

# Laudation

## For the Hedley Bull Prize in International Relations 2024

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The Jury has this year chosen to award the prize to Lachlan McNamee of Monash University.

The jury had the following to say:

In his book, Lachlan McNamee focuses on the reasons and factors that drive the settlement policies of many states, resulting in the displacement and suffering of indigenous peoples. In particular, he examines the internal dynamics of settler colonialism and the declining power of colonisers in a rapidly urbanising world. Noting that vast areas of the world have been forcibly colonised by settlers over the past few centuries, Lachlan seeks to understand why developed states such as Australia and the United States stopped settling frontier lands in the twentieth century, and why vocal decolonisers such as Indonesia and China began settling the lands of minorities such as the West Papuans and Uighurs.

Lachlan offers a powerful argument. In developing countries, political elites can easily persuade their citizens to migrate to a contested frontier by offering free land to settlers. In more developed countries, on the other hand, citizens are naturally attracted to economic activity in urban centres. This reverses the flow of migration from the periphery to the metropolis.

The book has several merits. First, it is not limited to the analysis of the traditional European colonial state as a settler, but also embraces different geographies and political contexts, including states that seem committed to decolonisation. Secondly, it does not just discuss colonisation, but a specific form of it, namely the displacement of indigenous peoples by settlers and the forced redistribution of land from one to the other.

By pointing out that states and settlers may have different interests, Lachlan makes an important contribution to the literature on colonisation, highlighting aspects that are usually neglected.

The selection of case studies, from Australia to Indonesia, from China to Israel, is particularly powerful in demonstrating the book's main assumptions and offering further avenues for future research and analysis.

The argument is thoughtful, stimulating, and provocative, and no doubt will generate response. As the current political crisis has shown, there is an urgent need to reflect on colonialism, secessionism and settlement. This book has the courage to do so and to make a bold, rich, and rigorous contribution.

The jury praised Lachlan's book for deepening an issue that has been overlooked in the International Relations debate, and for offering a combination of refreshing and innovative theoretical reflections on the problem of decolonisation and settlement, and insightful and detailed case studies from different regions.

The book inspires a set of visions that can be very helpful in understanding current dynamics and crises. The author appeals to a wide readership, from experienced scholars and practitioners to students of undergraduate courses in international relations, and offers space for various policy implications.

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**Daniela Irrera**

On behalf of the Hedley Bull Prize Jury

European Consortium for Political Research

