

Graduate School of  
East Asian Studies



Freie Universität



Berlin

Call for Papers

## **GEAS Graduate Conference 2019**

### **“Sovereignty and Institutions in East Asia”**

**November 22, 2019, Freie Universität Berlin**

The PhD students of the Graduate School of East Asian Studies (GEAS) at Freie Universität Berlin invite young scholars to present their research at the 2019 Graduate Conference on the topic “Sovereignty and Institutions in East Asia”.

The conference aims to provide an interdisciplinary forum to investigate how the concept of sovereignty has been developed and institutionalized in the modern and contemporary socio-political landscape of the region. More specifically, it wishes to explore the universality and particularity of the conceptual development of sovereignty in East Asia in relation to its European counterpart.

Referring to the divine right of kings, the Bodinean notion of sovereignty originally sought to legitimize monarchical absolutism. The concept was later radically reinterpreted by liberal and republican theorists who cemented the idea of social contract. The European ideas about sovereignty reached East Asia in the middle of the 19th century when the Imperial Chinese tributary system confronted Western colonialism, and soon spread across the region. Imperial Japan imported the concept of sovereignty to legitimize its method of nation-building through Western modernization. Between the two regional powers, Korean intellectuals developed the idea of *Yangjeol* or the half-suzerain half-sovereign regime. Such localization of the concept of sovereignty proceeded over time and manifested in historical events as well as institutions in East Asia.

The idea of sovereignty gives rise to an important question: whose authority matters? On the one hand, nation-states have been imagined as the only legitimate source of political authority, which led to the principle of national sovereignty. On the other hand, there has been a growing consensus worldwide that states should reflect the interests of their citizens, which became crystallized as the democratic ideal of popular sovereignty.

To the East Asian states, questions of national sovereignty continue to be of paramount importance. Furthermore, conflicts over sovereignty exist not only between states but also within them. We observe various cases throughout East Asia where indigenous peoples, minority groups, and others seek popular sovereignty over their local affairs and rights. The conference therefore welcomes applicants to submit papers that reflect the many diverse topics concerning sovereignty in the context of East Asia. Potential topics may include but are not limited to:

- Institutions and sovereignty in East Asia
- Concepts of sovereignty
- East Asian regional order and sovereignty
- Regional cooperation and sovereignty
- Popular sovereignty, citizen movements and marginalized groups in East Asia

**Date:** Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2019

**Venue:** Freie Universität Berlin

**Application requirements:**

The conference is open to doctoral candidates and recent PhDs in area studies or social science disciplines related to East Asia. We welcome all disciplines, including but not limited to sociology, economics, political science, anthropology, gender studies, media studies, cultural studies, law, and history. Each participant is asked to prepare a paper and presentation of 15-20 minutes in English, which will be followed by a discussion with invited scholars and specialists.

Applicants should submit abstracts (max. 250 words), including the author's name, institutional affiliation, discipline(s), and a short biography (max. 100 words) by **Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019**. The conference committee will confirm the receipt of abstracts via e-mail and will notify the selected participants. Once selected, the presenters will be requested to submit an extended version of their abstracts (2-5 pages).

Please submit all abstracts and questions to [grad.conference.geas@gmail.com](mailto:grad.conference.geas@gmail.com)

The file name should have the following format: "surname\_title.pdf"

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