

# Global South Perspectives:

## Towards decolonization, de-stratification and de-centralizing of social knowledge production

**International Workshop:  
18-19 April 2018  
Hong Kong Baptist University  
Hong Kong**



**Keynote speech:  
Pei-Chia Lan  
National Taiwan University**

**Plenary speech:  
Franz Waldenberger  
German Institute for Japanese Studies  
The Max Weber Foundation**

### Call for Papers

Social knowledge production, on a global level, is heavily stratified. Most centers of social knowledge production, such as globally high-ranked universities, 'international' academic journals, 'competitive' conferences and major funding bodies lie in Western countries. Producers of social knowledge, especially those of greater influence and prestige, tend to be White, from Western societies, or had to undergo training at high-ranking Western universities and display in-depth familiarity with the academic and cultural grammars disseminated there.

Critics have argued that this stratification, initiated by imperialism and colonialism and maintained and re-inscribed by vast contemporary global inequalities, is systematically distorting the knowledge that is being produced. As Walter Mignolo and others have pointed out, knowledge production is carried out under Western master frames or 'cosmologies,' which center and mainstream Western theory and findings as the scholarly 'core' and the foundation that new knowledge must be built

on, while provincializing and marginalizing knowledge produced by non-Western or racialized scholars, and relegating non-Western territories to sites for data collection.

It has been argued that this stratification in knowledge production leads to Western and White lived experiences, perspectives, interests, and sensitivities being woven into social theory, which is subsequently not recognized as positioned, but mainstreamed and normalized as 'general theory'. Conversely, theoretical and empirical work that is underpinned by, and focuses on, the lived experiences, perspectives and concerns of Non-White and Non-Western scholars, faces much stronger hurdles to recognition, and tends to be deselected, or assigned to the margins rather than the center of social knowledge: To a late session on the last day of a conference, to a roundtable, to a section on 'regional' issues in a journal, or to a job in 'ethnic studies.'

Situated as we are in a globally interconnected system with highly unequal distribution of resources, burdens, and life chances, this highly stratified knowledge production is problematic, and can even be dangerous. It is problematic because the social sciences are not accumulating knowledge on 'the global social,' but instead they are producing an incomplete, distorted version of it. It can be dangerous because policy decisions of tremendous local and global influence are in danger of being made following partial, one-sided or even biased knowledges. For example, free trade agreements or other international policies, implemented based on supposedly neutral knowledge, benefit Western societies but are associated with increased social stratification, labor exploitation, environmental destruction, toxin dumping and other problems in the Global South. Elsewhere, migration policies are designed that focus on keeping out, screening and disciplining migrants, ignoring groundbreaking work by racialized scholars on the causes of and countermeasures against racism and discrimination by receiving society members.

The aim of this workshop is to strengthen the dialogue, connections and collaboration of scholars pursuing 'Southern' or 'Subaltern' approaches. Scholars are invited to discuss research agendas, theories, methodological issues and empirical studies based on perspectives, experience, concerns and needs of people in the Global South and racialized or indigenous groups in the Global North. The workshop emphasizes thematic inclusiveness.

All interested individuals are invited to submit!

**Submission Deadline: February 15<sup>th</sup> 2018**

Please submit abstracts (max. 250 words)

to: [globalsouthperspectives@gmail.com](mailto:globalsouthperspectives@gmail.com)

*Organized by: The Joint Research Group on Migration, China and the Global Context  
Max Weber Foundation & Faculty of Social Sciences, Hong Kong Baptist University*