REQUEST FOR WORKSHOP PROPOSALS
DEADLINE: OCTOBER 2, 2012

The Conference Organizing Committee is pleased to announce an open call for proposals from faculty members at accredited universities and colleges in any world region to organize and direct a thematic workshop at an international conference, Inter-Asian Connections IV: Istanbul. Following on successful conferences held in Dubai in February 2008, Singapore in December 2010 and Hong Kong in June 2012, this conference will be held in Istanbul in October 2-5, 2013 and hosted by Koç University. The conference aims to showcase innovative research from across the social sciences and related disciplines on themes of particular relevance to Asia, re-conceptualized as a dynamic and interconnected historical, geographical, and cultural formation stretching from the Middle East through Eurasia, South Asia and Southeast Asia, to East Asia.

CONFERENCE WORKSHOP DETAILS & THEMES

Proposals are invited from faculty interested in organizing and directing a workshop on any one of the following broadly conceived themes. Members of the Conference Organizing Committee will select four-to-six workshops for inclusion in the final conference.

1) The Social Life of Capital in Asian Cities
   In the past decades, scholarship has focused on how the flow of global capital has transformed material environments and social life. With the rise of an interconnected Asia (both in neo-liberal and

and comparisons. We are interested in developing the study of connections - the exploration of historical and/or contemporary transnational/cross-national/trans-regional processes, structures, practices, and flows within and across the territorial and imaginative space of Asia, secondly convergences or the responses of different Asian societies to common processes, and finally comparisons involving the investigation of societies/politics within Asia, especially those that explore diverse and innovative units of comparison. In addition to the investigation of particular issues and processes as described in the workshop themes, the conference aims to critically investigate the ways in which fields of knowledge map Asia and imagine alternatives. Workshop directors should encourage papers that promote a conscious Inter-Asian project of inquiry. We aim at gathering as broad an international and multi-disciplinary representation of scholars as possible. We also encourage proposals for workshops that will see participation by activists, policymakers, media practitioners, and cultural producers addressing different aspects of the “Inter-Asian” conference theme.

1. The Conference Organizing Committee is composed of representatives from the following institutions: Social Science Research Council, Yale University, the National University of Singapore (NUS), the Hong Kong Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences (HKIHSS) at the University of Hong Kong, Göttingen University and Koç University
post-socialist terms), one sees new urban spaces in the making. From sustainability to consumption, institutional building, class polarization, family formation, and identity politics, Asian cities are (re) inventing themselves in multiple directions. Volatility of global investments combined with limited space and resources means that physical environments of cities are stressed and human ecology fragile. We can no longer understand these social landscapes with analytical lenses based on the usual East-West, North-South, market-state, rural-urban dichotomies. Workshops submitted under this theme are encouraged to treat mobility as constant (in capital, labor, family formations, values, etc.), and highlight conceptual issues in regional configurations driven by rapid turnover of capital and new financial instruments.

2) **Green and Brown in Asia**

Nature conservation and environmental protection have emerged as twentieth century issues across Asia that reflect distinct processes of “Asia-making” from the trade in animal body parts across Asia, to the circulation and redeployment of electronic waste. Forest and biodiversity conservation and the struggle for cultural and economic rights among ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples have shaped ideas of nature across Asia. At the same time rapid urbanization and the consumption of nature in Asian cities reveals shared experiences among middle classes and the poor, even as they are in conflict over extractive industries, water scarcities, hazardous industries, or the distribution of environmental risks and amenities across social groups. Workshops may address any of these topics either in terms of flows between Asian societies and regions or comparisons across different Asian experiences.

3) **Hubs and Hinterlands**

Recent work on Asian megacities focuses on their links to other cities in their regions and beyond. While continuing this line of inquiry we also wish to see how their urban and rural hinterlands have been affected and reshaped. Are new regional geographies emerging as hinterlands divide into multiple, overlapping regions, some networked to cores and others left behind? How do the hinterlands of new and newer hubs cross national borders and create alternative circulations? Although the topic is likely to have a contemporary focus, historical cases may also be very relevant.

4) **Connected Empires**

The history of Asia is one of empires: Russian, Ottoman, Safavid, Mughal, Chinese, Japanese and others. Workshops on this theme will be expected to address issues of historical exchange, mutual influence and overlaps between empires at the material, cultural and political level, in terms of trade, population movements, war and diplomacy, state building, governance, modernization, and reactions to the West.

5) **Food and Foodways**

Workshops interested in this theme may address topics like the political economy of food - its production, consumption, and distribution through wholesale markets and retail chains, or local commerce - biotechnology in agriculture and earlier technological revolutions that engineered food at places where it is grown, processed and prepared. They may also be interested in Asian foodstuffs and their circulation, changing cultures of eating and sharing food, organic and specialty food preferences, changing precepts on diet, health, and nutrition specific to the “Asian” body, and the itinerary of distinct Asian styles and flavors across Asia.

6) **Universities and New Transregional Classes**

Workshops will be expected to focus on aspects of the rapid expansion of tertiary education in Asian countries as well as the growing connections between educational institutions and student bodies across Asia. The numbers of university graduates are increasing indicating a qualitative transformation of the labor force and the national and transnational economies in which they are employed. What are the expectations of university graduates and
their relationship to the new middle classes with their novel economic, political, and cultural habits and expectations? The demand for university education strains state budgets, while privatization and deregulation create business opportunities for local and transregional corporate sectors, as well as for the rapidly globalizing Anglo-Saxon institutions of higher learning.

7) Politics of Racialization
How have ideologies of race and practices of racialization shaped understandings of Asia and Asianness? How do racial logics of boundary-drawing and boundary-crossing produce and transform transregional space? We encourage multidisciplinary workshops that explore the politics of racialization in the making and unmaking of Asia at different historical moments.

8) Land Speculation across Asia
This theme invites proposals for workshops that will focus on questions concerning land—such as raised by rapid urbanization, gated communities, new areas of business concentration, changes in patterns of agricultural use, and the creation of special economic zones. Workshops may wish to attend to histories of landed property, emergence and change in land markets, speculation and real estate bubbles, and the impact of rapid economic growth across Asia on land as commons, as property, as heritage, and as protected area.

9) Media and the Politics of Accountability
Across Asia today, different types of media—from traditional mass media to social networking technologies—are advancing claims of accountability upon governmental regimes as well as the private/corporate sectors. We encourage multidisciplinary workshops that investigate the comparative political dynamics and consequences of these variegated media accountability projects across Asia, and that delineate the normative opportunities and limits of a politics of media accountability within and across Asia.

10) Aging Societies: public policies, intimate dynamics, and biotechnologies
How do growing Asian economies face rapidly aging populations? Workshops should encourage closer examinations of specific demographic histories, family dynamics and public policies that affect labor demands, social needs, and institutional arrangements in elderly care. They can also focus on new biotechnologies, financial instruments, health strategies, and moral discourse that address changing demographics in an inter-connected Asia.

11) Inter-Asian Tourism
Workshops would examine processes connected with different and new types of touristic circulations, including the rapid development of touristic facilities aimed at attracting regional tourism and catering to tourists from particular Asian countries. Touristic itineraries that create cross-border linkages and remap local geographies are of particular interest as well as the ways in which the heritage and conservation industry comes into play in such reconfigurations and the circulation of experts becomes part of the economy of tourism development. Finally, workshops on how tourism intersects with rereadings and rewritings of national and post-national histories and identities would be highly relevant.

12) The Post Neo-Liberal State
How have Asian states responded to the effects of neo-liberal policies of privatization of public services and global market domination? Do new policies of redistribution, especially evident over the last ten years or less, extend market principles? How do the strategies of public-private partnerships, sovereign wealth funds or new technologies of surveillance/governance shape this changed role? How do these process connect or disconnect inter-state and inter-regional flows?

13) Refugees in the Making of Asia
Forced cross-border population movements are an important part of the remaking of Asian spaces and
defining border regimes. Workshops could examine the creation and administration of such spaces as refugee camps, holding centers, safe havens and so on and examine how such population flows impact both inter-state relations as well as social and cultural relations between different Asian populations. The ways in which the fuzzy boundary between forced and voluntary migration flows is defined across Asia is of particular interest as well as how such influxes can be seen as “making” or “breaking” Asia(s).

14) Picturing and Fictionalizing Asia
Circulations and connections through art, film, and fiction would be explored in these workshops, examining both the production of particular locales as well as the creation of Asia(s) as such. Memoirs, letters and other “private” modes of representing Asia could also be explored. Finally the political economy of artistic productions should also be a focus of attention.

APPLICATION PROCESS & ELIGIBILITY

Applications are invited from scholars who would like to convene an international workshop that brings together a group of researchers working on one of the aforementioned themes located in an “Inter-Asian” research landscape.

Each workshop should have two directors (with different institutional affiliations and preferably representing different disciplines) and will include approximately 10 participants (senior and junior scholars, graduate students, other researchers) chosen competitively from across relevant disciplines in the social sciences, humanities and related fields. Workshop directors selected by the Conference Organizing Committee will be expected to help recruit and select workshop participants, thus they should have sufficient research experience on the region and themes of their proposals. All directors will be selected according to four criteria:

i. The theoretical and/or empirical contributions of the workshop—i.e. the extent to which the proposed workshop represents an innovative and original contribution to existing scholarship on the subject;

ii. The “Inter-Asian” relevance of the workshop—i.e. the extent to which the proposed workshop takes forward the intellectual mandate of the conference, of redefining “Asia” as a dynamic and interconnected formation, whether through innovative comparative approaches or through a focus on connections within and across the traditionally defined regions of Asia (Middle East, Eurasia, Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and East Asia). Arguments that particular topics imply specific geographic configurations within and across Asia will be welcomed;

iii. The anticipated composition of the workshop—i.e. the extent to which the workshop will elicit participation from a diverse community of scholars, with preference given to workshops that have multidisciplinary and international appeal, and that involve scholars and researchers at different stages of their careers;

iv. The anticipated research outcomes of the workshop—i.e. the extent to which the workshop has the potential to generate new and innovative research agendas and to forge/sustain intra and inter-regional networks of scholarly research and exchange among institutions and individuals working in and on Asia.

Please note: workshop directors from the last two Inter-Asian Connections conferences (Singapore 2010, Hong Kong 2012) may not apply to serve as workshop directors, but may choose to apply as workshop participants.

The deadline for application submissions is October 2, 2012. Workshop proposals will be reviewed by a committee convened by the Organizers, and decisions will be announced by early November.
DIRECTORS’ RESPONSIBILITIES

Following the selection of workshop directors, the Conference Organizing Committee will announce and widely circulate an open call for individual paper submissions for each of the selected workshops (in addition to two workshops being organized by the host institution, Koç University). The responsibilities of the workshop directors will include:

• Collaborating with the Conference Organizers to select 10 participants for their workshop;
• Communicating with workshop participants once they have been selected, including providing feedback on participant draft paper submissions approximately two months in advance of the conference;
• Ensuring the timely delivery of papers;
• Preparing a workshop agenda and concept note;
• Convening daily meetings of the workshop at the conference as well as participating in a public plenary session and attending all conference events;
• Presenting a research statement at the conclusion of the conference.

In addition to covering the travel, accommodation, and other related costs associated with attending the conference, the Conference Organizers will offer an honorarium of 750 USD to compensate workshop directors for their time and efforts.

For further information, including details on the application process, please see http://www.ssrc.org/programs/interasia-program/ and contact the Conference Organizers at interasia@ssrc.org.