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SPECIAL SESSION 3

C34-SP3. New Policies and Legislation to Bring About Transformative Global Changes

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Economic growth has caused significant environmental degradation globally, increasing water scarcity, deforestation, food insecurity, and higher levels of inequality among human populations. Given the implications of environmental degradation for communities and ecosystems, the challenge of achieving sustainable growth and environmental justice is immense. The urgency for policy to address this issue has provided the impetus for policy and legislative changes within various regional and national frameworks. These changes may be the basis of a powerful political and economic shifts, or transformations, providing opportunities to achieve sustainable development goals.

The papers in this session will explore how transformation, in contrast to resilience (defined as persistence) or adaptation (defined as an incremental adjustment), may achieve a new method of achieving sustainable development.

While the need for transformation has been discussed across a variety of disciplines and within many different regional contexts (Gunderson & Holling, 2002; Irwin, 2010; Pelling & Manuel-Navarette, 2011; Sharma, 2007), essential elements of the field of transformation remain underexplored and warrant critical attention. Two strands of thinking currently dominate contemporary writing on transformation. The first emerges from the sustainability literature and conceptualizes transformation as an intensive policy shift or intervention (Frantzeskaki et al., 2012; Loorbach, 2007). An example of this would be the resettlement of coastal communities or a restructuring of agricultural systems. The second strand is rooted in critical social theory (Beddoe et al., 2009; Forsyth, 2003; Marshall et al., 2012; O'Brien & Wolf, 2010). This perspective argues that transformation must be built on an explicit challenge to the social, political, and economic structures that produce inequality and vulnerability, and bring about profound changes to existing institutions, values, and norms (Berkhout et al., 2010; Crompton, 2011; O'Brien 2013; Park et al. 2012). This panel will give attention to Transformation, and in particular will focus on how transformation can reduce inequality and increase sustainable living through formal governance structures, such as federal legislation, higher-court precedents, and public policy (Berkhout et al., 2010; Kates et al., 2012; O'Brien, 2012).

Relevant Sources

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Under C34. Political Geography. Deadline for abstract submission is 15 March 2018

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