

INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE AND ETHNIC RELATIONS IN TRANSITIONAL SOCIETIES

Session at the IACES

Wei Xing (Toronto)

Date: July 15-23, 2008.

Location: Kunming, China.

Homepage of IACES:
<http://www.icaes2008.org>

Please submit your paper abstract (in English, 300-500 words) to wei.xing@utoronto.ca before October 30, 2007, with your name, institution affiliation and contact information. The authors of abstracts which have been accepted will be notified by December 20, 2007. The deadline for completed paper submission is April 30, 2008.

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This panel addresses the effects of institutional transition/ policy change on ethnic relations. Social, economic and political institutional changes and their effects on ethnic boundaries in transitional societies, in areas such as daily interaction, identification, citizenship, language, dwelling, economic activities and marriage, are the topic of this session.

Studies can be theoretical or empirical, qualitative or quantitative. The geographic focus is on the dynamics of ethnic relations in many Eastern European countries, as well as China and Vietnam. These countries, despite the similarities in their long-lasting socialist regimes, took divergent paths of reform since the early 1980s. The social, economic and political restructuring, particularly the input of market forces, have created a number of challenges for ethnic relations in these countries. The central challenge has been the improvement of economic efficiency and the standard of living of the population, while avoiding the unintended negative consequence of market forces and preserving harmonious ethnic relations. Although there have been numerous studies addressing the ethnic issues in these countries, there has been surprisingly little exchange of research findings across institutional contexts, especially between East European countries and China. Nor has there been much in the way of comparative analysis available. This panel addresses this issue, looking at evidence from Eastern European countries, China and Vietnam.

In addition, empirical studies on the impact of institutional amendment/policy change, or variations of ethnic institutions of ethnic groups as results of different migration patterns in their relations with the mainstream in North American or other European countries are also very welcome. We believe they provide equally valuable perspectives to the issues which this session targets.