centre will work closely with our Research Department to provide the necessary research needed to assist small businesses in Malaysia.

ACADEMIC ENTREPRENEURIAL MODULE

The Centre will design an "Entrepreneurial Track" to be included in the Management Option. Students will be assigned to the Centre to provide business counselling, and project development support to small and medium-sized business. It is envisioned that the medium to long term "Entrepreneurial Track" will be extended to other faculties within the University, in particular the faculties of science and technology. Here students from all disciplines will be taught how to sharpen their entrepreneurial skills with a view to starting their own business enterprises on leaving the University.

MENTORING PROGRAMME

The Mentoring Programme is the most innovative service that is available to new and existing businesses. Mentors are selected from a pool of successful entrepreneurs, executives and professionals, representing nearly all business disciplines, provide practical advice to the existing business persons on a variety of issues.

TECHNOLOGY AND E-COMMERCE PROGRAMME

The Centre will establish in the long term a Technology Incubator to enhance E-commerce Training and to improve the delivery of the Mentoring Programme.

MEMBERSHIP AT THE CENTRE

The Centre's counselling approach is one of guidance, education and empowerment. Anyone requesting assistance must have a strong personal commitment to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities and implement solutions to issues and concerns. Membership at the Centre is at a minimal cost.

WEBSITE AND NEWSLETTER

AEI's website will electronically present regular updates on seminars, dialogues, conferences and other news stories, in an effort to improve awareness of the value of entrepreneurship.

Interested persons and budding entrepreneurs may contact the Centre for Entrepreneurship at the following address:

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AN INSIGHT: EDUCATION AND TRAINING SERVICES IN MALAYSIA

By FARIDAH SALIM, *AEI Research Assistant*

Education has always been considered a national instrument of change to achieve national objectives. The government has been the major supplier of education services until the mid 1990s. With the amendment to the national education service policy, private schools, colleges and universities have mushroomed. This is to meet the limited supply of places at public tertiary education level which has brought about an excess in demand for such placement, along with meeting the demand for educated and trained manpower that would contribute to the achievement of the development objectives of the nation and turn Malaysia into a regional education hub.

Education comprises systemic activities designed to meet learning needs through communication means and learning. Education enables initial entry to the working world as well as continuing education throughout a person's life. Education also can be classified and defined as higher education and other education. Higher education incorporates post secondary education that leads to university degrees through the academic route. Other education refers to the kind of educational process that replaces initial education in schools, colleges or universities with the purpose of pursuing technical or professional qualifications to further one's abilities and enrich knowledge.

To meet the needs of the rapid pace of changing technology, economic development, globalization and k-economy, there is a need for the labour force to acquire pertinent knowledge and competitiveness. In order to fulfill this need, Malaysia, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, has developed a comprehensive education system from pre-school education to higher education. Higher education comes under several categories, namely Public Institutions of Higher Education (IPTA), Private Institutions of Higher Education (IPTS), and educational programmes that come under other ministries such as Ministry of Human Resources for vocational training, Ministry of Youth and Sports for various skills training in line with youth development, Ministry of Entrepreneur Development & Co-Operatives which handles courses and workshops for entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs and Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) for various commercial and skills training programmes targeted for Bumiputera youths in the field of business, industry, high technology and entrepreneurship itself.

The number of students enrolled in IPTA has increased from 170,794 in 2000 to 222,300 in 2003 and forecasted to be 244,257 by 2005 (*Source: Mid-term Review of*

8th Malaysia Plan). As for the IPTS, 212,034 enrolled in 2000, 294,600 in 2002 and projected to expand by 315,000 in 2005 (*Source: Social Statistics Bulletin Malaysia 2003, Table 3.27 (MoE)*). The phenomenon arises from an increase in the number of IPTS, the growing numbers in the age group of between 17 to 24 and the influx of international students. However, given the same timeframe (2000–2005) the ratio of academic staff to students remains stable at 1:15 to 1:18 generally. Similarly, the intake for public training institutions increased from 27,686 in 2000 to 39,556 in 2003 and is projected to increase to 55,809 in 2005 (*Source: Mid-term Review of 8th Malaysia Plan*).

The government has been instrumental in the education sector by allocating a large budget given under various Malaysia plans for development and operating expenditures. Under the 8th Malaysia Plan period, the budget allocated for the education and training sub-sector was RM40.2 billion, which doubled that of 7th Malaysia Plan which accounted for RM20.2 billion (*Source: Mid-term Review of 8th Malaysia Plan and 8th Malaysia Plan*).

The growth in personal incomes, population, increased awareness of lifelong learning to sustain employability, the demand for internationally recognized qualifications, socio-cultural advantages of a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, as well as political and economy stability has made the education industry grow. It is expected that the tertiary student population would increase to 1.6 million by 2010 from the estimated 0.6 million in 2005.

The Malaysian government has initiated major educational reforms by amending existing legislation and formulating new ones in order for a systematic development of the education and training industry through implementation of franchising programs with overseas universities and more flexible immigration procedures for foreign students. Joint promotional efforts between government bodies at international level, especially in ASEAN, Asian and Middle Eastern countries, more aggressive promotional activities as well as tax incentives, tax exemptions, special capital allowance and other IT incentives further enhance the escalation of education and training activities.

However, a few factors could hinder this initiative, namely, the inadequate competent managerial and administrative personnel produced by the education system plus the imbalance of science versus arts student ratio in secondary schools (35:65) as opposed to the

national target (60:40). Secondly, despite the effort by the Government to establish training institutes, the education sub-sector is also facing shortage of technical trainers in key areas. Unrecognized foreign qualifications for entry into the local education institutions and different study periods of different school systems also pose a problem. There is a lack of proper accreditation systems and degrees from most universities in the ASEAN region do not get international recognition. Finally, disallowing credit transfer due to different education systems between countries also contributes to the problems.

Greater trade liberalization has brought Malaysia into greater competitiveness in education services among ASEAN countries. This gives Malaysia a head start in attracting foreign investors to invest. Besides Malaysia's social-cultural advantage, a reputable and English-based education system grants a competitive edge. Thorough enforcement and a comprehensive quality assurance system has motivated education providers to establish their presence. Liberalization also promotes efficient allocation and use of resources, encourages the inflow of foreign capital, attract keener competition which results in

higher efficiency and productivity, promotes acquisition of latest technology, technology transfer and enhances domestic human capital development. Malaysian higher education providers, in return, would benefit from the inflow of expert educators from around the world.

Malaysia's future strategic direction plans aim to enforce a constructive legislative business environment where education and training services can be carried out efficiently and capable of responding to changes quickly. Mechanisms, institutions and processes that represent the foundations for developing existing education and training providers would be in place. Education and training providers would leverage Malaysia's position as a major global ICT and multimedia hub to further promote eLearning and distance education. A competitive cost is imposed for quality and qualifications framework assures quality education and training.

Finally, a reputable education and training system, through innovative teaching and learning, would enable Malaysia to compete globally with a *Malaysian brand* of education and training services as well as contribute directly to economic growth. ■

Cultural Programmes

By GARETH A RICHARDS, AEI Senior Research Fellow

World Cinema at AEI

There is something in the air. Over the last year the regular weekly screenings of outstanding films have transformed the AEI into a premier venue for world cinema in Kuala Lumpur. And it has to be said that this is a golden age for cinema if, for a moment, we avert our gaze from the formulaic and entirely predictable movies churned out by the gigantic studios of Hollywood or Bollywood.

For the last decade or so, there has been a true efflorescence of filmmaking in unlikely places. In Asia, the well-established cinema cultures of China, Korea and Iran have gone from strength to strength as younger directors make their distinctive mark. They have been joined by new voices from Thailand, Afghanistan and beyond. In Latin America, bold statements have come from the "new cinema" of Mexico, Brazil and Argentina reflecting on a continent in transition. In Africa, talented filmmakers overcome tremendous obstacles of production and distribution to present images of lives that are barely known, still less understood, by the outside world. And in Central and Eastern Europe there has been a genuine artistic renaissance after years of uncertainty and gloom.

Of course filmmakers beyond the mainstream—including the flourishing independent sector—still struggle against the odds. The film industry remains overwhelmingly conservative and conformist—aesthetically obsolete and temperamentally boring. And box office returns are still the bottom line for producers, distributors and investors concerned only with profits. It goes without saying that hundred-million dollar budgets

do not permit experimentation or encourage examinations of issues that affect most peoples lives. Yet the globalised film industry seems to sweep all before it. It is for that reason that cynics too readily dismiss the possibility for another cinema. They end up listlessly proclaiming that the public gets what it wants and deserves what it gets; there is no alternative to the juggernaut.

And yet there is something real in the air, something transformative. It reflects an intense dissatisfaction with the status quo. It speaks of a new dissidence to confront conformity. And it struggles to give birth to a more authentic cinema against the prevailing wisdom of the market. The whisper becomes a chant; a frame becomes a film.

What the filmmakers of the new world cinema need, more than anything, is exposure: spaces in which their films can be exhibited and in which audiences can respond—looking and learning—in their own unique way. And that is precisely the spirit in which AEI's film screenings should be understood. Our auditorium, transformed into a cinema once in a while, is a special space, unencumbered by the imperatives of the box

office or artistic conformity. It is a place for sharing an exciting and sometimes disturbing visual aesthetic. It is a place of invention and exuberance. It is a place for reflection and argument.

Since April, the AEI has joined forces with Institut Alam dan Tamadun (ATMA), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, in programming the regular film screenings. This collaboration has undoubtedly helped to reach out to an even wider audience in the Klang Valley so that the screenings now regularly play to a full house. More substantively, the expertise and wide network of contacts of ATMA's Dr Wan Zawawi Ibrahim have allowed us to introduce an exciting new feature to the film schedule. This is the "Directors in Conversation" series which showcases the very best of Malaysian independent cinema as well as providing an opportunity for audiences to talk directly with some of the most talented filmmakers in the country.

As in previous months, the programming policy has continued to present the best films in thematic mini-seasons. This practice allows audiences to explore intriguing parallels and differences in cinematic treatments of common motifs. The April theme was "New Voices of Asian Cinema", a chance to view some of the exciting work of a younger generation of filmmakers. Bong Joon-ho's *Memories of Murder* is a stylish and masterfully directed thriller based on Korea's most notorious real-life serial killer case. It made for an interesting contrast with the two films from Andrew Lau and Alan Mak, *Internal Affairs* and *Infernal Affairs II*, which have been credited with the kickstarting the artistic revival of Hong Kong cinema. Both use a state-of-the-art visual style with subdued story to explore themes of deep-seated emotional and psychological tension. Apichatpong Weerasethakul's *Topical Malady* from Thailand is much more experimental both in form and style. This winner of the Prix du Jury at the Cannes Film Festival is a work of outstanding originality and adventure though, it should be said, the audience response to it was very mixed.

The screenings in May turned on the theme of "Overcoming Adversity", offering a revealing insight into how filmmakers attempt to portray the struggles of ordinary people to deal with extraordinary circumstances. The month opened with the award-winning *Hotel Rwanda* directed by Terry George. This tells the harrowing, unforgettable and deeply moving story of the efforts of one man to save the lives of over a thousand helpless refugees by granting them shelter in the hotel he manages. This was followed by *I Am David*, which follows a twelve



From *Memories of Murder*



From *Tropical Malady*



From *Hotel Rwanda*



From *Nobody Knows*



From *The Return*



From *Central Station*

year-old boy as he boldly escapes from an East European prison camp and makes an incredible personal journey to freedom. By contrast with these two epic stories, Hirokazu Kore-eda's *Nobody Knows* is a touching domestic drama of four Japanese children engulfed by a cruel abandonment, who do their best to survive in an urban jungle. The month ended with Ken Loach's acclaimed *Carla's Song*, which tells the story of the relationship between George, a free spirited Scottish bus driver and Carla, a Nicaraguan refugee who is adrift in Glasgow. On the surface it is an unusual love story but it is also deeply revealing of the traumas of war and exile.

The June programme, entitled "Family Affairs", turned its attention to a theme that has seen a marked revival in recent independent cinema—the fortunes of the family, and especially the relations between parents and children. It began with Chen Kaige's latest film, *Together*, a coming-of-age tale of a violin prodigy and his relationship with his ambitious father. The emotional heart of the film lies in the difficult choices that the child makes, between an extraordinary talent and a simple love. The mood of Andrei Zvyagintsev's *The Return* is altogether much darker. Here the father-son relationship is framed by absence rather than presence and Zvyagintsev offers a brooding study of the dysfunctional and, ultimately, tragic dynamics of a family torn apart. If the first two films focus mainly of father-son relations, then Walter Salles's *Central Station* offers a profoundly moving story about the triumph of the human spirit as a lonely and cynical older woman agrees to help a young boy to search for the father he's never known. Set against an epic backdrop of majestic landscapes, their journey becomes a quest for their own identities. Rounding off the month's theme Nanni Moretti presents an emotive and poignant study of a family touched by loss in *The Son's Room*. The film is a powerful journey through loss, acceptance and the experience of healing. ■

Forthcoming Highlights from AEI'S International Film Screenings:

- Krzysztof Kieslowski's THREE COLOURS Trilogy
- Walter Salles's MOTORCYCLE DIARIES
- Tian Zhuangzhuang's SPRINGTIME IN A SMALL TOWN

"DIRECTORS IN CONVERSATION" SERIES

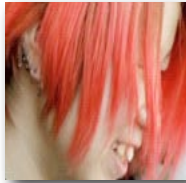
By GARETH A RICHARDS, AEI Senior Research Fellow

In April 2005, the Cultural Programme of the Asia-Europe Institute joined forces with Institut Alam dan Tamadun Melayu (Institute of the Malay World and Civilization), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, to launch an exciting new initiative: "Directors In Conversation". The idea is to provide a monthly showcase of the very best of Malaysian independent filmmaking. Each of the invited directors introduced their film and engaged in a conversation with ATMA's Dr Wan Zawawi Ibrahim, the well-known anthropologist and cultural critic. The series has also given audiences an opportunity to meet and ask questions about the work of these outstanding directors. The three sessions to date in the "Directors In Conversation" series have played to large and enthusiastic audiences. They reflect the commitment of AEI and ATMA to promoting this vital strand of Malaysia's art scene.

Saturday 30 April

GLASS ENCLOSURE: TOKYO INVISIBLE

Malaysia/Japan 2004, 103 mins. [Director's Cut], Dir. Mohd Naguib Razak



Director Naguib Razak spent time in Tokyo on a fellowship only to discover himself isolated and profoundly alone in a wondrous, yet oddly harsh city where intimacy is ephemeral at best. Glass Enclosure is a poetic, honest visual essay on this experience. It uses the motif of a glass enclosure within which a writer finds himself trapped. Everything and everyone is within plain view of his world, but untouchable, inaccessible.

Saturday 28 May

TIMELESS TEMIAR

Malaya 1956, 44 mins., Dir. Md. Zain Hussain



GUARDIANS OF THE FOREST

Malaysia 2000, 52 mins., Dir. Alan D'Cruz

A special presentation of two very different films on Malaysia's indigenous peoples. Shot in northern Perak, Timeless Temiar is a

typical example of colonial ethnography in its representation of the Other. By contrast, Guardians of the Forest is a unique document of the Orang Asli in their struggle to retain their ancient ways of life in a rapidly developing nation. The film chronicles the heartbreaking realities they face and unveils chilling truths that echo the plight of indigenous peoples all over the world.

Saturday 25 June

SEPET

Malaysia 2004, 104 mins., Dir. Yasmin Ahmad



19 year-old Ah Loong is in charge of a stall selling pirated VCDs. Contrary to what you might expect someone of his social standing to be, Ah Loong is an incurable romantic with an unlikely hobby – he loves to read and write poetry. Quite content to carry on being the Romeo of the slums, Ah Loong's life takes a sudden turn one day when a 16 year-old Malay schoolgirl arrives at his stall in search of Chinese films. The result is a beautiful relationship that is fraught with the dangers and contradictions of the society the young couple inhabit.

Winner of Grand Prix du Jury, Creteil Women's International Film Festival 2005

YASMIN AHMAD'S *SEPET*: ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE

Hassan Abd Muthalib

All you need is love, love. Love is all you need,
Love is all you need THE BEATLES

'Who are we? What makes us the way we are? What is it to be a person; to love and hate, to think and feel? Why do we live together? What makes us happy? Do we have any power over the forces shaping us to become who we want to be?' These are the elements that Yasmin Ahmad explores in *SEPET*. Under the guise of a love story, she makes comments on her society the way that Charlie Chaplin and P Ramlee used to do through their films. Chaplin and P Ramlee were social critics - and creative at the same time. And that's difficult to do.

The world itself never lies; it is only lied about by humans who represent (or misrepresent), it. Yasmin once said that she is very concerned about her country – that film stories are written from imagination and

not experience. When the subject is strong, simplicity is the only way to treat it. *SEPET* is a simple story but with repeated viewings, it begins to reveal hidden layers of meaning. Whether we agree with her or not, Yasmin forces us to be involved in the storytelling. She wants us to feel - and the only way to feel is to look deep within our hearts. We need to ask ourselves: From where did bias, bigotry, prejudice, and racism come from? Like the little kids in *SEPET*, we were all children once, never knowing the difference between being a Malay, Indian or Chinese. The adults introduced all that to us. Even in that so-called great land where all men are (supposedly) equal and having equal opportunity, people are not safe. In the words of Spike Lee: Racism is interwoven into our fabric. When you talk about America, you're talking about baseball, apple pie and racism. Without batting an eyelid, the world is being lied about.

The choice of the point-of-view from which a story is told is arguably the most important single decision that the filmmaker has to make, for it fundamentally affects the way viewers will respond, emotionally and morally, to the fictional characters and their

(continued on p20)



Asia-Europe Institute
University of Malaya



Institut Alam dan Tamadun Melayu
UNIVERSITI KEBANGSAAN MALAYSIA



**Wednesday 6 July
8:30 pm**

**BALZAC AND THE
LITTLE CHINESE
SEAMSTRESS**
France / China 2002
110 mins.
Dir. Dai Sijie

Based on director Dai Sijie autobiographical novel, this film is a beguiling love story set during the 1970s Cultural Revolution. Luo and Ma, two bourgeois young men are sent to a remote, culturally barren mountain village for re-education. Discovering a hidden cache of books by Western writers, the pair transmit their love of art and literature to the knowledge hungry local seamstress, with whom they promptly both fall in love. Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress is an evocative paen to a time long past and to the realization that change can bring freedom.

Nominated for Golden Globe, Best Foreign Language Film 2003



**Wednesday 13 July
8:30 pm**

VERA DRAKE
United Kingdom
2004
125 mins.
Dir. Mike Leigh

The latest film from Mike Leigh portrays an extraordinary portrait of a selfless woman who is completely devoted to, and loved by, her working class family. She spends her days dotting on them and caring for her sick neighbour and elderly mother. However, she also secretly visits women and helps them induce miscarriages for unwanted pregnancies. While the practice itself was illegal in 1950s England, Vera sees herself as simply helping women in need, and always does so with a smile and kind words. When she is finally found out by the authorities, Vera's world and family life rapidly unravel.

Winner of Golden Lion, Venice Film Festival 2004



**Wednesday 20 July
8:30 pm**

CHIHWASEON
Korea 2002
117 mins.
Dir. Im Kwon-taek

South Korea, the 1850s. Jang Seung-ub, a young orphan, is saved by painting master Kim Byung-moon from a beating. A grateful Jang draws him a picture; Kim immediately recognises the boy's potential and becomes his mentor. Jang soon runs away. Some years later Jang renews his apprenticeship. Sent to study at the home of a Chinese nobleman, he falls for his master's sister So-woon. She is attracted to him, but their relationship has no future because of Jang's lowly class status. Chihwaseon is a fascinating, consummately crafted and ultimately moving portrait of a man as an artist.

Winner of Best Director, Cannes Film Festival 2002



**Wednesday 27 July
8:30 pm**

**THREE COLOURS:
BLUE**
France / Poland 1993
100 mins.
Dir. Krzysztof
Kieslowski

The Three Colours trilogy by Krzysztof Kieslowski is generally regarded as a major triumph of European cinema. An examination of how the ideals of the French Revolution – liberty, equality and fraternity – have meaning in modern life, the trilogy combines visual elegance, narrative complexity and virtuoso performances to extraordinary effect. Blue—representing liberty—concerns how a composer deals with the death of her husband and child.

The two remaining films in the trilogy—White and Red—will be screened in August and September.

Winner of Golden Lion, Venice Film Festival 1993



**Saturday 30 July
3:30 pm**

THE GRAVEL ROAD
Malaysia 2004
92 mins.
Dir. Deepak Kumaran
Menon

Deepak Kumaran Menon's assured debut is based on his mother's teenage experiences of growing up on a rubber plantation in the 1960s and becomes a rubric of personal struggle against tradition and, on a wider plane, for the assertion of (Tamil) identity. Diligent daughter and student Shanta is close to realizing her dream to attend university. But her rural family has other priorities for her—plantation work, marriage and subordination of her ambition to the plans for her brothers. Beneath its quiet surface lies a determined, precise and unswerving vision.

The director, Deepak Kumaran Menon, will be in conversation with the anthropologist and cultural critic, Dr Wan Zawawi Ibrahim (ATMA-UKM) after the screening.



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Intellectual Exchange

My Internship at the ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta

By TIBOR KOVACS (IMSME)

Setting the scene

Having been rejected by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Malaysia and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) in Thailand as well, I found myself in a very desperate situation. It was just one week before my internship was supposed to commence and I still had not found any international or regional organizations that would willingly take me on board and accept my application. But, thanks to the Asia-Europe Institute's widespread network of connections, within a week I was sitting on a plane heading for Jakarta, Indonesia to do my internship at the Infrastructure Unit of the ASEAN Secretariat. I have to admit that I was very disappointed at that moment and expected a boring two-month period passing by in slow motion.

Establishing myself at the ASEAN Secretariat

...and how mistaken I was. On my first day at the Secretariat, I was indeed surprised by the efficiency of those little bureaucratic clogs turning around in that large machine that runs the entire ASEAN Secretariat. Of course, there were many administrative procedures involved: starting from submitting copies of all my degrees and transcripts to filling out applications for an official email address and access to confidential reports, requests for computers and stationary and a zillion more.

Finally, my day was hardly over I was already sitting in a huge office equipped with a state of the art computer, a printer, a small conference room and an area with sofas and coffee tables just to hang around. I was a hundred per cent sure that there was a mistake involved here: I am just an intern from the Asia-Europe Institute and not some high profile investment guru from corporate America. I even had my fingerprints taken: it serves for the digital registration I have to go through every morning when I arrive and at the evening when I leave the building.

I was introduced to everybody in my department right away on my first day, except for the director who was on a mission in Cambodia. I had an extensive talk with my supervisor, Mr. Bernard TAI, who seemed to be an extremely helpful man and very knowledgeable indeed on ASEAN transport related issues. He was not into beating around the bush either: he gave me my first assignment after our first introductory discussion.

So that is how my new adventure started at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, Indonesia.



Tibor with the ASEAN Secretary-General

Mastering ASEAN Transport and Mineral Cooperation...and a lot more

... and it took no time for the pace to seriously pick up and finding myself loaded with reports to read, project papers to write, speeches to draft and meetings to attend. I should not deny that I love it: it presents a true intellectual challenge for my brain, a great opportunity to fill up my tummy with the delicious food served at the reunions and a delight for my eyes as I look at the very talented female workforce of the ASEAN Secretariat.

I have been assigned to various projects since I am here: I prepared the agenda for the forthcoming round of the ASEAN Transport Cooperation Meetings (Air / Land / Maritime Transport Working Group Meeting and Senior Transport Officials Meeting), I drafted speeches for several conferences, such as the 10th Annual Asia Oil and Gas Conference, the ASEAN Energy Business Forum and the 27th ASEAN Railway Managers Conference, and I attended several meetings concerning an ASEAN project on enhancing ASEAN minerals trade and investment. I have even had the chance to contribute to an article on maritime and inter-modal transport market integration in ASEAN, which will be published in the shortcoming future.

Through my colleagues, I have also learned a lot about the non-professional aspects of life at the ASEAN Secretariat and in Jakarta. I know now how to make the best use of the conference room (thanks to the delivery service of Pizza Hut), how to make sure that I get the biggest portion of food at the canteen, which bars not to go to and which ones to frequent. All in all: I am enjoying my internship at the ASEAN Secretariat and would highly recommend this place to any of our future students who would be interested in being exposed to the working dynamics of a regional institution. ■

Tibor Kovacs is a student in the International Masters in Small and Medium Enterprises and underwent his two months' internship at the ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta.

News from Italy

By ROHAN F VIGNESWARER (*IMSME*)



Leaving Kuala Lumpur at about midnight on 2nd May 2005, I was destined for a country that I knew little about save for the material on industrial districts and the challenges of ‘gobble-lisation’ surrounding the small and medium sized businesses in Italy, a role model apparently for developing countries to emulate.

Certainly all that did not matter if one was going to the country to learn by way of observation and getting assimilated into its culture. What mattered was for one to be reasonably apt at communicating in the local language as well as having a fair bit of historical insight on the particular country one was visiting. In about three weeks prior to my departure, I started to read up on as much material as I could and most importantly, having an open mind and the “I’ll give the Devil hell if I have to!” mindset.

In the linguistics department, this skill was honed via a free downloadable “Before You Know It –Learn Italian” programme on the internet. This is apart from the much needed copy of the Michelin Green Guide and a pocket-sized dictionary, were just about the few items I equipped myself for purposes of getting to know Italy and for basic communication purposes.

Italy, with its capital, Rome was the seat of the ancient Roman Empire, the land in which the sovereign enclave of Vatican City is situated in, the land of pizza, spaghetti, mandolins, the place where the first pair of blue jeans was ever produced (Genes in the city of Genoa), Neapolitan ice-cream and the land which gave the world Sophia Loren, Isabella Rossellini, Susan Sarandon, Monica Bellucci and Al Pacino, to just name a few Hollywood stars.

Italians had also discovered America for the Americans (Columbus), taught poetry (Dante), statesmanship and the ruses of trade to the English, military art to the Germans (‘Kaiser’, by the way, comes from the word Caesar) who felt they could not legitimately rule unless crowned by the Pope himself in Saint Peters and in the name of the ghostly empire that had disappeared centuries before.

Italy has a commendable list of geniuses in the field of arts, politics and in the sciences in the likes of Michelangelo, Raphael, Verdi, Vivaldi, Dante Alighieri, Machiavelli, Lorenzo de ‘balance of power’ Medici, Galileo Galilei (although later persecuted for his ideas), Leonardo ‘the Guru of gurus’ da Vinci and, of late, a nuclear physicist by the name of Antonio Zichichi.

The importance of having thinking and innovative minds rather than having unproductive minds emphasising the glories of reverse engineering should now come to bear some light on its importance as being instrumental towards being any nation’s generator of growth. Yes,

knowledge and the processes associated with the ability to think out of the box, just like all those advertising gurus, certainly conforms to the Malaysian governments efforts in promoting and subsidising the usage of ICT and for the creation of the k-economy.

On a more sober note, touch down at Leonardo da Vinci, Fiumicino was approximately at about 5.40am on Tuesday, 3rd May 2005. I was to get a train to Stazione Termini (the central station) at which point I was to take the Metro (underground train) to Tiburtina, that is in the heart of Rome. Having taken the train to Stazione Termini and thereafter the Metro, to Tiburtina, at which point I was to meet up with Prof Carlo Pietrobelli. The whole journey was a long an arduous one and certainly was not merely a “15 minute trip” as the dear Professor put. It was nice to see the good professor and we were then off to his humble abode to meet his wife and for a cup of coffee.

My internship at the Universita Roma Tre in Basilica San Paolo was initiated with a visit to the International Relations Student Office to have my two month stay formalised. Internet connectivity was the most pressing issue and the people here are genuinely downright humble, helpful and very warm and the personnel at the IT department saw to it that I had a temporary wi-fi account and it was all systems-go from the second week of my stay there. Not quite researching material solely but being a tourist and roaming and exploring the city centre on foot.

Just being in Saint Peters Square, walking past the Swiss Guards at the entrance of the Citta Del Vaticano (Vatican City), who by the way are dressed in garb that had been designed by Michelangelo or standing metres away from the Colosseo with flashes from the flick Spartacus running in your head is akin to being inside the Notre Dame in Paris and knowing that it was exactly at this spot in which Napoleon Bonaparte was knighted... more or less a “phuaaah” sense of euphoria.

Eight days after I arrive, I am then joined by Duc Nam and Tung, two students from the International Masters Programme in Regional Integration. Having met them at the Stazione Termini, we headed straight for our rented apartment and the same course of events in terms of meeting Prof. Carlo and registering with the University followed thereafter.

We have been expanding our cultural dimensions with the good professor treating us to a fine dinner at his place and having cooked the pasta and sauce himself and serving us wine from Sardenia, Tung and I doing the unexpected, i.e. going for two choir recitals at the Basilica Saint Nicola (that’s Santa Claus) and organised by the Lazio Region Choir Association. Well, our next quest would be to catch Verdi’s La Traviata...yes, I do have a bit of a cultured side and all thanks to my mother’s influence.

My preliminary readings on the SME industry here in Italy disclosed that all’s not well and with there being a

general decline in growth figures. Presently, the country is facing a recession and I am here, try as I may, to pick on the strategies and policy frameworks that are being mapped out to curb this decline. We have been scheduled to attend a workshop organised by industry players together with various academics in taking steps to raise awareness on the same and how Italy is tackling area of ICT and in attracting foreign investment on 7 June.

The key areas are perhaps centrally linked with checking the mammoth Chinese growth and devising and articulating new areas of economic activity that cannot be sad to be lacking on our side of the continent. Trade and innovative thinking perhaps are worth delving into for even if governments fail, trade and international trade tends to spur economic activity even at the grassroots.

I find the Italians a hardy lot who have had their fair share of past troubles and economic downturns. What you see here in Rome are merely tourists on a pilgrimage,

albeit, with a lot of Euros and American Dollars. Rome is anything but the real story. Unemployment rates have soared and other indicators of a recession, such as a Metro strike and possible 'disintegration' of the EU, have been clearly visible during my stay here in the past month.

Venture out into the suburbs and life there is also anything indicative of the levels of opulence and affluence that we Malaysians are accustomed to. Its inhabitants, to my mind, are a sturdy breed and are equally fearful of losing their long held jobs, for instance in the fabric and furniture trade, just because the production centres have shifted to a different geographical location should and cannot be the end of the matter. ■

Rohan F Vigneswarer is a student in the International Masters in Small and Medium Enterprises and underwent his two months' internship at Universita Roma Tre in Basilica San Paolo, Italy.

The Basic Conditions to Build Successful Academic Research and Development (R&D)

By MARIO ARTURO RUIZ ESTRADA, *AEI Senior Research Assistant*

AEI the Base of My Progress in Research

In the three years (2002-2005) that I was attached to the Asia-Europe Institute (AEI), University of Malaya as Senior Research Assistant, I had the opportunity to witness important challenges and rewarding results in the different phases of my own research. There were many factors that led to the accomplishment of my research during this period. Firstly, there are complete facilities, including efficient and supportive library service in the institute. Secondly, I was able to avail myself of the opportunity to present my research papers at several academic institutions in Malaysia and overseas during this period. Thirdly, I had the opportunity to share and exchange research ideas with various professors of high academic credentials who visited AEI during this period. The combination of these factors benefited me greatly in that it enabled me to produce works to the standard acceptable by credible and renowned international journals, namely *Journal of Policy Modeling* and *Asia-Pacific Development Journal*.

The following is the list of my publications produced in the past two years at the Asia-Europe Institute:

Journals

2005 "Introduction to ECONOGRAPHICATION", *Advanced Research Methodology Journal*, MIT, U.S.A. (In reading process).

Abstract: This research proposes a new field in



economics. It is called "*Econographication*". The origin of *Econographication* is based on the vital importance of graphs as the clearest and most effective means of presenting real or experimental data in order to understand and visualize any economic phenomenon, "the representation of data will be taken to mean the geometric and graphical representations of data as distinct from the graphical plotting of mathematical functions" (Royston, 1956) or statistical data. However, the central idea to propose this new field is to study the evolution and development of different types of graphical representations as can be applied in different areas of research in economics.

2005 "Cooperation Effect Creation (CEC) Model", *Asia-Pacific Development Journal*, Volume 12, No. 1, June 2005.

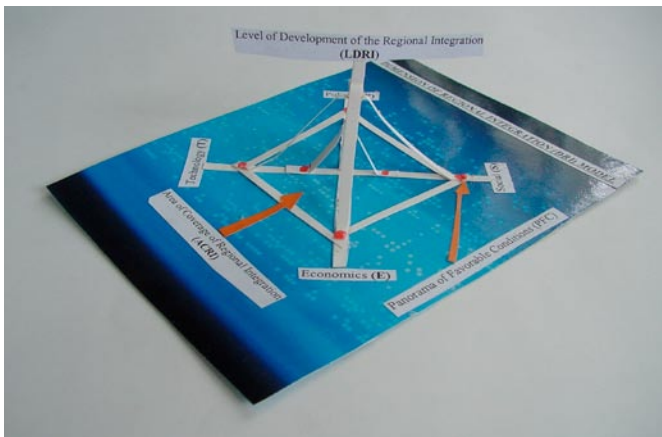
Abstract: The objective of this research paper is to present a suitable scheme of regional integration which can be applied between developing countries and less developed countries (LDC's). This new scheme is called "the Cooperative Regionalism Scheme (CR-Scheme)." The application of the CR-Scheme attempts to demonstrate the basic condition to make successful any case of regionalism as open regionalism (Free Trade Areas, FTA) or closed regionalism (Customs Union, CU) implementation between developing countries and less developed countries. It is depending on a strong Cooperative Regionalism Scheme (CR-Scheme).

2005 “Openness Growth Monitoring (OGM-Model)”, *Journal of Policy Modeling (JPM)*, Economic Note, Volume 27 (Forthcoming).

Abstract: This new model of analysis will evaluate the trend, vulnerability and harmonization of openness or trade orientation. The relationship between open growth and income growth is based on a new group of indicators and a new type of graph (see graph 1). This new model of analysis is entitled “The Openness Monitoring Model (OM-Model)”.

2004 “The Trade Liberalization Evaluation (TLE) Methodology”, *Journal of Policy Modeling (JPM)*, Volume 26/ 8-9, pp. 1015-1029.

Abstract: This research paper proposes a new trade analysis model to evaluate the trend and stages of trade liberalization of any country. This new trade analysis model is entitled “The Trade Liberalization Evaluation (TLE) Methodology.” The TLE Methodology will introduce new indexes and graphs.



The Pyramid graphic design is based on an originated idea using one independent variable (Y) and four dependent variables (x_1, x_2, x_3 and x_4) into the same Cartesian Plane. It can help to visualize any economic phenomenon from a global perspective or view. For more information please visit www.econographication.com.

Working Papers

2004 “Global Dimension of Regional Integration Model (GDRI-Model), FEA-Working Paper No. 2004-7, University of Malaya.

Abstract: This research paper presents a new model of analysis to study the trend of regional integration from a global perspective. This new model is called the Global Dimension of Regional Integration (GDRI) model. The rationale for the creation of this model is the necessity to study regional integration from political, social, economic, and technological perspectives simultaneously.

2004 “External Sector Evaluation Model (Sxi)”, FEA-Working Paper No. 2004-11, University of Malaya

Abstract: This paper introduces an alternative index to measure the external sector from different perspectives. Called “External Sector Development Index (SXi), this index is a new analytical tool for studying the trend of the external sector in any country or region.

2005 “The Multi-Dimensional Cartesian Plane (MD-Plane), FEA-Working Papers, No. 2005-1, University of Malaya

Abstract: The objective of this paper is to introduce an alternative type of Cartesian plane – Multi-Dimensional Cartesian plane (MD Cartesian plane) – for both microeconomic and macroeconomic levels of analyses. Different from the traditional 2-Dimensional Cartesian plane (x, y) and 3-Dimensional Cartesian plane (x, y, z), MD Cartesian plane consists of five axes ($[x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4], y$), where each axis has positive and negative values.

2005 “Multilateralism and Regionalism Theoretical Analysis”, FEA-Working Papers, University of Malaya (forthcoming 2005).

Presentation of Papers

2005

Universiti Sains Malaysia, seminar, Malaysia.

Universiti Utara Malaysia, seminar, Malaysia.

2004

29th Conference of the Federation of ASEAN Economic Assoc. (FAEA). Malaysia.

National University of Singapore (NUS), Department of Economics.

University of Malaya (UM), Faculty of Economics, Malaysia.

National University of Singapore (NUS), Faculty of Business.

Malaysian Institute of Economic Research (MIER), Malaysia.

Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), Malaysia.

Federation of Manufactures of Malaysia (FMM), Malaysia.

2003

Ministry of Industry and Trade (MIT), Singapore.

In the three years that I spent at the Asia-Europe Institute, I got the chance to grow not only academically, but also socially and spiritually. My faith in God has certainly strengthened. I will never forget all my experiences and time at AEI.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to a number of people who have contributed in one way or other to my development and progress as a researcher thus far. They are Professor Dato’ Dr. Shaharil Talib (Asia-Europe Institute); Assoc. Professor Dr. Shamsulbahriah Ku Ahmad (Asia-Europe Institute); Dr. Yeoh Kok Kheng (University of Malaya); Professor Dr. Jomo K. Sundaram (United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs); Associate Professor Dr. Yap Su Fei (University of Malaya); Professor Dr. Jose Ramon Lasuen Sancho (Universidad Autonoma de Madrid); Professor Dr. Antonio Vazquez-Barquero (Universidad Autonoma de Madrid); Professor Dr. Ramon Tamames (Universidad Autonoma de Madrid); Mr. Dang Minh Quang (Asia-Europe Institute), Ms. Yvonne Yeo, Mr. Charles PE Yeoh and last but not least, Mr. Ibrahim Bin Ismail (Head, Resource and Documentation Centre of Asia-Europe Institute). ■

Can Democracy Consolidate?

By NAZLI AZIZ (AEI Lecturer)

The so-called *third wave* of global democratisation has brought more than 60 countries from authoritarian rule toward extensiveness of democratisation. However, it has become obvious that sustaining democracy is often as difficult as to institute it. During the democratic transition, pressing concerns have quickly arisen of how to strengthen and stabilise these new regimes. Hence, political scientists in new democracies have been increasingly concentrating on *democratic consolidation* as democracy in some countries is rather uncertain.

In general, it can be argued that the democratic consolidation approach is rooted in the classic works of modernisation theory, especially those of Parsons (1951), Almond and Verba (1963), and Eckstein (1966). From the modernisation perspective, representative democracy is basically a product of general transformation of human societies from *tradition*, based on communal identity, ascriptive status, particularism, and personal ties, to *modernity*, based on individualism, achieved status, universalism, and impersonal procedures.

Then, the third wave of democratization has flourished a great literature that sought to elaborate, analyse and justify the emergence of seemingly stable democracies in Southern Europe, Latin America, and East Asia in the 1970s and 1980s. The third wave's idea of modern development is fundamentally western *culture* in its essence too.

The word *consolidation*, however, remains a contested if not controversial concept in the comparative study of democracy. In its broadest sense for democracy to be consolidated it is to be interpreted as "the only game in town" but this definition provides no sign of how to visualise this notion into *reality*. Eventually, Juan Linz's and Alfred Stepan's (1996) "the only game in town" requires a degree of social unanimity that is quite idealistic even in the established democracies in the advanced countries.

Notwithstanding the pertinent effects of consolidation in Western Europe, there is no general theory of why precisely European democracies consolidated or clear agreement as to when consolidation occurred in each country. Hence, the discussion about the consolidation of third wave democracies in Latin America, Eastern Europe, North Africa, and East Asia lacks a fundamental element: a theory distinguishing the causes of consolidation in Western Europe that hold "the largest cluster of cases of once-precarious-now-consolidated democracies". Huntington's argument that the experience of consolidation in the first and second wave democracies could yield lessons for the third wave, illustrates why cases of third wave democracies may be fundamentally

different from their predecessors. By comparing cases within the Western European countries, it makes it possible to challenge the advancing theoretically grounded and sharply demarcated hypotheses about what causes consolidation.

The most common view about the problem of democratic consolidation in the field of political science is to highlight the essence of a *political culture* and/or *civil society* supportive of democratic institutions. Hence, Larry Diamond (1999) enhances the essence of a political culture and civil society that are supportive of democratic institutions. Diamond argues that the most vital step to institute a firm democracy is the creation of solid institutions such as political parties, a free judicial system and the presence of a civil society which is *not decisive* in the early stages of democratization.

That is to say that Diamond's vision of democratic consolidation entails a citizenry almost exclusively oriented toward impersonal procedural rule. Given recent social trends, many new democracies in Latin America, Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa will probably break down in the medium to long run. Furthermore, Diamond's judgment suggests that only in the West does one find truly consolidated democracies. Once we cross the frontier beyond "the consolidated democracy of Western Europe," there is no single definition of democratic consolidation.

Looking back, probably, Robert Dahl's (1971) *polyarchy* is the most widely accepted criteria in describing democracy that is formal with institutional guarantees for political rights, fair, competitive, and inclusive of elections; with formal rights to citizenship that has become dependable and regularized.

Interestingly, we can describe democracy as a type of state in which there are formal institutional guarantees of electoral contestation, from the classic work of Dahl. The enforcement of the key institutions of democratic regime with legally defined state boundaries, free, fair and genuinely competitive elections, and formal rights of citizenship have become dependable and regularized. Yet, dependable and regularized enforcement does not necessarily contain social equilibrium based on near-universal agreement to democratic values and procedures. Every democracy must cope with a large number of important actors who can imagine acting, and sometimes do act, outside of the formal democratic "rules of the game."

Guillermo O'Donnell (2001) criticizes the notion of strong teleological assumptions in defining democratic consolidation and urges scholars to dismiss it as the newly emerging democracies should not necessarily resemble

the advanced countries. This critique is right but yet, in dismissing the idea of democratic consolidation on the whole, it runs the risk of dichotomizing liberal and delegative democracies in a way that may unintentionally perpetuate the sort of Eurocentric analysis it attempts to criticize.

This alternative view sees that the contemporary idea of democratisation sprang from modernisation theory and rational choice theory that incline towards static rather than dynamic definitions of consolidation. Modernists emphasize that consolidation can only be accomplished when the majority of citizens believe democratic procedures to be legitimate and there is a high level of congruence between authority patterns in culture and politics; and the rational choice theorists argue that consolidation can be accomplished when significant social actors discount the possibility of pursuing payoffs outside the legal rules of the game and interact with democratic institutions with a high level of civic trust. How such a joyful scenario could prevail in countries with high degrees of social uncertainty, distrust and turbulence as in Russia, is never directly analyzed. Thus, it gives us notions that the democracies of the third wave are likely to remain perpetually unconsolidated outside of civic nations.

Democratic consolidation may seem a vague concept since its very inception makes the term inconsistent in the academic and the political worlds. Initially, the term democratic consolidation was meant to explain the challenge of crafting new democracies secure in the long term and immune from any authoritarian elements. The ambiguities among the theorists make the list of “problem of democratic consolidation” increase beyond all recognition. It has included different elements; the diffusion of democratic values, party building, civilian supremacy over the military, the elimination of authoritarian enclaves, the organisation of functional interests, the stabilisation of electoral rule, the introduction of mechanisms of direct democracy, judicial reform, and

economic stabilisation and the decentralisation of state power.

When people employ “consolidation” as they like but all uphold the illusion of communicating with one another in some intelligible way, the concept becomes fragile. This conceptual disorder can be an influential blockade to scholarly interaction, theory building and the accumulation of knowledge and which Lawrence Whitehead considers somewhat fuzzy. In fact, at this present state of conceptual confusion, the study of democratic consolidation is condemned to stagnation if the claim that social science field can only progress if the members share a common understanding of key terms in the field is true.

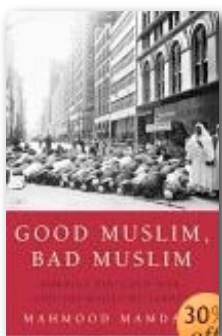
Some scholars argue that consolidated democracies are the ones where almost all actors have pro-democratic regime preferences that are doubtful to be reversed as a result of routine events. Must this convergence continue? Commentators in the past century have generated at least three major images of the likely trajectory of modern democracy: pessimistic, cyclical and optimistic. Nonetheless, it shared the turn-of-the-twentieth-century optimism about democracy’s prospects that was noticeable during the high point of Huntington’s first democratization wave.

The wave saw the flourishing of both new and common types of exclusionary tenet in the interwar years both in Western and Eastern Europe, East Asia, and the Middle East; interwar and post-1945 Latin America, and postcolonial Africa. This evidence suggests caution in assuming that the third wave is relegating authoritarianism to backwaters before rendering it obsolete.

In sum, commitment to democracy is a reaction to ongoing events in which its causes are constant. Thus, the conception of democratic consolidation depends on where we stand and where we aim to reach i.e. our empirical viewpoints and our normative horizons respectively. It diverges according to the objectives and the goals we have in our perception. ■

BOOK NOTICES

By NUR RAFEEDA DAUT, *AEI Lecturer*



Mamdani, Mahmood. *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War and the Roots of Terror*; Pantheon Books, New York, 2004.

Ever since September 11, there has been a growing media interest in Islam. What is the link, many seem to ask, between Islam and terrorism?

In *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror*; Mamdani analyzes the ways in

which the “war on terror” has politicized religion. He dispels the notion that terrorism is a necessary effect of religious

tendencies and explains that terrorism as a tactic was born as a direct result of the Cold War.

This book examines the Western premise that ‘bad Muslims’ who practice terrorism are fundamentalists, backward and hate freedom while ‘good Muslims’ are modern, secular and embrace Western values. According to Mamdani, the differences between Islam as a religion and political Islam as a political movement are often obscured. Thus all Muslims are seen as potential terrorists and Muslim terrorists are assumed to be acting out of fundamentalist religious beliefs. He points out that fundamentalism is strictly religious in nature whereas terrorism is a political tactic.

This book argues that political Islam emerged as a result of a modern encounter with western power and that the terrorist movement at the center of Islamist politics is a recent phenomenon that followed America’s embrace of the highly

ideological politics of “good against evil”. Mamdani writes with great insight on how America readily backed terrorist movements during the Reagan administration.

In his final chapter, Mamdani links the creation of terrorist movements to their popularity in much of the Third World, demonstrating that violent methods in service of social movements are neither new nor specific to Islam. According to Mamdani, the popularity of such extreme methods necessitates that we examine terrorists’ grievances. Terrorists are not simply born but they are created. Terrorists do not act out of religious conviction but they act as a response to what they perceived as an unjust society. Mamdani concludes by stressing that terrorism is not a necessary effect of religious tendencies whether fundamentalist or secular but is born out of a political encounter.

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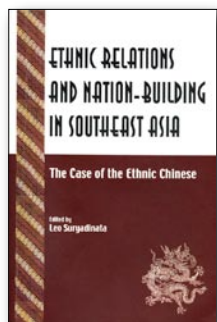
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Mahmood Mamdani was born in Kampala, Uganda. He is a political scientist and anthropologist and Herbert Lehman Professor of Government and Director of the Institute of African Studies at Columbia University. His previous books include ‘*Citizen and Subject*’ and ‘*When Victims Become Killers*’. In 2001 he presented one of the nine papers at the Nobel Peace prize Centennial Symposium. He lives in New York City and Kampala with his wife and son.



Suryadinata, Leo et al. *Ethnic Relations and Nation-Building in Southeast Asia, The Case of the Ethnic Chinese*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 2004

Ethnic Relations and Nation-Building in Southeast Asia the Case of the Ethnic Chinese is a compilation of articles from an international conference organized by The Singapore Society of Asian Studies (SSAS) in November

2002. The conference which focused on the analysis of ethnic relations in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia paid special reference to the roles of ethnic Chinese in nation-building. Articles in the book were written by established scholars of various ethnic origins from Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia in order to obtain perspectives from each of the author’s respective ethnic background. According to the editor of the book, the arrangement did not imply that scholars were not able to offer an accurate analysis of those outside their own ethnic group. Rather the arrangement was made to provide an opportunity for the scholars to deal with different facets of the

issues involved as witnessed in their lives. The articles in the book clearly depict each of the writer’s own rich experience with regard to his or her relations with the ethnic Chinese community in these three countries.

Ethnic relations have been a perennial theme in Southeast Asian studies. Current events have highlighted the tensions among ethnic groups and the need to maintain ethnic harmony for national unity. This book critically examines some of the important issues such as ethnic politics, nation-building, state policies and conflict resolution.

The final chapter of the book includes comparisons on the ethnic relations in the three Southeast Asian countries as well as the actions taken by each government with regard to nation-building. Apart from that, this chapter also gives a brief summary on what had been written by all the authors. Most of the authors in the book agreed that the problems of ethnic Chinese and nation building in Southeast Asia are still far from being resolved.

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Contributors: A. Dahana, Wang Gungwu, Mely G. Tan, Frans H. Winarta, Lee Kam Hing, Shamsul A.B, P.Ramasamy, Eugene K.B Tan, Tan Ern Ser, Sharon Siddique and Leo Suryadinata

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OBITUARY

A Personal Tribute

The distinguished development economist Sanjaya Lall was a Visiting Professor at the Asia-Europe Institute in February-March 2005. His sudden death has shocked everyone at the Institute.

Our deepest sympathy goes to his family and friends

Sanjaya Lall passed away on 18 June 2005, in Oxford, England. We have lost an eminent and widely respected economist and a widely liked person. His absence will be felt by all of us who had known him.



SANJAYA
LALL
(1940-2005)

I first met Sanjaya many years ago in the winter of 1976 when I arrived in Oxford as a graduate student to work for my D.Phil degree at Queens's College, Oxford. Sanjaya was then at the Institute of Economics and Statistics and at my first meeting in his room at the institute he was, as always busy in the midst of his papers and writing. I had come to Oxford because Sanjaya and Paul Streeten with whom he was working closely then, were in Oxford, and I was planning to work on foreign direct investment. I had to make a decision on my supervisor. I had just seen Streeten and had talked about the possibility of him being my supervisor and he suggested that I see and talk with Sanjaya before making my decision. Sanjaya agreed to be my supervisor at Oxford and over the next more than three years we were in constant touch with each other and he saw me through my D.Phil. work. We became close friends and I got to know Rani, Sanjaya's wife and his children. Over the years Sanjaya would appear in Malaysia on some assignments and we would catch up with each other.

Sanjaya was a prolific economist. He moved on beyond his early work on foreign direct investment and transnational corporations into the areas of development among the less developed countries, focusing especially on industrialization and technology. Sanjaya built up an impressive corpus of published works in these areas. What made them also impressive was that they were grounded on specific country experiences, ranging far and wide to cover South East Asia, East Asia, Africa and Latin America, their empiricism and rigour. In his later years he worked more on growth and exports of manufactured goods focusing also on competitiveness. And in one of his last papers Sanjaya critically questioned the accepted norms of measuring global competitiveness of nations. Sanjaya always injected an infectious

and intense enthusiasm when discussing his work and their policy implications for the less developed countries. He was also involved actively as consultant and adviser to numerous international and national institutions, including the World Bank, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNIDO and ILO. I kept in touch with his publications and sometimes he would send me copies of his latest papers.

I met Sanjaya after a long break when I returned to Oxford for a short stay in May and June 2004 as a Research Fellow at the new Centre for Research on Inequality, Security and Ethnicity (CRISE), Queen Elizabeth House, which is headed by Professor Frances Stewart. By then Sanjaya was busy and active teaching and supervising students in Oxford and was a fellow at Green College. Always warm and generous despite his busy schedule, we had dinner at his modest, modern house with the ample gardens, and Rani as usual was the gracious and charming host. Sanjaya followed that up with a lunch at Green College and as he took me round the college grounds on that summer day, giving me the highlights of the history, architecture, founder, alumni of the college, and the gardens, my mind turned to that winter day years ago in Oxford when we first met, and I could see how settled he was at Oxford and how it had become a vital part of him.

My last meeting with Sanjaya was a few months ago when he was in Kuala Lumpur to provide a series of lectures on globalization and economic development at the Asia Europe Institute, University of Malaya. He was as busy and ebullient as ever and he never gave any inkling of any ailments. His sudden passing away was a shock. I consider him a friend and professional colleague and will miss his presence. My condolences to Rani and Sanjaya's children. May his soul rest in peace.

Datuk Dr. Zainal Aznam Yusof
Kuala Lumpur
June 26, 2005

actions. Perhaps it is precisely this conscious choice of technique that has resulted in both the positive and negative reception of *SEPET*. For a creative writer, possession of the 'truth' is less important than emotional sincerity. For those who have been upset by Yasmin's treatment of certain truths, observe her use of cinematic devices as she sincerely presents her case. We have to judge Yasmin and her intentions within the created logic and reality of *SEPET*'s text

Like many writers, she writes about herself and her own time, and in doing so, she writes about all people and about all time. Within the compass of many short scenes, large questions about love, life and death are raised. In the opening scene, Jason's mother says of Tagore's poetry (from which Jason quoted a passage): Strange, isn't it? A different culture, a different race. But we can feel what is in his heart. Upon her asking, Jason tells her that the poet is dead. In close proximity, Orked's voice is heard reading a passage from the Qur'an – akin to a death prayer, denoting how the film will end, and of the chasm that will forever exist for multi-racial love (for Malaysians, at least). Unlike the typical mainstream film, Yasmin does not give us a clear resolution at the end of *SEPET*. She takes us on a journey and then lets us arrive at our own destination. The journey is more important - and if we allow it, it is one that will transform the traveler. In the words of Lao Tzu: A good traveler has no fixed plans, and is not intent on arriving.

After seeing *SEPET*, a French critic commented: World media has painted a dark face of Muslims today, *SEPET* shows us Muslims who are gentle, loving, funny, and kind. *SEPET* has been placed in the context of world events. This is the function of art. Art should not dictate but present a case. Its meaning is necessarily created within our minds. What kind of persons we are determines how we react to both the real world and the fictional world. And herein lies the problem. As an author has remarked: The future is not some place we are going to but one we are creating. The paths are not be found but made. And the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination. The writing on the wall is clear ('read' the opening title sequence!). But what kind of change would this be, and are we (specifically a certain segment of the Malaysian population), prepared for it?

SEPET begins with the Chinese boy and his mother. It ends with the Malay girl and her mother. The mothers never meet. If they had met, perhaps *SEPET* would have had a different ending, but Yasmin has purposely made it so. She began the film with the 'Bismillah': In the Name of Allah, The Merciful and The Compassionate. Love and compassion is the only way to react to our world. But one must be prepared. Allah knows best who should receive His Message (Qur'an 6:124).

SEPET began its run at TGV and GSC cinemas on 24 February 2005. Since then, *SEPET* has been instrumental in creating a new breed of filmgoers (if the drop in attendance for *SEMBILU 2005* and *POTRET MISTIK* that came immediately after *SEPET* is any indication). Yasmin has achieved what U-Wei Hajisaari could only wish for: If I make an intelligent film, I would require equally intelligent viewers.

A certain author once wrote a biting answer when his manuscript was rejected:

Curse the blasted, jelly-boned swines, the slimy, belly-wriggling invertebrates, the miserable sodding rutters, the flaming sods, the snivelling, dribbling, dithering, palsied, pulseless lot that make up England today. They've got the white of egg in their veins & their spunk is that watery it's a marvel they can breed.

That author was D H Lawrence, and the book was *Sons and Lovers*. Yasmin does not have to lose sleep over criticism nor does she have to answer her critics. Critics fade away into oblivion. Important works live on. *SEPET* is a love letter to all of us. Look beyond what you see on the screen and you will understand.

All you need is love.

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