From Associations to Info-Sociations: Civic Environmentalism and Information Communications Technologies (ICTs) in Three Asian Tiger Cities

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Abstract:
If civic environmentalists represent a force for change in working towards livable cities, then how do their day-to-day practices intersect with technologies? In particular, how and why are civic environmentalists employing information and communications technologies (ICTs) in their practices—and to what extent are these technologies transforming ‘civic space’ in cities if at all? This study systematically compares how ICT-linked tools or platforms are shaping (and being shaped by) civic environmental associations in the three Asian ‘tiger cities’ of Hong Kong, Singapore and Taipei.

In this multi-year, tri-city investigation the concept of ‘info-sociations’ (information-associations) is employed in constructing a socio-technical model for the analysis of fast-evolving ICT practices. The exploratory ‘info-sociational model’ used in this investigation compares ICT-linked organizational, participatory and spatial practices; and it is employed in the study of six distinct civic environmental actor-networks in Hong Kong, Singapore and Taipei. The info-sociational approach also invites comparative analyses of the uses of ICTs in: social media deliberations and mobilizing activism; digital networking and civic-cyber alliance formations; digital representations of spatial issues in city-regions; and new media formations. By touching upon questions of knowledge, power and space an info-sociational approach can contribute to integrated explanations of how and why civic environmental associations are using and (re)shaping ICTs in pursuit of their diverse aims for more livable and just cities.

About the Speaker:
David Sadoway has a Bachelor’s degree in Environmental Studies (Urban & Regional Planning, BES, Waterloo); and a Master’s degree in Resource & Environmental Management (MRM, Simon Fraser University). He has previously worked with the United Nations Development Programme (in Mongolia); at the Chinese Culture University (in Taipei); along with undertaking stints at urban planning firms in Toronto and Vancouver. His current research focuses on the intersection of livable city-regions, technologies and social change.

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