



ASIAN INSTITUTE

Dissertation Workshop on

SOCIAL CAPITAL AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN ASIA

May 3-6, 2009

WORKSHOP STATEMENT

This dissertation workshop seeks to engage scholars whose work explores the *impacts* of collective action and social capital, and its various component parts (trust, norms, networks and associations) in diverse parts of Asia, where the nature of state, civil society and alternate civilities is changing rapidly. Our premise is that the “productivity” of civic engagement in terms of enhancing the economic and political vitality of local communities depends, to a large extent, on the responsiveness of the local government and the nature of civil society/alternate civilities in the region under examination. As such, empirical research that seeks to discover and document how social capital and civic engagement interact with other aspects of social and political life to enhance, or perhaps diminish, well-being is important to both intellectual and policy debates taking place across a variety of academic disciplines. Further, researchers who focus on Asia are well positioned to contribute to theoretical debates about the relative usefulness of the concept of “social capital” and associated terms such as social cohesion, cooperation, public participation, empowerment, and community as ways of apprehending the complex dynamics of Asian settings. The workshop thus seeks to bring empirical research and re-theorizations from Asia into a productive dialogue.

ELIGIBILITY AND ARRANGEMENTS

The workshop is intended for doctoral students whose dissertation projects concern the role of civic engagement and social capital, in its many variations, in fostering dynamic change in any part of contemporary Asia. The purpose of the workshop is to encourage and assist doctoral students who are just beginning work on these issues, as well as those who are farther along in their projects. The workshop will involve intensive discussion of the individual projects and also the larger theoretical and methodological issues that they raise. Possibilities for continuing associations among interested students and faculty will be explored. Applicants must be enrolled in a full-time doctoral program. They must have drafted a dissertation research proposal, even though it may not yet be approved by their committees. They must be prepared to engage in some work prior to the meeting, namely reading and commenting on the proposals of other participants to establish a basis for productive exchange at the event.

The workshop will take place over three days on the campus of the University of Toronto. It will include twelve students and four faculty members from a variety of disciplines and interdisciplinary fields. The Asian Institute at the University of Toronto will cover the costs of work, meals, and accommodation. Travel will be subsidized up to a maximum of CDN\$600 per participant.

APPLICATION DEADLINE is JANUARY 30, 2009

Applications consist of two items: 1) a current curriculum vitae and 2) an 8 to 10 page double spaced dissertation proposal. Alternatively, if the work is well underway, an 8 to 10 page double spaced description of the specific issues being addressed, the intellectual approach, and the materials being studied. Workshop participants will be selected on the content of the submitted projects, the potential for useful exchanges among them, and the benefits of including a wide range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches and intellectual traditions. Applications should be sent in an email attachment to ai.soc@utoronto.ca. Applicants will be informed about whether or not they have been selected for the workshop by February 6th 2009. For further information about the workshop or eligibility, please contact the workshop assistant at ai.soc@utoronto.ca.

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