

## Immersion Lecture: Rethinking Urbanization in the 21st Century

### Time of Event:

Wednesday, April 13, 2016 - 11:00 to 11:45

### Video:

In this lecture on new theories and methods in urbanization studies, Dr. Karen Seto highlights the changing character of contemporary cities and their connectivity to other places. She first focuses on historical theorists and practitioners who worked to understand and design cities, and notes that there was a shared conception of cities as distinct spaces separated from rural areas. She notes that current urbanization trends are more varied and heterogeneous than this historical model, and she links this diversity to questions about sustainability in cities. She poses the question of if and when cities contribute to or hinder global sustainability, and presents examples of different types of urban planning and policy that leads to different impacts and outcomes. She highlights as well the need for new thinking about the spatial configuration of urban and rural spaces, and suggests that moving from a dichotomous understanding to one based on a spectrum better captures current land use and land change trends. She concludes with the proposition that we need new theories about urbanization and its social and environmental impacts, especially in the context of global emphasis on human wellbeing through efforts like the Sustainable Development Goals.

### Reading list

Seto, K.C., Sánchez-Rodríguez, R., and Fragkias, M. 2010. The new geography of contemporary urbanization and the environment. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 35: 167-194.

Seto, K.C., et al. 2012. Urban land teleconnections and sustainability. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 109(20): 7687-7692.

### Presentation slides

[Click here to download the presentation slides.](#) [1]



[Karen Seto](#) [2] is Associate Dean of Research and Professor of Geography and Urbanization Science at

the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies. She is an expert in urbanization and global change, urban mitigation of climate change, and satellite remote sensing. Professor Seto has pioneered methods to reconstruct land-use dynamics with satellite data and to forecast the expansion of urban areas. She has conducted urbanization research in China for twenty years and in India for ten. She was one of the two Coordinating Lead Authors for the urban chapter of Working Group III of the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report, and has served on many U.S. National Research Council Committees, including the current NRC Committee on Pathways to Urban Sustainability. From 2000 to 2008, she was on the faculty at Stanford University, where she held joint appointments in the Woods Institute for the Environment and the School of Earth Sciences. She joined the Yale faculty in 2008.

**Event type:**

Immersion Speaker

**Event Attendance:**

Private Working Group

---

**Source URL:**

<https://www.sesync.org/events-announcements/thu-2016-03-24-1335/immersion-lecture-rethinking-urbanization-in-the-21st>

**Links**

[1] [https://www.sesync.org/sites/default/files/seto\\_pdf.pdf](https://www.sesync.org/sites/default/files/seto_pdf.pdf)

[2] <http://environment.yale.edu/profile/seto/>