

**MSDI RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES 2020**

# National Risk Assessment Exercises and Existential Risks

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University of Tokyo

Thu 5th March, 2020  
1.00PM – 2.00PM

The 2019 World Economic Forum Global Risks Report identified failure of climate change mitigation measures as one of the Top Five risks that will have the biggest impact over the next ten years.

The same report also highlighted the interconnectivity of climate change risks with others such as societal instability, conflict and “adverse consequences of technological advances” such as Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI and climate change fall into a category of “existential risk” which has gained growing prominence. Cambridge University Centre for Study of Existential Risks; Oxford University Future of Humanity Institute, and the Future of Life Institute have projects studying such risks. However, the existing literature remains largely silent on how governments and national risk assessment exercises might address this particularly alarming type of risk. How might such complex risks be assessed adequately in the policy processes of government agencies? This paper examines two countries that have developed risk assessment and foresight capabilities in their government institutions: Singapore and the United Kingdom. Based on field interviews, document analysis and stakeholder mapping, it comparatively evaluates how both countries assess two “existential risks”: Climate Change and AI, in terms of the methodology, mandates, institutions and processes involved. The paper also explores the limitations and difficulties of attempts to identify early warning signals of the interconnections between risks.

## WHEN

Thu 5th March, 2020  
1pm – 2pm

## WHERE

MSDI Conference Room,  
8 Scenic Boulevard,  
Clayton Campus

## ZOOM

<https://monash.zoom.us/j/180535806>



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### ABOUT PROF. YEE KUANG HENG

Yee Kuang HENG is Professor at the Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Tokyo. His areas of expertise include international security, global risks, and power in the Asia-Pacific. He has published widely in these areas, including the books *Managing Global Risks in an Urban Age* (Routledge 2016) and *Asia-Pacific Nations in International Peace Support and Stability Missions* (edited with Chiyuki Aoi, Palgrave 2014). His latest project focuses on the governance of national risk assessments, with a focus on risks associated with climate change and Artificial Intelligence. Professor Heng holds a PhD from the London School of Economics, and before joining the University of Tokyo held previous appointments at Trinity College Dublin, the University of St. Andrews and the National University of Singapore

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### About the Series

The MSDI Research Seminar Series aims to foster interdisciplinary conversations on the grand sustainable development challenges of our time. Through engaging speakers and topics, the series hopes to spark dialogue and collaboration across Monash University's research community for a sustainable future.

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<https://www.monash.edu/msdi/research-seminar-series/>