

CALL FOR PAPERS

Legal Culture, Consciousness, and Conflicts in Asia

Singapore, 22-23 September 2016

As part of the inaugural meeting of the Asian Law & Society Association (ALSA), Lynette J. Chua (NUS Law) and David M. Engel (State University of New York, Buffalo) will convene a series of panels entitled, "Legal Culture, Consciousness, and Conflict in Asia." They invite scholars researching and writing about legal consciousness and legal culture in Asian societies to submit abstracts of their papers to be considered for one of these panels. Panelists may receive partial funding for their travel to and participation in the ALSA meeting held on 22 and 23 September 2016 at NUS Law, and selected papers will be published in a book volume or special journal issue.

The pluralism and cultural diversity of Asia make it well suited for studying and advancing the concepts of legal consciousness and legal culture. At recent conferences of the Law & Society Association (LSA) and the East Asian Law & Society network (now succeeded by ALSA), as well as in regional workshops convened by Chua and Engel, scholars conducting research on diverse issues and sites in Asia have drawn attention to the significance of culture and consciousness for analyzing law and conflict resolution in Asia. For example, people deal with grievances and conflicts in Asian societies in a variety of ways – they turn to state legal institutions to address certain problems, but very often they also use other forms of resolution, such as collective political action or communities organized around religion, ethnicity, kinship ties, or other shared norms and identities. These are not just alternative forms of conflict resolution but they are interconnected in complex and subtle ways. Legal norms and procedures can shape customary practices, and cultural beliefs and values can influence official actors and institutions.

At the same time, such recent work has highlighted inconsistencies and contradictions in the study of legal culture and consciousness in the Asian field. Scholars have pursued a variety of studies, sometimes employing contradictory definitions and non-comparable approaches. Although the two concepts overlap substantially, referring to individuals' orientations toward law and the cultural context, law and society scholars invoke them and emphasize their meanings differently, depending on their foci and levels of analyses, such as individual, social group, or community. While some scholars treat culture and consciousness as post-structuralist concepts, others regard them as epiphenomenal reflections of social structure, or treat them as rational, individualistic preferences or aggregations of such preferences. Scholars who share an interest in legal culture and consciousness need an opportunity to address one another's work, compare approaches, and advance this field of study. A clearly identifiable body of work is lacking for Asian law and society scholars to engage and advance theory.



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The panels' conveners, however, recognize that the concepts of legal culture and legal consciousness have the potential to facilitate scholarly interaction and development in Asian law and society. With this series of panels and planned publication, they aim to make an important contribution by drawing from contemporary empirical work on Asian societies to theorize the concepts for law and society scholarship at large and to begin shaping a canon for this area of scholarship in the region.

To be considered for this series of panels (including funding), please submit your application **HERE**.

No separate funding application is required. Priority will be given to proposals based on fieldwork.

Scholars may apply to both the Young Scholars' Workshop and this series of panels, so long as they meet their separate criteria.

General guidelines for abstract submission

1. The deadline for submission of abstracts is **31 March 2016**.
2. Please submit your abstract online using the link provided.
3. Participants will be notified of the status of their submission within two months after the deadline. If your abstract is accepted, you will be informed by email. Please maintain a functional email address at all times.
4. Selection will be made on a competitive basis for a limited number of slots. The organisers reserve the right to make changes to the panel allocation.
5. Complete versions of all papers must be submitted by August 20, 2016.
6. For more information, please email cals@nus.edu.sg



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