On 27 May the shortlists of the IBP 2009 for the humanities and social sciences were uploaded to www.icassecretariat.org. Out of the 89 books received, eight remain on the shortlists, so there was stiff competition this year. The number of publishers on the list is now six out of an original 24. Washington University Press and Duke University Press have two books each on the shortlists, while Harvard University Press, KITLV Press, NUS Press and University of Hawai‘i Press are represented with one book each.

Paul van der Velde

The question ‘What criteria are used to draw up the longlists and shortlists?’ is one we hear often. There are several criteria which determine what is a good book: originality in the treatment of the topic; the depth of the research; opening up a new field of research; being a definitive study on a certain topic; being well written and making clear arguments. The 20 books on the longlists reflect one or more of these criteria and all are possible prize winners. Inclusion on the list is a significant achievement and means that the author belongs in the top tier of Asia scholars.

The eight books on the two shortlists possess a significant number of the criteria mentioned above. The final prize winners clearly have that little extra something which will ultimately convince the whole Reading Committee that these are the books that should win the prizes. The prizes will be awarded during the opening ceremony of ICAS 6 on 6 August 2009.

Two prizes for best PhD
The ICAS Secretariat, having consulted with the Reading Committee, has decided that in order to stimulate worldwide competition among young doctoral candidates, there should be two prizes for best PhD thesis: one for the humanities and one for the social sciences. This is on the grounds that there are also two book prizes in these categories. With this new symmetry we hope that for the fourth edition of the IBP in 2011, more PhD theses will be submitted. In order to actively stimulate participation in 2011, the two prize winners of this year will become members of the IBP PhD Reading Committee. They will also have the task of actively acquiring PhD theses for the IBP 2011. By that time, the works for which they were awarded the IBP 2009 will have materialised as publications in the ICAS Publications Series.

Vote for your colleague!
For the 2009 Colleagues’ Choice Award we have set up an online voting compass to facilitate the voting process and point you in the direction of books you might want to vote for. Simply ticking boxes on topics, themes and regions will lead you to the books you are interested in. The virtual polling booth will be open until 15 July 2009.

You can vote from the full lists of 89 titles submitted. Everyone can follow the voting process at www.icassecretariat.org. We hope that authors will mobilise their networks to gain votes for their books. The Colleagues’ Choice Award is all about involving as many Asia scholars as possible in the voting process. The winner of this prize – which consists of a ticket to the venue of ICAS 2011 and free accommodation for the duration of the convention – surely knows how to interest other people in his or her writings: an indispensable quality for any scholar in the increasingly competitive globalised field of Asia Studies!

Paul van der Velde
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All ICAS 6 participants can claim two free volumes of their choice from the ICAS Publications Series (as long as stocks last) using the vouchers in the delegate pack.

Orders for further volumes may be placed with Amsterdam University Press at www.aup.nl.
Shortlist Social Sciences


Shortlist PhD Social Sciences

- Building Political Parties from the Bottom Up: A Case Study of Four Parties' Branch Management in Malang, Indonesia by Ulf Fionna Defended 2008

- The Politics of Islamic Law: Local Elites and Colonial Authority in Malaysia, India and Egypt by Iza Hussain Defended 2008

Shortlist Humanities


- Competition over Content: Negotiating Standards for the Civil Service Examinations in Imperial China (1127-1279) by Hilde De Weerdt Published 2007 by Harvard University Press Hardback, ISBN 978-0-674-02588-2


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