

**CONFERENCE ON  
INTER-ASIAN CONNECTIONS III: HONG KONG  
JUNE 6-8, 2012**

**CALL FOR WORKSHOP PAPERS  
DEADLINE: Friday, June 24, 2011**

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Workshop Title:  
**Sustainability and Citizenship in Asian Cities**

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In recent decades, rapid urban growth has stretched the resilience of cities and the ecological integrity of urban forms throughout Asia. Taking new shape, they leave unprecedented ecological imprints on their hinterlands and the populations they displace or marginalize. As urban sprawl and incessant redevelopment fray urban ecologies, the environment is strained with pollution, resource scarcity, and public health hazards. Despite this, public sentiment, government policy, and social action aspire as never before toward sustainability, environmental improvement, and more “livable” cities. Asian cities are witnessing rising conflict from disparate groups seeking a place in an unstable urban ecology. In the process, ideologies of environmental improvement are becoming increasingly important for producing or reproducing important modes of expertise, moralities of belonging, and justifications for social action.

This workshop will explore the dynamics of environmental sustainability and citizenship in Asian urban settings by addressing how, in specific cities, urban social processes intersect with assessments of urban environmental order and disorder. Participants ask: how are relationships between environments and societies made, and made *meaningful*, in an urban setting? How do biophysical properties, rules, and histories of nature matter in contemporary Asian cities? How is the urban environment used to construct social identities and demarcate political spaces?

Citizenship and environmental sustainability are the key themes through which these questions are explored. Citizenship invokes the question of rights and their formulation and negotiation in law, government and social conflict. Through this lens we will consider issues of livelihood and residence in cities, as well as the way people make claims upon, and experience, urban forms in historical development and contemporary transformation. Environmental sustainability raises multiple, sometimes conflicting ideas of nature, and aspirations for renewal that connect contemporary urban environmental realities to imagined futures. It highlights how environmentally responsible action is defined, promoted, and articulated in private and public sectors, and how logics of green consumption and growth intersect with the politics of urban sustainability. Government and private enterprise work to refashion the city through ideas of sustainability, affecting both ecological processes and the exercise of citizenship.

We anticipate participants in the workshop will focus on several inter-linked questions and topics, including:

- How claims to natural resources are forged, appealed, and mediated in urban contexts.
- How such claims—be they to ‘open space,’ water, or land—resonate with questions of citizenship, informality, equity, and social strife.
- The changing realms of urban expertise, such as planning, architecture, hazardous waste management, and public health engineering.
- Historically-shaped moments of encounter and contest between various urban actors and their impact on the nature, environmental sustainability, and political economy in Asia’s diverse but connected urban forms.

The workshop will draw together scholars of the environment and urban experience from interdisciplinary backgrounds. Building on strong traditions of political ecology research, it will outline a research agenda for urban environments in East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East, regions that are deeply connected historically and interlinked in the present through urban ecological processes and circuits of labor, capital, and information.

For additional details and application guidelines, please visit the Conference website: <http://www.ssrc.org/programs/pages/interasia-program/conference-on-inter-asian-connections-iii-hong-kong-june-6-8-2012/>.