



**Inter-Asian Connections II: Singapore  
CALL FOR WORKSHOP PAPERS  
DEADLINE – MAY 31, 2010**

**WORKSHOP TITLE:**

Old Histories, New Geographies: Contrapuntal Mobilities of Trade and State across Asia

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This workshop aims to foster dialogue between past connections and contemporary ones which are changing the social shape of Asia. We seek to plumb the historical resonances that lend excitement and confidence (and at times concern) to new exchanges with old acquaintances across Asia. Such dialogue necessarily revisits the idea of the region, one of the most vibrant areas of study to emerge in recent years. If imperialism created new geographies and indeed new histories, recent global currents are reworking older regional connections and generating new relationships. We invite papers which study historical or contemporary inter-Asian exchanges, or that reflect on both.

The different ways in which business/labour and government interact provide a rich empirical base and theoretical frame for thinking about how such new connections are reshaping Asia. While the British empire provided a common administrative and security frame for new connections across the Indian Ocean, the connections being remade across Asia today do not share such a common frame. States often lag behind their mobile citizens: labour-exporting Philippines, Indonesia and India are challenged to construct inter-governmental labour regulations with their counterparts in Saudi Arabia/the Persian Gulf and Malaysia/Singapore. In industry, chip foundry makers of Taiwan have completely relocated to the PRC despite a lack of diplomatic and regulatory protections agreed between their governments. How are labour and capital able to make such leaps out of their national spaces, where they have little recourse to national rights and legal protection? In other ways, states are being entrepreneurial ahead of their populations. Saudi King Abdullah headed east --to China, India, Malaysia, Pakistan rather than Washington-- on his inaugural overseas trip, with businessmen and women and tow; Singapore's foreign minister in turn went west in a historic first visit to Yemen, with businessmen and Singaporean members of the Yemeni diaspora in tow. Across Eurasia, former Soviet bloc states delicately renegotiate their mutual relations as oil pipelines snake across new borders, while their Central Asian subjects seek new silk routes of trade as soviet industrial jobs disappear.

The concrete social shapes of these new exchanges seldom correspond to globalization's classic liberal conditions of free-flowing trade and finance, alienable property and legal protection for foreigners. Instead, they subsist on a broader range of social relations. We invite papers that explore what these broader relations look like. Such a paper might be one that examines old associations like Chinese lineage temples, once stigmatized under communist rule, but now revived in bringing together clansmen who are national communist party officials, local landholders, and overseas Chinese investors, to transform paddy fields into



export zones. Others may look at ways in which older connections – of culture, language, education, kinship, religion, trade – are being reworked to engage with more contemporary concerns of circulation in South and Southeast Asia. Yet others may attempt new theorizations of space that offer very new challenges to notions of entitlement and citizenship. Such concerns may help break the older limits of regions be it Asia or Eurasia, and allow us to ask whether new modalities of circulation of capital and labour are being created, that will drive the reconfiguration of the regions.

Through the papers and discussion, we plan to collectively theorize how long distance connections based on reciprocal ritual and economic transactions, and their retrospective reflections, may be producing new, expanded notions of space and subjectivity, reprising older ones, or transforming them. We hope to understand how such spaces and subjectivities interpenetrate with those of national and transnational states, and their constituent categories of citizenship and subject-hood.

For additional details and application guidelines, please visit the Conference website - <http://www.ssrc.org/pages/conference-on-inter-asian-connections-ii-singapore-december-8-10-2010/>.