



THE UNIVERSITY  
of ADELAIDE

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5<sup>th</sup> Indian Ocean Dialogue, Durban, 1-2 August 2018

**ROLE OF ACADEMICS WITHIN THE INDIAN  
OCEAN REGION**

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# Introduction:

Through the pursuit of academic and economic diplomacy, independent science and research, publication, and education-based activities, academics are capable of pursuing research and training goals which enhance governmental, business and civil society objectives of the day. In addition, regional academic communities are unusually and positively placed to engage in more complex, wider-ranging, longer-term research questions and pursuits when compared to other localised policy-making processes.

# Role of Academics in the Indian Ocean Region

1. Academic Diplomacy;
  2. 'Thinking Like a Region';
  3. Education and Vocational Training;
  4. An Independent Voice.
  5. Understanding Complexity
-

# Academic Diplomacy I

The Indian Ocean Region is of vital geopolitical importance, is a celebration in terms of its diversity in political systems, cultural institutions and ethno-religious identities. This diversity is the true strength of the region. The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), is based on a form of maritime regionalism, now going from strength-to-strength, with a range of different and exciting region-building initiatives. Despite this cultural diversity, this region exists in real, biophysical terms: linked together as it is by the Indian Ocean itself, by its trade winds and seas, leading to regional interactions such as trade, migration, **and the sharing of systems of knowledge since ancient times.**

# Academic Diplomacy II

Today, epistemic communities continue to be key movers in building and strengthening this tradition of Indian Ocean regionalism – across the full gamut of intellectual enterprises, including the sciences, the social sciences, arts and humanities – in vibrant, knowledge-rich societies where economic and environmental prosperity is driven by knowledge and scientific innovation. It provides opportunities to build bridges and increase networking between the three tiers of government, private sector and academia, within the region.

# **Emergence of Academic Diplomacy Within IORA**

## **IOR-ARC March 1995 Academic Sub-Committee**

1. Recognising that the primary thrust of the Indian Ocean Rim Initiative is economic a meeting of academics (from Mauritius, India, Australia and South Africa) agreed that they should combine their established networks and expertise to support the initiatives of regional co-operation by facilitating complementary research, development and training programs.

# **IOR-ARC March 1995**

## **Academic Sub-Committee**

2. The group recognized the centrality of informed policy making to the success of regional co-operation, and the need for a responsive knowledge and research base to support the development of such policy.

3. The group also recognized the need for the development of human resources in the context of fast evolving regional and international economic environment, including the requirements of closer cross-cultural human intercourse.

# **IOR-ARC March 1995** **Academic Sub-Committee**

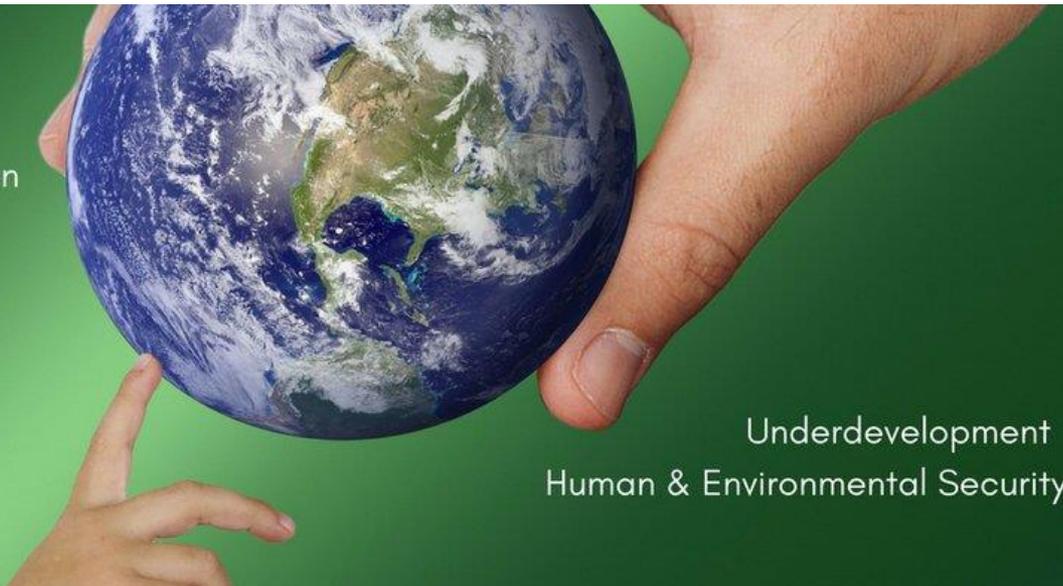
4. With these broad objectives in mind the group highlighted their ability to interact immediately, on the basis of their existing networks, with one another (individually and institutionally) to service the need for data collection and distribution, policy information, training and development programmes, and source materials and information.

# Thinking ‘Like a Region’.

## K.V. Bhagarath

‘Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group meeting in Jakarta in 12 October 2016’, (page 36), the Secretary-General, Ambassador K.V. Bhagarath, made the following comments about the *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region* (Routledge, London):

‘The Secretary-General ... stated that the *JIOR* marks a stronger period of development for IOR, and that the Journal continues not just to build academic enquiry in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), but also continues to be actively engaged in actual region-building’.

A hand is shown holding a small, realistic globe of the Earth. The globe is positioned in the center-right of the frame, showing the Americas. The background is a solid green color. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Regional Geopolitics    Maritime Issues  
Conservation        Resource Exploitation  
Human Trade & Cooperation  
Ocean Resources

Underdevelopment  
Human & Environmental Security

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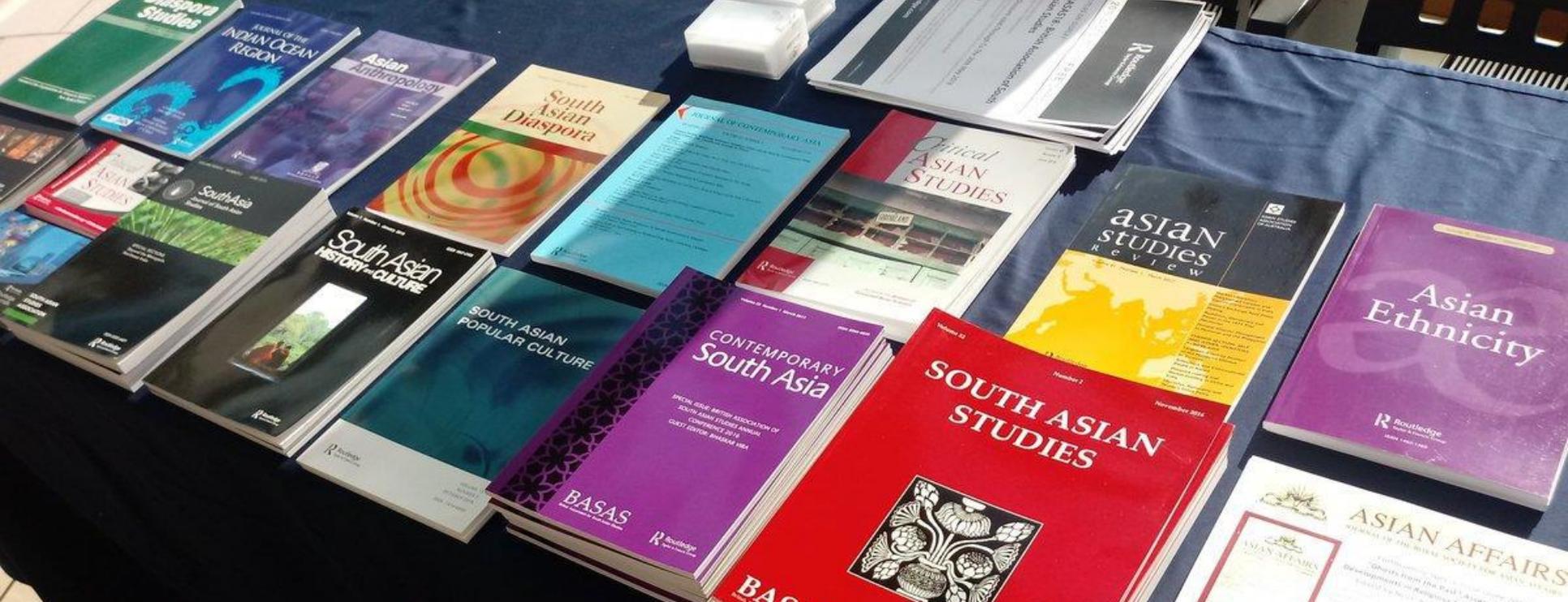
# Academic Independence: Emergence of *JIOR*

*JIOR*'s affiliation with IORA emerged directly from the IORAG reform process in 2013. At the meeting of IORAG Sub-Committee on Improving and Restructuring IORAG held in Perth 31 October 2013, a number of proposed recommendations were listed.:

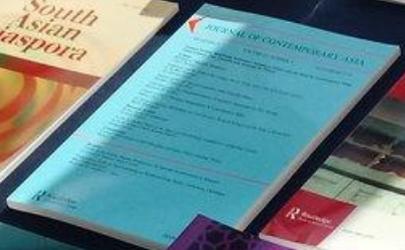
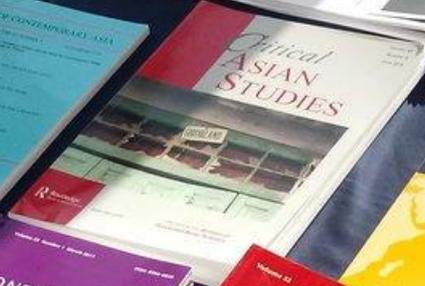
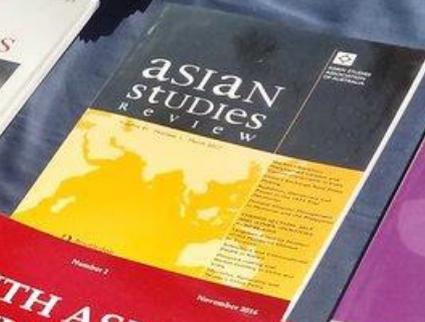
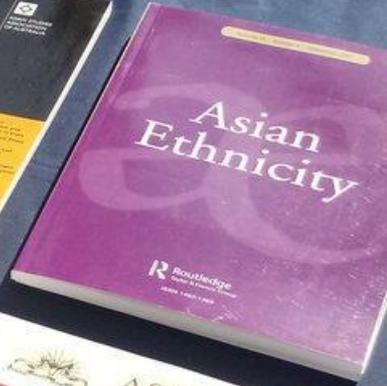
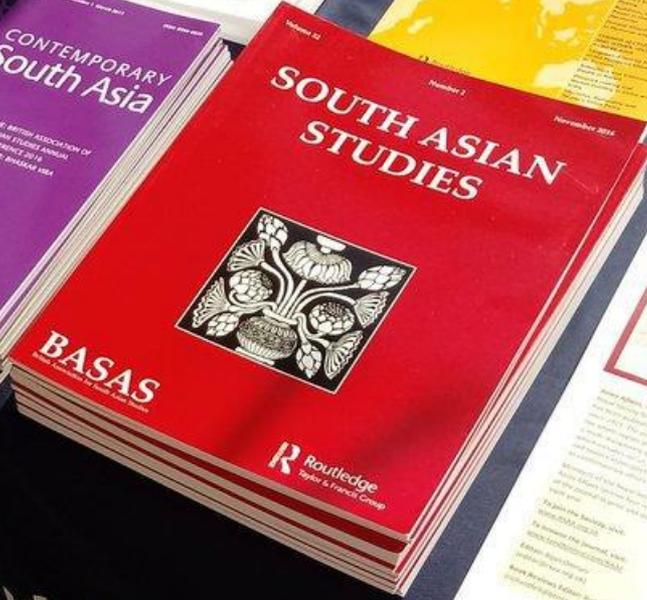
1. The importance of having a peer review process as part of monitoring and evaluating the quality of the ongoing research or academic activity.

2. IORAG has to publish its research, papers and other outputs (seminar proceedings, policy papers, position papers, abstracts etc.) in the form of a journal or IORAG Annual Academic compilation.

3. The Academic compilation/Journal should be distinguished from the 'Administrative' Annual Report, which is presented to the CSO at the IORA Annual Meeting.



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# JIOR: Empowering Voices Within and Without

Aligned with its vision of high quality, cross-regional research programs, JIOR places increasing emphasis on developing academically independent, internationally recognised, peer-reviewed science, social science and humanities research outputs. Avenues for research publication are being pursued within the IORAG network, but equally importantly, substantial effort is being invested to raise IORAG's profile as a prestigious, respected academic group in other international academic and public fora.

# International Editorial Board

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# EDUCATION AND PRACTICAL TRAINING EXAMPLE -INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE

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Led by Professor Peter Draper, the Institute for International Trade (IIT) is an interdisciplinary research institute with a focus on trade and development issues, economics, business and law.

Founded in 2003, the IIT is a leading global institution with an international focus and a reputation for providing academically rigorous and practical trade training, policy advice and technical assistance relating to international trade policy.

# WHAT Institute for International Trade DOES



# **PRACTICAL, SPECIALISED TRADE RESEARCH/CONSULTING**

Much of our research and training is conducted in support of governments, industry and coordinating bodies responsible for the effective implementation of regional and development cooperation projects and activities, with the ultimate goal of enhancing trade facilitation through the simplification and harmonisation of international trade policies and procedures and the strengthening of local and regional capacity to effectively engage in the global economy.

# CUSTOMISED TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

- We provide a customised learning experience, incorporating face to face seminars, discussions, simulations and interactive workshops led by renown educators, government and business leaders with experience in international trade and development.
- Our programs can be customised to include peer to peer learning in and outside the classroom, site visits and guest speakers from organisations with first-hand experience in international trade and economic development, case studies providing practical government and industry examples relevant to the program content and networking opportunities with peak industry bodies, government agencies and businesses.

# Beyond the 'Practical', Beyond the Adversarial – the Case of Trade

1. Abilities to Challenge 'Groupthink' eg International Trade as either/or Geopolitical option – Indo-Pacific versus One Belt One Road;
2. Abilities to Challenge Polarisation of Free Market and Mercantilist Models – Understanding Complex Nature of Societies and Markets

# **The Role of Journalism, Adversarial and/or Public Relations: BRICS – Shorter Term Focus - Polarisation and Simplification of Trade Policy**

“Countries have to make decisions about how they want to engage with the wider world. Do they want an economy that is inclusive, outward looking, and open to investment? Or do they want to embrace mercantilist policies of protectionism and isolationism? The BRICS countries have given a clear answer’.

Source: China Media Group, *The Mercury*, July 30, 7.

# **An Academic Response to BRICS – Longer Term Investment Models: Workplace and Human Rights, Environmental Protection, Community Participation**

‘A new BRICS company Africa investment model must produce more jobs, reduce poverty more effectively, create more wealth, more widely to Africans; and transfer technology, upgrade Africa’s skills base and create new domestic African businesses.’

Source: William Gumede, University of Witwatersrand, author of *South Africa in BRICs* (Tafelburg)

# Conclusions: Academic, Region, Independence, Critical, Complex

1. Abilities to Critique Dominant Paradigms using Critical Analyses, Non-Nation-Statist perspectives, and Longer Term time frames;
2. Importance of models of development which argue for Inclusive and Ecologically Sustainable Development and High Quality Development – development infrastructure projects initiated and/or partnered by local NGOs, companies and states with donor organisations



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