RESEARCH SEMINAR

Department of Geography and Resource Management
地理與資源管理學系

The Power of Names: Media, Nationalism, and the Spatio-Discursive Construction of Territory

5 Nov 2026 (THU) | **CKB 109 16:30-18:00**

Names seldom serve as unbiased locational identifiers. Instead, they act as powerful tools of governance, identity, and political influence. In a time marked by shifting geopolitical relationships and hyperrealities, conflicts over symbolic names often substitute for deeper territorial and existential struggles. This lecture examines how state actors, nationalist movements, and media organizations influence, challenge, and regulate geographic names to create spatial and discursive interpretations of territory. Drawing on semiotics, critical toponymy, security, and media studies, the lecture emphasizes how complex symbols (toponyms) can become national security issues and at times distort reality. Through empirical research spanning more than six years, with examples including the Macedonian Name Dispute (MND), the South China Sea (SCS), Essequibo, and the Gulf of Mexico/America, it is shown how the media connect abstract narratives of nationalism to tangible land and maritime boundaries. Thus, the lecture offers new critical insights into how contemporary societies navigate symbolic sovereignty amid a renewed wave of global territorial revisionism.

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Minos-Athanasios Karyotakis is a recipient of the AXA Postdoctoral Fellowship in 2024 at HKBU. He chairs the Crisis, Security and Conflict Communication Working Group of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) and is the author of the monograph *Populism, Territories, Name Disputes, and Hyperreality: Greek Nationalism and the Macedonian Case* (Bloomsbury, 2025). He has published more than 20 peer-reviewed publications and advanced the understanding of global media politics through environmental communication, hate propaganda, power relations, and territorial disputes. For more information, you can visit his website: https://minoskar.net/.

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