
Reviews

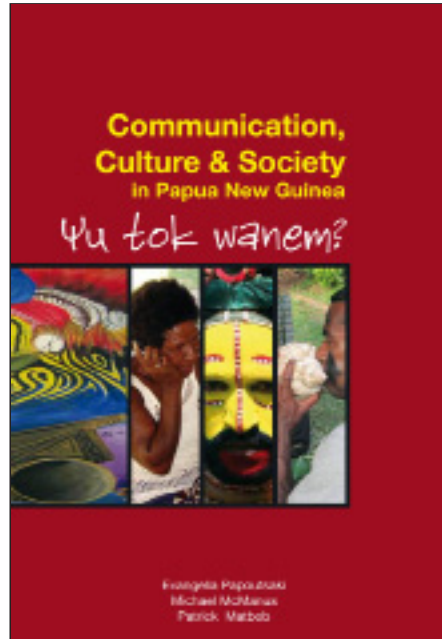
PATRICK CRADDOCK is a media and broadcasting training consultant with wide Pacific experience.

Western media 'elite' models challenged by PNG research

Communication, Culture and Society in Papua New Guinea: Yu Tok Wanem? Edited by Evangelia Papoutsaki, Michael McManus and Patrick Matbob, with a preface by David Robie. Madang, PNG: Divine Word University Press; Auckland: Pacific Media Centre. 2011, 239 pp. ISBN 978-1-877314-94-3

MORE THAN 20 authors have been included in *Communication, Culture and Society in Papua New Guinea: Yu Tok Wanem?* This should surely be the book of the month on media in the Pacific.

The editors have divided the book into four themes focusing on: mainstream media issues; social issues; information gaps and development issues, and the search for solutions.



A glance at the mini-profiles of the authors show that many come from a range of PNG backgrounds, including the Highlands, Bougainville, New Ireland, Manus and East New Britain. Also represented in the book are well-known media academics from New Zealand and Australia.

Identifying media development issues and suggesting solutions in PNG is a stiff intellectual task and a hazard for any writer as the PNG national culture is so diverse and we do it a disservice to encompass it in one culture. Eight out of every ten people work in rural areas. Many villages are cut off from the next village by a mountain and a valley. There

are numerous islands. The number of individual languages in Papua New Guinea is over a thousand and these are languages, not dialects.

All teaching in schools and institutions is in one language, English, but that too creates its own problems as students struggle to understand what is being taught. It affects the training of young journalists. Amanda Watson, an Australian completing her PhD in 'Putting development into communication' notes that many tertiary students go through primary school in PNG being taught by teachers with a tenuous grasp of English. The result is that when these young university students reach the time for tertiary education their past experience of education has left them with a huge educational task as they discover that the English language 'has its meaning embedded in alien concepts' (p. 186).

Evangelia Papoutsaki, a co-editor of this book and its interesting predecessor *Media, Information and Development in Papua New Guinea*, says that one part of a solution to improve the quality of reportage is to look at the curriculum for journalism, and to amend it to focus on awareness on the social and cultural importance of local knowledge. She suggests a 'robust methodology' is required to reach this goal.

This chapter hits out at journalism that follows a Western model and reports the views of prominent elites while the views of ordinary people are excluded unless they are involved in accidents, violence or catastrophes. Part of the solution for Evangelia Papoutsaki is to encourage students to do research in their own communities. She notes that while resources may be limited for this type of research, it is seen as developing pride and confidence in students while helping to develop a critical sense about Western models of inquiry.

The work of Patrick Matbob, a journalism lecturer at Divine Word University for the last eight years, supports the ideas stressed by Evangelia Papoutsaki. His chapter shows that students engaged in research in their own communities both in PNG and the Solomon Islands do develop confidence and enhance their journalism skills.

Yu tok wanem?—want to talk? The answer to the question is a 'Yes', according to research conducted by Amanda Watson about the use of mobile phones in two PNG villages using a methodology of observations, a survey and Tok Pisin interviews. Those in possession of a mobile phone talked about being able to communicate with friends and relatives. The perceived benefits of the mobile

phone appeared to be the same in both villages. A negative (for parents) was their confusion and inability to monitor the behavior and friendships of their offspring.

She also found that in one of the two villages taking part in the research, nobody owned a computer or had access to the internet, while in the other village less than ten percent used a computer or the internet.

Media and big business are an important focus for Barbara Kepa, a PNG national and graduate of Divine Word University. She examines in considerable detail the relationship between the media and the mining company working at OK Tedi in the Western province. The mining project began in 1981.

Kepa shows how media played a big part in informing the citizens of the area to help them to keep up to date with progress and development of the mining company.

The company ran a media unit that produced printed information and a company radio station, Radio Fly, made programmes on business development, safety, education and mining with updates on news of the moment.

In her research, Kepa wanted to find out how the information was disseminated by the company and what communications took place

between the company, its employees and the landowners before and during development by the company. She also asked questions about the appropriateness of the information that was conveyed to the people.

What Kepa found was that while there were a number of talk mode programmes about planning sustainable futures, there was a lack of practical support. She quotes one man who said in his survey: 'Give us some training on how to start these projects, not just talk. We want action' (p. 153).

How do you design a successful media campaign on HIV/AIDS? Using media to educate tends to draw groans from radio and TV presenters, enthusiasm in media educators and unfortunately, it often creates confusion among the receivers ... the audience.

Henry Yamo's background crosses the category of teacher, writer and researcher. Trained as a Primary school teacher he moved to journalism and then to university. His findings make depressing reading but his topic is fascinating. His article examines the language of HIV/AIDS campaigns (p. 86). English and Hiri Motu are official languages of PNG. English is taught in schools but the lingua franca is Tok Pisin. To reach the masses, a media programme designed in Tok Pisin seems to guarantee the most success.

But as Yamo discovered, you can reach the people, but that is only one small step in the great education marathon. Tok Pisin language is basic and the words used for different parts of the body and sexual activity are often the same as those used in swearing, frustration or anger and are seen by some sections of the population as offensive and vulgar. While youth will have no problems with the vernacular among friends, the use of these words in the media is unsuitable as media outlets can reach all ages and all sectors of the PNG population.

The majority of the respondents said that some of the words used were inappropriate to their culture. From a religious perspective other respondents thought some of the words in the media messages were linked to sin.

On the positive side Yamo says there is sufficient information for him to conclude that more care needs to be given in designing the specified vocabulary in both written and oral messages

The chapters are well referenced and the publication has a substantial index. This admirable book serves as a worthwhile companion to earlier publications, *South Pacific Islands Communication: Regional Perspectives, Local Issues*, edited by Evangelia Papoutsaki and Ushar Sundar Harris, and *Media and Development:*

Issues and Challenges in the Pacific Islands, edited by Shailendra Singh and Biman Prasad, published three years ago, and an earlier book in 2004, *Mekim Nuis—South Pacific Media, politics and education*, written by David Robie.

References

- Papoutsaki, E., and Harris, E. S. (2008). *South Pacific islands communication: Regional perspectives, local issues*. Singapore: Asian Media Information and Communication Centre; Suva: University of the South Pacific Book Centre; and Auckland: Pacific Media Centre.
- Robie, D. (2004). *Mekim nius: South Pacific politics, media and education*. Suva: University of the South Pacific Book Centre.
- Singh, S., and Prasad, B. (2008). *Media and development: Issues and challenges in the Pacific Islands*. Suva: Fiji Institute of Applied Studies, and Auckland: Pacific Media Centre.

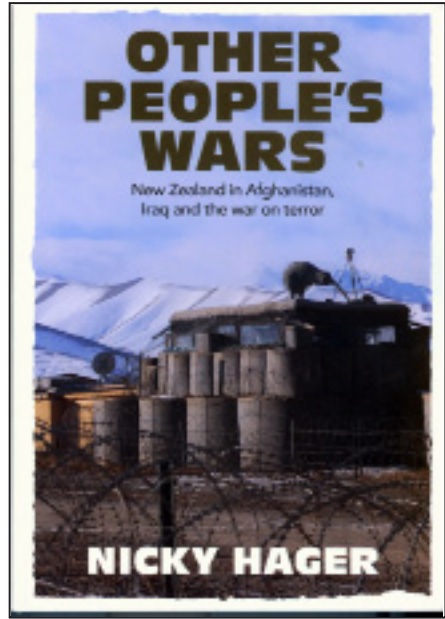
DAVID BEATSON is a broadcaster, communication consultant and writes for the political blog Pundit.

Complacent media fails debate over ‘empire’ wars

Other People's Wars: New Zealand in Afghanistan, Iraq and the war on terror, by Nicky Hager.
Nelson: Craig Potton Publishing, 2011.
439 pp. ISBN 978-1-877517-69-3.

NICKY HAGER'S main charge in *Other People's Wars* is that New Zealand's defence and foreign affairs establishment has developed a culture where some senior officers 'wanted to obey the government only when they agreed with it', and otherwise 'quietly undermined' its policies and decisions. They believed they could 'go to war without telling the public most of what they did'—and Hager provides convincing evidence that, for most of the last decade, they have been successful.

His sprawling, densely footnoted and referenced book is built on a solid



foundation of thousands of government documents, obtained under New Zealand's *Official Information Act* and from confidential sources, and copies of diplomatic cables that were dispatched from the United States Embassy in Wellington and obtained by Hager from the Wikileaks' collection.

Dismiss Hager's analysis and conclusions, if you will, but it is difficult to dismiss the original source material he uses to carve through the New Zealand defence mythology that has been spin-fed to a trusting public.

Myth 1: The ANZUS fracture

At the end of 1999, Helen Clark

led her Labour-Alliance coalition government into office, determined to avoid any impression that it was looking for a revival of the ANZUS alliance. She walked into a wall of resistance from some of the country's most senior defence and foreign affairs officials.

A member of Clark's political staff told Hager that 'every draft coming from defence and foreign affairs was worded to reshape the government's new policies, back into the old ones'. The issue quickly came to a head when the officials delivered their draft of the government's Defence Policy Framework early in 2000.

Clark rewrote it personally. From this point on, the New Zealand government would contribute to global security and peacekeeping through 'participation in the full range of UN and other appropriate multilateral peace support and humanitarian relief operations'.

The Clark Framework did not stop the officials' drift back to the old alliance relationship. Hager documents the presence of two NZDF officers at the start of a week-long 'interoperability' discussion between representatives of the armies of the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand at Fort Benning, Georgia, on 11 September 2001. The focus of their discussions:

preparing the five armies to integrate into an effective coalition force during conflicts in the 2001 to 2010 timeframe. ANZUS may have been defunct since 1984, but the old military alliance club was still operating.

Myth 2: 9/11 provoked the wars

Hager produces testimony from US Secretary of State Colin Powell confirming that, 24 hours before the 9/11 attack, White House officials decided to give the Taliban a final ultimatum: hand over Osama Bin Laden or they would channel funds to anti-Taliban forces. If that failed, the US would intervene directly and throw them out. The next major conflict of the new millennium was already planned. The only surprise on 9/11 was that Al Qaeda struck first.

The next day, President Bush already had his eye on the next target—Iraq. Citing US counter-terrorism co-ordinator Richard Clarke, Hager portrays Bush in the White House situation room, muttering: 'See if Saddam did this ... Look into Iraq, Saddam.'

Myth 3: NZ's UN mandate

Helen Clark was flying to Europe when the hijacked aircraft hit the Twin Towers and the Pentagon. She rushed home to confront the first pressure test of her Defence Policy

Framework. Five days after the 9/11 attack, her government advised the US that ‘if there were a specific role for New Zealand special forces, we would of course consider it’.

Hager does not try to explain the Prime Minister’s sudden transformation from Helen the Peacemaker to Helen the Warrior Princess. She did not wait for the formation of the UN International Security Assistance Force before committing the SAS to the war against terrorism. They entered as part of US-controlled Operation Enduring Freedom. That, together with their precise date of entry, was concealed at the time under the cone of silence that governing politicians and officials are both happy to place over SAS operations.

Hager cracks the cone to produce the evidence that by the time SAS troops set foot in Afghanistan the real war-fighting was over and Bin Laden had left the country. The Kiwi troops found they had ‘no specific role’ to play. Step by step, he shows how NZDF senior officers proceeded to invent one, and sold it to the Americans. Through no fault of the troops, this new role would soon see the SAS demolishing another tenet of the Clark Defence Policy Framework.

Myth 4: Protecting human rights

The Clark Defence Policy Framework stated: ‘New Zealand will not

engage in military cooperation or exercises with the armed forces of a nation which sanctions the use of their armed forces to suppress human rights.’

It has taken nearly nine years of digging by Hager and another independent New Zealand free-lance journalist, Jon Stephenson, to unearth the unsavoury truth about the botched raid by an American-Canadian-New Zealand joint special operations task-force on the village of Band e Timur in May 2002. Two 70-year-old village leaders and a 6-year-old girl died in the attack. 55 prisoners were taken, transferred to US custody and beaten and mistreated. Fifty were released without apology or compensation. Five are still unaccounted for. The New Zealand SAS led the raid, but was not equipped to identify the prisoners taken and had no ability to track their welfare in custody. All this was concealed, but is now conceded.

Nine years later, no-one is held accountable, and intelligence botch-ups, civilian deaths, and allegations and evidence of the suppression of human rights by New Zealand’s allies in Afghanistan continue to plague the operations of the SAS in and out of Kabul.

Myth 5: Saying No on Iraq

When George Bush and Tony Blair started conditioning other alliance

leaders for the invasion of Iraq in April 2002, Helen Clark was quick to say no. She was not prepared to be involved in an intervention that did not have a UN mandate.

New Zealand Navy frigates and RNZAF Orion aircraft were sent to the Persian Gulf from November 2002. Their assigned role was to break the Al Qaeda Gulf-Afghanistan supply line—not to protect the Gulf-Iraq invasion supply line. But US controllers were running both operations in the Gulf and made no such distinction. The same problem arose In June 2003, when NZDF engineers arrived in Iraq to support a UN-mandated reconstruction effort. They were embedded in a British unit that was part of the Operation Iraqi Freedom invasion force. Hager shows that evidence of mission ‘blur’ was gathered by the NZDF, but he leaves one crucial question unanswered: was it ever drawn to the government’s attention?

Myth 6: Bamiyan reconstruction

Since September 2003, Kiwi Base, Bamiyan, has been the centre-piece of the NZDF’s campaign to project the softer side of its war effort—as the model of a successful provincial reconstruction team.

Hager shatters some of the illusion by quoting from a previously unpublished report on ‘New Zealand

Official Development Assistance supported activities in Afghanistan’, dated June 2009. It concludes that NZDF was ‘not an effective aid provider’ and ‘projects overseen by the NZDF through the PRT do not appear to be sustainable in any way and anecdotal evidence is that some have already failed’. None of the critical detail from this report appears in the publicly released government review of Afghanistan policy, which, nevertheless, recommended ‘civilianisation’ of New Zealand’s contribution to provincial reconstruction.

The main function of NZDF at Kiwi Base has never been reconstruction, as we use the word. Its main role is to operate security patrols, gather signals intelligence, and build Afghan army and police capacity to take over these roles. In military operations, NZDF’s Bamiyan deployment answers to a US commander in Bagram. A contingent of American troops shares quarters with the Kiwis at the base. Among them, under the terms of an official NZ-US administrative arrangement document that Hager has discovered, can be a ‘counter intelligence team at NZ PRT Bamian (2-4 pers.)’. This is the basis for his claim that New Zealand is contributing to the protection and support of a CIA base. It is probably the most debatable claim in his book.

Hager casts his net much further than this in *Other People's Wars*, but these six myths have been pivotal in shaping the public perception of New Zealand's involvement in the 9/11 wars. We are only now beginning to appreciate the yawning gap between the honey-coated vision of UN-driven peace-building, mentoring and aid-focused reconstruction and the blood and grit reality of our war-fighting in Afghanistan.

However, the blame for this does not rest solely with secretive, manipulative officials in defence and foreign affairs. It also falls on leading politicians of all persuasions and a largely complacent mainstream media for failing their public duty to foster informed debate on policies that consign brave young New Zealanders to kill and die in the graveyard of other people's empires.

BEING THE FIRST SOLOMON ISLANDS WOMEN IN PUBLIC LIFE



EDITED BY
ALICE ARUHE'ETA POLLARD AND
MARILYN J. WARING

THIS IS THE FIRST BOOK PUBLISHED
ABOUT SOLOMON ISLANDS WOMEN BY
SOLOMON ISLANDS WOMEN.

ISBN 978-1-877314-76-6.

PUBLISHED BY THE REGIONAL ASSISTANCE
MISSION TO THE SOLOMON ISLANDS (RAMSI),
AUT INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC POLICY AND THE
PACIFIC MEDIA CENTRE.

PACIFIC MEDIA CENTRE
AUT UNIVERSITY
ORDER FROM WHEELERS BOOKS
WWW.WHEELERS.CO.NZ
AND BOOKSHOPS
MORE INFORMATION:
WWW.PMC.AUT.AC.NZ
PRICE: NZ\$27



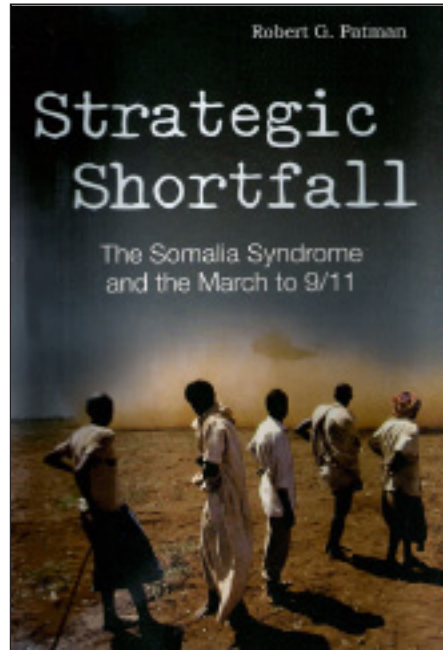
DR PAUL G. BUCHANAN is the principal of Buchanan Strategic Advisers and a security analyst.

US failures in strategy and the ‘CNN effect’

Strategic Shortfall: The Somalia Syndrome and the March to 9/11, by Robert G. Patman. Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010. 185pp. ISBN: 978-0-275993-62-0

IN THIS short, but interesting book, Robert Patman argues that US policy failures in the lead up to and aftermath of the October 1993 ‘Blackhawk Down’ incident in Mogadishu facilitated the conditions for the terrorist attacks on the US mainland in 2001. The thesis that the US merely reaped the bad fruit of its foreign policy on 9/11 is not new, but Patman’s approach is.

Rather than blame the historical content of US foreign policy (as a form of neo-imperialism that bred resentment in the Muslim world), he argues that the US failure to adapt to the changed security environment that followed the end of the Cold War, particularly the impact of globalisation and the resurgence of primordial conflicts in failed states, contributed



heavily to al-Qaeda’s rise as a political actor as well as its ability to project irregular force world-wide.

Patman places the failed 1992-94 UN attempt at peace enforcement in Somalia at the centre of his claim. The crux of his argument is that the US misread the post Cold War international security environment because it remained locked in a realist mindset focused on inter-state conflict and contingency planning for major war in which overwhelming force was the preferred way of engaging in combat operations (under the so-called ‘Powell Doctrine’ implemented in the first Gulf War). This prevented it from understanding the opportunity provided

to unconventional warfare actors by failed states, which were considered too peripheral to 'core' US security interests to warrant full attention. This made the US resistant to participate in UN-led humanitarian intervention in low intensity conflicts in failed states, and when it did belatedly intervene as part of a UN-led multinational force in Somalia in 1992, it did so on an ad hoc and short-term basis in which an exit strategy was a major priority and mission creep was a constant as the rationale for intervention shifted from famine relief to confronting warlords and imposing order.

US failure to adopt a 'tough' approach to peace enforcement in Somalia was due to an aversion to casualties and Congressional resistance to expanding the mission into combat roles, coupled with misgivings about allowing US soldiers to serve under foreign commanders, all under blanket media coverage of events on the ground. The latter turned the aborted attempt to capture General Mohamed Farah Aideed in October 1993 into a 'major league CNN-era disaster', according to one of the decision makers involved (p. 58).

The failure to capture Aideed emboldened not only Somali warlords but also al-Qaeda, which had operatives on the ground in Mogadishu (to include people involved in the Blackhawk Down incident), whose leader-

ship saw the US withdrawal from Somalia in 1994 as evidence of a lack of US stomach to engage in irregular conflicts where its core interests were not immediately involved.

US aversion to taking casualties was a legacy of the so-called 'Vietnam Syndrome', which along with the 'CNN effect' of real-time uncensored news coverage compounded US administration concerns about the negative domestic political impact of involvement in UN peacekeeping missions. That led to the 'Somalia Syndrome' (a term apparently coined by Senator John Kerry, as quoted on page 83), which was codified in the Presidential Decision Directive 25 of May 1994 outlining the seven criteria that were required for a use of US force in multinational peacekeeping efforts.

Given the difficulties in meeting those requirements, PDD 25 amounted to a refusal by the US to get involved in sub-national conflicts in failed states (such as in Rwanda), and when it did (be in Haiti, Bosnia, or the containment of Saddam Hussein), it did so tentatively and always with its eye on the door. Patman contends that this led to a power vacuum into which al-Qaeda flowed, which then allowed it to plan and carry out the 9/11 attacks. By the time the US realised the seriousness of the al-Qaeda threat, it was too late.

There are some oddities in the book. Much of chapter two, which details the George H. W. Bush administration's reluctant and confused participation in the Somalia imbroglio, is based upon interviews conducted in 1999-2000 by the author with former US policy-makers.

Likewise, chapter four, which disingenuously argues that, in spite of its much smaller commitment of military assets in a much more benign security environment in Baidoa, the Australian role in Somalia offers an alternative model to the failed US approach in Mogadishu, is based on interviews and primary data collection done in 1994-95.

Yet there is not a single interview with Clinton-era decision makers and much less primary source data on US security policy from 1994-2001 even though the bulk of the failures to recognise the looming threat of transnational terrorism ostensibly occurred during that period (which is the subject of chapters five through seven). The book has a retro-fitted feel to it, as if Patman started another research project about Somalia in the 1990s, put it down for almost a decade, then cobbled together an *ex post* argument about the 'march' to 9/11 using his original interview data and primary sources on the H.W. Bush administration's and Australian approaches to

'Operation Restore Hope' along with mostly secondary data on everything that followed.

This leaves some gaps in Patman's interpretation of the Clinton administration's approach to international security affairs, particularly its commitment to cooperative security, multilateralism and operations other than war (in fact, the cornerstone of the original Clinton approach, cooperative security, is not mentioned once in the entire book). In explicit contrast to the H.W. Bush administration's view of international security, the Clinton administration initially worked hard to develop a form of 'Wilsonian pragmatism' that supported UN peacekeeping and nation-building efforts under the banner of 'assertive multilateralism'.

Its original cadre of foreign policy appointees understood they were faced with a changed geopolitical landscape and attempted to meld idealist and constructivist initiatives into the US foreign policy paradigm while maintaining the core realist principles that were the backbone of US national security policy. Those efforts were undermined from the onset by Republican-majority congressional opposition to US participation in peace enforcement missions.

They also were the subject of intense debates between Clinton appointees such as Secretary of

State Madeline Albright and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs Morton Halperin (who is never mentioned and yet was a key polarising figure in US defence circles on the subject of peace-keeping) and more traditional-minded policy-makers in the Pentagon, CIA and NSC such as Secretaries of Defence William Perry and William Cohen.

After the Blackhawk Down incident and given the political balance of power within the foreign policy bureaucracy and *vis a vis* Congress, and confronted by a pressing domestic agenda, Clinton had to relent on his commitment to the type of aggressive multilateralism that Patman believes would have averted 9/11. By 1996 pragmatists had won over idealists and constructivists in inter-agency debates, and realism was restored as the dominant lens through which international security affairs was viewed.

Thus, it was not so much US failure to recognise and adapt to the post-Cold War international security regime as it was the opposition of political opponents, inter-agency policy disagreements on how to respond and leadership weakness and myopia (in the persons of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, respectively) that thwarted any hope that the US

would change its cautious approach to multilateral armed interventions in peripheral failed states in which irregular warfare actors congregated. That set the stage for al-Qaeda's rise and 9/11.

Along with some minor editorial errors, the omissions in Patman's coverage of the Clinton administration's perspective do not detract from his argument. His coverage of the W. Bush administration's non-response to the looming irregular threat, while also heavily reliant on secondary sources, is succinct and convincing in showing that Bush and his advisors ignored the belated warnings offered them by their predecessors. Although the book is not meant to be an academic treatise, in chapter seven Patman gives it a measure of scholarly gravitas by persuasively offering four 'causal associations' to justify his claims about the link between the Somalia Syndrome and 9/11 (consistency, strength, specificity and coherence of association (pp.136-40)).

As an alternative interpretation of events Patman presents a well-organised narrative that is richly detailed and very well documented, in a good example of a 'thick description' approach to foreign policy analysis. As such the book is a worthy addition to the literature on US foreign policy after the Cold War.

NICK CHESTERFIELD is editor of West Papua Media and was engaged as a consultant for the filmmakers.

Exposé through music of media ignorance of West Papua

Strange Birds in Paradise: A West Papuan Story, feature documentary directed by Charlie Hill-Smith. Melbourne: The House of Red Monkey, 2010. 75min. www.strangebirds.com.au Soundtrack: www.wantokmusik.org/artists_strangebirds.htm

As the songman of freedom lies dying from an Indonesian bullet, his spirit spawns a great tree of life, feeding the irrepressible spirit of West Papuan liberation. The Birds of Paradise, for so long held prisoner by the Java warlord demons of destruction, pillage and brutality—sing for life, and fly to freedom.



THIS beautifully illustrated animation sequence epitomises the West Papuan desire for simple survival, an assertion that West Papuan people are the custodians of a true paradise that the Indonesian military mafia has turned into a hell on earth.

Combining one of the oldest musical traditions of Earth, and inspired by the liberation music of West Papua's executed poet laureate Arnold Ap, the groundbreaking film *Strange Birds in Paradise* shows the spirit of West Papuan resistance is alive and building, and refusing to accept more than 45 years of brutal occupation by Indonesia. Rarely does a film tell a hidden story of a truly miserable

situation with such beauty, and with great sensitivity in attempting to understand all players' perspectives in this ongoing tragedy. Australian director Charlie Hill-Smith has woven together many complex threads to create this rich and evocative tapestry clearly showing the 'mystery of life' in Papua today.

With innovative storytelling methods unseen in documentaries, Hill-Smith explores differing experiences and perspectives of Indonesia's colonial occupation of Papua, from everyday people, musicians, artists, academics, freedom fighters, refugees, activists; telling the stories of those who resist and have martyred themselves to protect the survival of one of the oldest, most linguistically diverse cultures, custodians of an earthly paradise.

Strange Birds accurately portrays the hope and occasional disconnectedness of those forgotten in the jungle, and the energy of the new generation. Particularly poignant today, it accurately depicts the losses of that new generation of civil resistance from Papua's new generation of elite forced to hide in insecure border camps after being hunted like animals. One failing is probably the lack of focus on the rise and transformation of the civil resistance movement inside, but one can read between the

lines in the value that is given to the power of songs for freedom.

West Papua is a place that is still off limits to foreign journalists and human rights observers, with Jakarta sharing a dubious honour with Syria and other dictatorships as among a few countries that ban independent verification of abuse. The film was shot undercover in West Papua and Papua New Guinea, with the film crew posing as tourists. *Strange Birds* shines a bright light on the otherwise ignored experience of West Papuans living a daily death. Capturing the intrinsic language of *singing for life* that is at the heart of Papuan culture, daily life, resistance and survival, *Strange Birds* advocates clearly the core message that music can rise above tyranny. An evocative soundtrack written by Arnold Ap, and arranged by Australian music legend David Bridie, with West Papuan singer-activists providing the beautiful Melanesian harmonies, bring to life some of the most important songs Arnold Ap wrote to rally his people to fight for their liberation.

Ap, a pioneering Papuan ethnomusicologist at Cenderawasih University, was arrested in 1983 by the Indonesian military for recording traditional West Papuan songs. Together with nonviolent movement founders Jacob Rumbiak and Thomas Waing-

gai, Ap helped pioneer a sense of ethnic pride for West Papuan culture that Jakarta wanted destroyed forever. Ap was executed extrajudicially in 1984, shortly after he recorded the song 'Mystery of Life', which was smuggled out via a prison guard to his wife. According to Ap: *'I sing to live, singing is a sign of life. If I am not singing it means I am already dead.'*

'Strange Birds' powerfully documents the power and reverence in which Ap's music is still held by West Papuan people, as the soundtrack to self-determination. Hill-Smith explains: 'I believe art is a weapon and culture is life. As long as the West Papuans can sing they will prevail and Arnold Ap will never die.'

Faced with the dilemma of how to counter more than 45 years of wilful ignorance of the West Papua issue by the international community, *Strange Birds* manages to highlight a powerful undercurrent that has maintained people's identity, and hope, through a genocide that has claimed over 526,000 West Papuan lives since 1962.

Jacob Rumbiak, an exiled West Papuan political diplomat and academic, describes *Strange Birds* as 'a diploma for somebody who knows nothing about West Papua'. Certainly, audiences in Europe, Asia and Australasia have been deeply

moved by the film, with many asking the question: 'Why do the international media ignore this issue?' Why indeed? One theory is the majority of international media is so embarrassed by its craven, complicit behaviour that to suddenly report it would highlight media weakness. Tyranny must be documented; resistance must be documented too.

West Papua's history means that any truthful analysis will necessarily examine the crimes of Indonesia's military and their multinational corporate enablers like Freeport and the timber industry, and also why the West turns a blind eye as a modern day Eldorado is plundered into a wasteland. The vast forests of Papua, protected for millennia by a deep and reverential connection with its inhabitants, are being felled illegally by the military to feed Australia's obsession for merbau outdoor furniture and flooring, and our insatiable need for palm oil. Wherever the Indonesian military kleptocracy decides to pillage next, the raiders attempt to eliminate any organised resistance by engaging punitive sweeps against civilians.

Hill-Smith, together with producers Jamie Nicolai and John Cherry, has used visually rich animation sequences by Colin Moore, and contemporary *wayang kulit* shadow puppetry to perfectly illustrate the mercenary

dynamics of Indonesian occupation, and the deep motivations from Papuan traditional beliefs to maintain hope and transform survival into freedom. Interweaving his own personal journey of discovery, Hill-Smith takes the viewer on an epic journey through West Papua's history, sharing the journey he had as his eyes were opened after blundering into a forgotten warzone. Adopting the persona of Javanese *wayang kulit* hero Samar, he shares his shock of hearing 'the guarded whispers of sons, fathers, and brothers murdered'. The fact-checked evidence presented is confronting and sobering, which makes for uncomfortable viewing for those who have enjoyed the fruits of genocide occurring in Papua.

This film particularly juxtaposes the experience of non-political West Papuan farmers, activists, exiles, and refugees, as well as the lives of those who through their beliefs were forced to flee. Travelling through the Baliem Valley, the film highlights the neglect of Papuan people's welfare by Indonesia, and the shocking lack of educational resources or medical care. Hill-Smith meets an eight-year-old boy Ruben, deaf, in great pain from an easily preventable ear infection curable by access to simple drugs. With the nearest hospital in Wamena, the Indonesian government refuses to

supply basic medical services where they are needed most.

It is evident that ordinary people in the Baliem Valley are now too terrified to talk. In the Baliem Valley the brutality of the Indonesian military climaxed in 1981 during an operation known by local Dani tribespeople as 'Wamena Bleeds'. Almost 14,000 people were killed during an air and ground assault on civilians in the Highlands area.

Strange Birds is a travelogue in some ways, but also an examination of the human and historical landscape of West Papua, as vast and undiscovered as the forests daily being destroyed by the bulldozers of the military logging companies. It deftly illustrates Indonesian nationalism as being a political construct to unify all the disparate peoples of a new Javanese empire, a land of impunity for the plunderers, as West Papua is a very long way from Java.

Strange Birds provides a timely reminder that people do not leave their home, unless they have no other choice that refugees only flee to survive heinous abuse. The students fleeing from the 12 March 2006 riots conveyed a *cri de coeur* for the future of the homeland that people must respond to. During filming, and feeling completely helpless in an environment like isolated Skotchiou village

on the PNG/West Papua border. The whole crew were all so thoroughly moved at the core of our beings by what we witnessed that there were no question of staying silent.

Is this film an honest examination of the situation in Papua? Yes and No. Uncovering a hidden history is never an easy task, but Hill-Smith, through his own experience as an exchange student in Indonesia, has set about understanding Indonesian peoples' perceptions of the occupation as West Papua. Far more than just talking heads, the story is told with sensitivity and truth.

Hill-Smith cannot be accused of showing one-sidedness, the insistence on showing the Indonesian side of the story is a trait that admittedly was a trifle annoying during production. But the finished product is testament to the wisdom of this approach, in that the extremely honest and candid Indonesian perspective demonstrates clearly that the military is not loved by the people of Indonesia either. As the film demonstrates clearly, no observer can see the reality of Indonesia's military occupation and condone their behaviour.

**COMMUNICATION,
CULTURE AND SOCIETY
IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA:
YU TOK WANEM?**



**EDITED BY
EVANGELIA PAPOLITSANI
MICHAEL McMAHUS
AND PATRICK MATEOS
PREFACE AND CHAPTER
BY DAVID RUSSELL**

**YOUNG, EMERGING AND
ESTABLISHED RESEARCHERS
WRITE ABOUT ISSUES INVOLVING
MAINSTREAM MEDIA, SOCIAL
CONCERNS, DEVELOPMENT AND
THE INFORMATION GAP IN PAPUA
NEW GUINEA.**

ISBN 1 877007 00 0
PUBLISHED BY
DIVERSITY MEDIA UNIVERSITY PRESS
AND PACIFIC MEDIA CENTRE

PACIFIC MEDIA CENTRE
AUT UNIVERSITY
CAMPUS FROM LITTLE ISLAND PRESS
ARCHIVED FROM
LITTLE ISLAND PRESS
PACIFIC MEDIA
CENTRE





DR GILES DODSON is a lecturer in communication studies at Unitec, Auckland.

A rich profile of protest and global communication

Transnational Protests and the Media, edited by Simon Cottle and Libby Lester. New York: Peter Lang, 2011 331 pp. ISBN 978-4331-09-85-0

ON 15 February 2003, several millions of engaged, networked and technologically enabled protesters took to the streets of world capitals to demand the halt of US-UK plans to invade Iraq. This broad coalition of opposition, which transcended the persistent localising imperatives of specific issues, identities, affiliations and interests, was global in scope and expressed clearly the ‘imagined solidarity’ or ‘global civil society’ of which it is the aspiration of transnational protest to mobilise.

Notably too, as *Transnational Protests and the Media* points out, in the pre-invasion phase of the Iraq



conflict, (UK) mass media undid the trend toward the marginalising and de-legitimising coverage of protest, providing ‘generous and sympathetic reporting’ of the million-strong rally (p. 70).

Nonetheless, as *The Guardian* reported the same day, for officials of the UK government, the largest public demonstrations ever seen, ‘... changes nothing at all. The quicker it is done the better.’ (*The Guardian*, 17 February, 2003). How then do scholars account for the ‘democratising promise’ of transnational protests and the ignoring responses of governments and international governmental organisations?

This question is central to understanding contemporary protests and their role in the putative processes of emerging global solidarities and in the political processes of policy development. The point of protest on the world stage, after all, is to change it.

Transnational Protests and the Media provides a thoroughgoing account of the processes through and by which the ‘transnational’, as both identity and political action, is materialised through communicative activities. As such the volume provides insight into the transaction of global demonstrations through the formations of worldwide media and communication networks, attempting, and succeeding for the most part, in making sense of the vast and eclectic range of material thrown up by the international protest movements of the last decade.

However, while the authors suggest that the global era opens up possibilities to reconfigure communicative power, protest and thus politics, the failure of protest to bring about substantial political change in liberal democracies, is insufficiently investigated or theorised. The ‘war on terror’, global climate change and international financial crisis have all drawn significant global protest, yet substantial change in policy direction is difficult to discern internationally, to say nothing of the urgent, yet

unsuccessful struggles against authoritarianism with which the volume engages (China, Iran).

Transnational Protests and the Media avoids approaching the power of protest and demonstration as determined by the capability provided by media technology. While today’s communications ecology does indeed offer unprecedented opportunities to activists and enables the relocation of protest from the local to the global level—this book makes clear that how such technology is used and the extent of its efficacy must be carefully considered, both empirically and theoretically.

Although the translation of political protest into concrete policy direction is somewhat under-theorised in this volume, the book includes a host of chapters drawing on empirical analysis of the enactment and diffusion of mediated protest. And these empirical chapters are arranged according to the focus of the protest activities under examination; war and peace, economy and trade, ecology and climate, and civil and human rights.

In chapter four, Murray et al (2011) provide an analysis of the coverage of the anti-Iraq War protests by British media. Finding that the media provided favourable coverage of the mass demonstrations, the authors argue against the interpretation

of the mass media's role as substantially supportive of the political elites and de-legitimatising of 'alternative' views.

The reversion, however, to media frames of patriotism and 'support the troops' once the invasion was underway, indicates how short-lived the contemporary media's sympathy towards the 'protest paradigm' may be.

In chapter five, Stephen Reese argues the Iraq protests must be understood in relation to the 'global news sphere', which has disrupted, to an extent, the tendency for dissent and protest to become marginalised by a media sector beholden to political and military elites. The argument however that the diffuse nature of the current media environment restricts the dismissal of public sentiment and that public opposition to war policy had 'serious political fallout' (p. 76), requires further development. On one hand, the pro-war leaders of the US and UK were returned to office, while on the other hand the election loss by the pro-war Spanish Prime Minister, Jose Maria Aznar, seems minor fallout when viewed globally.

Transnational protest is circumspect about attributing significant power to the international protest movement—in a clear-eyed chapter on the 'global social justice' movement and its efficacy post-Seattle, Rojecki (p. 92) argues that although

in the contemporary era protesters are not constrained by the discursive limits imposed by elites (Gitlin, 1980), it remains uncertain that hard-edged critique and reform can be launched from post-modern lifestyle and identity politics of which much of the 'global social justice' coalitions consist. Although new media technologies offer international demonstrators much-enhanced networking and publicity capabilities, Rojecki notes that despite the high profile of international demonstrations, the general level of political engagement among Western public's remains low and indeed the 'mainstream media' remain vitally important to protest, despite the establishment of worldwide independent (Indy) media centers and the like.

How transnational protest uses digital media for its own ends is vividly described in chapters 11 and 13, focusing on the online campaigns to protect Tasmania's wilderness areas and on the exploits of the *Sea Shepard* conservation group respectively. A sophisticated understanding of the capacity for communications technology to project protests, tree-based sit-in and the violence of pro-logging groups enabled Tasmanian environmental groups to overcome their relative obscurity and global-powerlessness to establish substantial international networks and media

coverage, frequently garnering supportive coverage in mainstream media.

Sea Shepard, as local readers will be very aware have taken their use, manipulation and exploitation of the media substantially further, in their campaigns to halt Japanese whaling in the ‘global commons’ of the Southern Ocean. Incorporating pop-cultural pirate-imagery with spectacular and daring encounters with the Japanese whaling fleet—and deluging media outlets, activist networks, YouTube and Twitter with their self-produced reportage, *Sea Shepard* have successfully cultivated a ‘global citizenship’ and ‘imagined solidarity’ around the protection of Southern whales, only possible through digital and satellite communication and information technologies. Although ‘image events’ (DeLuca, 1999) are not novel within the protest repertoire, Crouch and Damjanov argue in chapter 13 that *Sea Shepard’s* construction of a globally common, spectacular, transnational-scape constitutes a novel development. Furthermore, the spectacular nature of *Sea Shepard’s* mediated activities confounds theorists such as Baudrillard and Debord, who dismiss the potential for progressive social action within the ‘society of the spectacle’. As the authors point out, the spectacle of

anti-whaling activist-pirates has been vigorously and successfully exploited by *Sea Shepard* as a galvanising political tool.

Transnational Protests and the Media provides a rich and nuanced view of the interconnection between global protest and global communication processes. While the question of the impotence of protest in liberal democracy is under-examined, the volume is commendably circumspect over the power of new media to deliver global profile, impact and efficacy to global protest. The relationship between protest, power and the global political-public sphere has however been altered by the contemporary configurations of transnational networks and an uneven and intermittent emergence of a global ‘imagined solidarity’ must be considered in its local particular context, a theme emphasised by several contributors to this volume.

Transnational Protests provides a clear account of many of these particularities and as such is a welcome and current contribution to the field of international communication.

References

- DeLuca, K. M. (1999) *Image Politics*. New York: Guildford Press
- Gitlin, T. (1980). *The whole world is watching*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

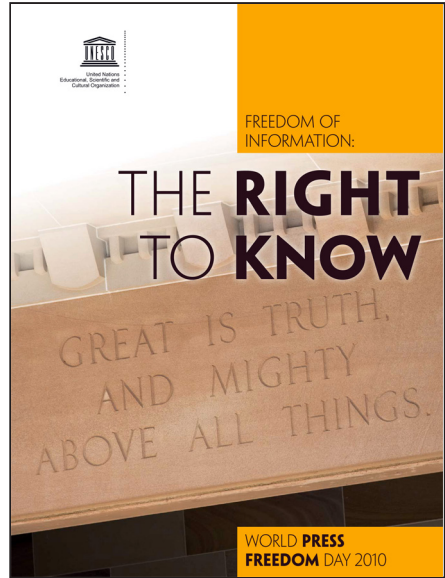
Noted

DR EVANGELIA PAPOUTSAKI
is associate professor of
communication studies at Unitec,
Auckland, and reviews editor of
PJR.

FOI laws grow stronger but so does the intimidation

UNESCO 2011. *Freedom of Information: The Right to Know.* Paris: UNESCO. World Press Freedom Day 2010 (e-publication) <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001936/193653E.pdf>

UNESCO's recent e-publication based on the 2010 World Press Freedom Day conference, hosted by Queensland University in Brisbane last May, brings together a remarkable selection of presentations by journalists, media and communication professionals from different regions including a substantial contribution from the Pacific. This publication serves as a reminder of the importance of journalists' work, the risks they face and the urgency of



securing their safety and punishing those who violate their right to report freely and safely.

The publication is grouped around six themes focusing on the current status of freedom of information around the world and the challenges and implications for news media, freedom of information as an empowerment tool, issues of transparency and accountability and fighting against corruption, the right to know in the digital age, pressures journalists face in conflict reporting and a whole section on the South Pacific. This last section deals with the threats to media freedom and freedom of information in this region and the contributors bring their stories from

Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu and a regional media approach to the right to know. One could ask how you can make an argument about freedom of information when lack of infrastructure for instance results in media not reaching big parts of these islands populations. Access, voice and participation are still big issues for this region.

The Pacific is also present in the other themes but having a section devoted to this region is undoubtedly a great step forward in bringing recognition to the challenges some of the Islands journalists and media currently face. As Kalafi Moala said at the first Pacific Freedom Forum meeting in Apia in 2008 when asked what he wanted to tell UNESCO WPF 2010 about the Pasifika media community: 'Notice us. We exist!' (Pacific Island Journalism Online, 24 August 2011).

This publication does not include all the Pacific presentations made at the UNESCO conference such as John Woods' excellent paper on the challenges the *Cook Islands News* is facing as a result of challenging the Prime Minister and his cabinet on issues of transparency and accountability in spite of the country's *Official Information Act*. These papers were published in the 'Media freedom in Oceania' edition of the *Pacific Journalism Review* (2010).

Although freedom of information laws have been on the increase around the world, so have incidents of intimidation and attacks on journalists as indicated in the third part of this publication which focuses on issues of transparency, accountability and the fight against corruption. Azhgikhina, the secretary of the Russian Union of Journalists, argues that the intimidation and murder of Russian journalists that go unpunished indicate a serious illness in society (p. 73). The right to know should be seen as an entitlement for all, not a favour as La Rue argues (p. 32). And those journalists who defend the truth on behalf of others can claim to attain a higher sense of self or state of being according to Hunter (p. 97)

Overall there is immediacy in the language that engages the reader, as it is mostly the case with this kind of publications that are based on papers delivered as presentations.

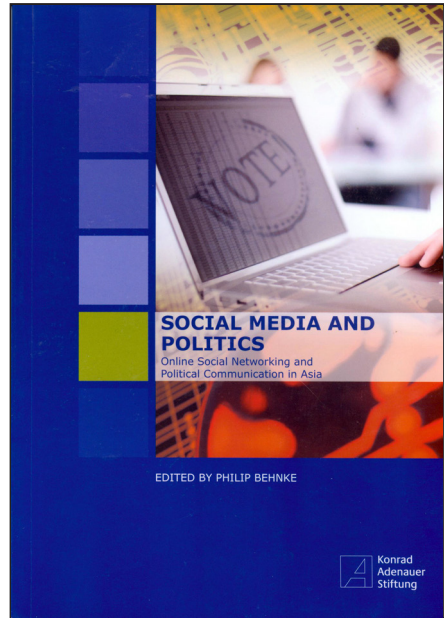
Reference

WPF 2010: Media freedom in Oceania (2010, October). *Pacific Journalism Review* (v16, n1). Available online at: <http://search.informit.com.au/browsePublication;py=2010;vol=16;res=E-LIBRARY;issn=1023-9499;iss=2>

The Twitter revolution

Social Media and Politics: Online social networking and political communication in Asia, edited by Philip Behnke. Singapore: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2010. 140pp. No ISBN number.

THIS BOOK provides an informative snapshot of where countries in and around Asia are with their technology and how governments are responding. Behnke binds together reports from Pakistan to the Pacific, some of which include analyses of elections such as the 2010 ‘Twitter election’ in Australia, and more conflicting chapters of politics such as the Thai ‘Red Shirts’ political crisis during 2010, as well as the 2010 Philippine election. Alastair Carthew reports on the tendency of heavy-handed governments such as the previous Thai rulers using Twitter to send quick updates to its supporters while blocking more than 50,000 websites, showing governments are as competent as their citizens when in keeping up with developments and none more so than China and Vietnam. The micro-blogging craze through sites such as *Sina Weibo* reportedly provided a decent challenge to censors, however Zhai Zheng notes the self-censorship phenomenon as well, where sites comply with government policy and toe the line in a bid to stay online. Zheng



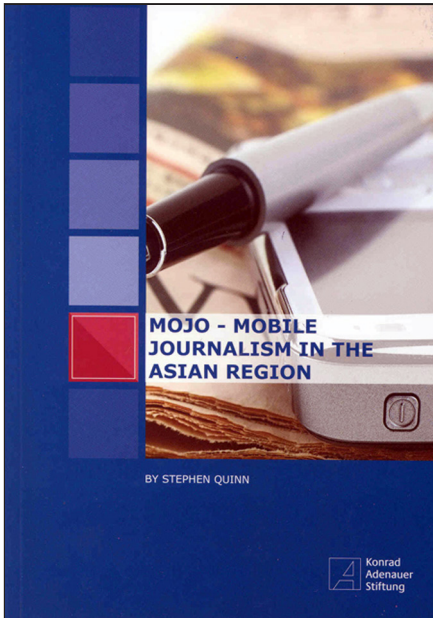
quotes an expert in new media from the School of Journalism and Communications at Peking University, Hu Yong, who makes the point that a ‘100 percent Twitter clone won’t survive in China. Striking a balance between the country’s internet regulations and users’ increasing demands for speedy real time information is like tightrope walking.’ Just as ‘microblogging’ is praised for the speedy flow of information, particularly during events such as the Yushu earthquake, Ji-hyun Cho reports that Korea has encouraged the younger and tech-savvy generation to get out to vote—surely a boon for democracy. Articles in the collection list pages of revealing facts on the

increasing millions of Asian internet users, even in developing nations. Vietnam's usage grew by 10,882 percent last decade and it looks as though India's usage is set to explode with half of its 1.16 billion people under 25 years of age; a relatively small 16.18 million internet users is going to multiply rapidly in a short time. The research highlights governments are clearly aware of the impact of technology on the dissemination of information. Cambodia's Ministry of Information spokesman is quoted: 'Personal interaction and direct contact with voters will ultimately determine the choices and responses of voters.' Yet others like Vietnam see the need to curtail. Human Rights Watch in 2010 observed that the Government detained bloggers while permitting cyber attacks against anti-government pages. Stephen Quinn's article quotes Vietnam's Prime Minister Nguyễn Tấn Dũng: 'The truth is always the truth but we must choose the suitable time to tell the truth to ensure the country's interests.' While the reports provide excellent case studies, many questions remain, such as how deep is the effect on political results? And is it really a revolution in itself or simply an ever-adapting medium? —Alex Perrottet is *Pacific Media Watch's* contributing editor.

How to be a mojo in Asia

Mojo-mobile journalism in the Asian region, by Stephen Quinn. Singapore: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung: 2009. 66 pp. No ISBN. E-book at www.kas.de/wfi/doc/kas_18599-544-1-30.pdf

STEPHEN QUINN presents in this rather concise publication the concept of mobile journalism (*mojo*) within the Asian context. Along with practical tips on how to be a mojo in this region, Quinn provides case studies and examples in an anecdotal form from Asia and around the world to support his argument that journalists in Asia need to embrace new technologies and learn how to maximise the use of mobile phones to improve and increase their mobility. The author links his argument for mobile journalism with the rapid growth of mobile and internet use in Asia which contributes not only to further technological advancements in this area but also to an increased demand for more and 'fresher' news. All journalists are potential mojos, although not all will engage with this form of journalism. This approach is more appropriate for the first level of reporting, breaking news. A mojo, according to Quinn, uses a mobile phone to gather and distribute news which can consist of text, audio, stills or video or a combination.



Mojos tend to work alone, in comparison to video journalists for instance who tend to operate in a small team. Mobile technology allows the mojo journalist to operate thus in a more discreet and faster way. The book is organised around five small chapters, outlining what mobile journalism is, how to be a mobile journalist, techniques of mojo reporting and how to address workflows issues. There is undoubtedly a need for new newsroom structures that are relevant for knowledge-age workforces and Quinn provides here suggestions that best support mojo journalism. Ethical and privacy issues are very briefly touched. As the author says,

codes of ethics vary enormously in the Asian region which makes it very difficult to provide overall guidelines.—*Dr Evangelia Papoutsaki is associate professor in communication studies at Unitec, Auckland.*

Vital media resource

Routledge Companion to News and Journalism, edited by Stuart Allan. London: Routledge, 2010. 642 pp. ISBN 978-0-415-46529-8

OVER the past two decades, all aspects of media-communication have been reshaped by economic, technological and social forces. It is difficult to track these multiple changes and to evaluate their general significance. All sub-fields of media-communication research contain burgeoning literatures in need of conceptual and empirical classification. Major publishers are rapidly addressing this situation.

Wiley-Blackwell, for example, have recently produced handbooks in the fields of Global Communication, Global Communication and Media Ethics, Internet Studies, Intercultural Communication, Media Audiences and the Political Economy of Communication. The *Routledge Companion of News and Journalism* is a welcome addition to this genre. Editor Stuart Allan has done remarkably well to arrange 56 chapters and

The Routledge Companion to News and Journalism



Edited by Stuart Allan

an introductory essay across 636 pages of text. One is immediately struck by the size and complexity of this field. The *Companion's* articles consider the ideals and professional histories of journalism, sub-categories of journalistic practice (photo, sports, investigative and autobiographical journalism) along with the national, cultural and gender specificities of practising journalists. Other articles place journalism and news media content within broader contexts. Thus, various authors discuss radio-news publics, development journalism, international news flows, nationally-specific news media organisations and the global ecology of television network news. One particular section

of the book deals with the interlinked processes of news gathering, news construction and news presentation across different media platforms. Another section is devoted to normative evaluations of news and journalism. Such articles deal with infotainment, tabloidisation, public sphere principles and racial diversity in news reporting and news stories.

A number of articles deal with the social reception of news media content. Important themes here include citizenship and public knowledge, ethnographies of news consumption, news consumption and social memory. Another set of chapters looks at news and journalism against the backdrop of crisis and conflict. Relevant titles here include 'Journalists and war crimes', 'Peace journalism', 'News and foreign policy', 'Reporting the climate change crisis', 'Iconic Photojournalism and Absent Images: Democratisation and Memories of Terror'. The historic significance of digitalisation and internet communication is considered in Mark Deuze's 'Journalism and convergence culture' and Natalie Fenton's 'News in the Digital Age'. The economic plight of newspapers and newspaper workers in Western countries is sharply depicted in James Compton's 'Newspapers, labour and the flux of economic uncertainty'. The globalisation of media-communication is

detailed in Simon Cottle's 'Global crises and world news ecology', in Lisbeth Clausen's 'International news flow' and in Dayan Thussu's 'Television news in the era of global infotainment'. The proliferation of non-Western journalism and news media is acknowledged in Qing Cao's 'Journalism and political change: The case of China' and in Silvio Waisbord's 'Rethinking development journalism'. My abiding impressions from this *Companion* are somewhat contradictory. In one sense the sheer diversity of news organisations and journalistic practices testifies to their resilience. It is equally evident, however, that the critical functions of news and journalism are vulnerable to commercial pressures, state and military coercion and the pervasiveness of global media spectacles.

Furthermore, news organisations and journalists cannot assume the existence of a public domain and an informed citizenry. Our intensely mediated world may be inhabited by atomised, depoliticised people without the capacity for public argument. Whatever one's point of view, this *Companion* will serve as a vital resource for media academics, journalism educators, media professionals, political participants and all others of an inquiring mind. —*Dr Wayne Hope is associate professor communication studies at AUT University.*



**A special screening
of the award-winning
documentary by
Charlie Hill-Smith.**

***Indonesia Human Rights
Committee (IHRC)***

***Amnesty International
Auckland (AI)***

Pacific Media Centre (PMC)

**Place: Academy Cinema (below
Auckland City Library)**

Date: Thursday, 20 October 2011

Time: 6pm - nibbles and drink

6.45pm - movie starts

Tickets: \$20 - Waged

\$10 - Unwaged/Students