

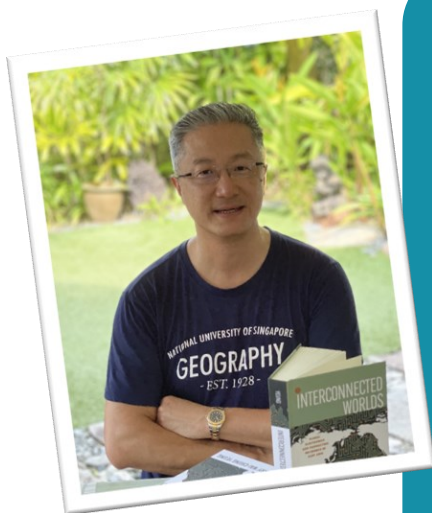
RESEARCH SEMINAR

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Beyond Situated Knowledges in Human Geography: “Theorizing Back” and Making (Southern) Theory Work

26 Sep 2023 (Tue)
4:30 – 6:00 pm (UTC+8)
Rm 221, Chen Kou Bun
Building, CUHK

Drawing on my recently published *Theory and Explanation in Geography* (Wiley’s RGS-IBG Book Series, September 2023), this presentation reflects critically on the normative stance of theory building and epistemological practices in contemporary human geography, in particular feminist and postcolonial geographies. Despite the widely acknowledged importance of recognizing one’s situatedness and positionality in geographical knowledge production, the development of reverse discourses in order to theorize back at situated knowledges emanating from Western Europe and North America remains a daunting epistemological challenge in human geography. I argue that the recognition of situated knowledges is necessary but perhaps insufficient in theorizing back at and advancing social science understanding of complex socio-spatial worlds. Reflecting on my work in the co-development of the theory of global production networks, I explain how the key concept of “strategic coupling”, grounded in the transformative material realities of East Asia, has been conceived and deployed to theorize back at dominant conceptions of endogenous regional development in Western theories and to “speak back” to mainstream Anglo-American human geography. Pushing further this situated discourse of global economic geographies, I believe there are necessary reflexive steps for making the theory of global production networks work better, as a “Southern” theory, in explaining the recent “troubles” with global production networks, deglobalization, and decoupling during and after the Covid-19 pandemic.



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Professor Henry Yeung has been Distinguished Professor at the Department of Geography, National University of Singapore, since 2018, and Professor of Economic Geography since 2005. As a leading academic expert in global production networks and the global economy, his research interests cover broadly theories and the geography of transnational corporations, East Asian firms, and developmental states. He is the first geographer based in Asia to receive the UK’s Royal Geographical Society Murchison Award 2017, the 2018 American Association of Geographers Distinguished Scholarship Honors, and the UK’s Regional Studies Association 2022 Sir Peter Hall Award for Lifetime Contribution to the Field. Professor Yeung has published 7 monographs and 1 textbook (3 editions), 7 edited books, 110 journal articles, and 50 book chapters. His latest books are *Theory and Explanation in Geography* (RGS-IBG Book Series, Wiley, September 2023) and *Interconnected Worlds: Global Electronics and Production Networks in East Asia* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, June 2022). His previous monographs are *Strategic Coupling: East Asian Industrial Transformation in the New Global Economy* (Cornell University Press, 2016), and *Global Production Networks: Theorizing Economic Development in an Interconnected World* (with Neil Coe, Oxford University Press, 2015).



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