

City University of Hong Kong

Department of Public Policy

*Research Student Seminar*

**RELATIONAL NETWORKED  
SOVEREIGNTY REGIME: ACTORS,  
POWERS, AND TERRITORY**

**- A CASE STUDY OF PHNOM PENH SEZ  
IN B&R INITIATIVE**

by

**YAO Chao**

*PhD Student*

Date:	22 Oct 2019
Time:	1500-1630
Venue:	Room B7-516, POL's Multi-purpose Room, Yeung Kin Man Acad. Building City University of Hong Kong
Language:	English

*Abstract:*

This proposed study is about extra-territoriality through transnational infrastructure construction based on special economic zone (SEZ) development, using the case of Phnom Penh Special Economic Zone against the broader context of Belt and Road initiatives. The growing literature on extra-territoriality and re-territorialisation has challenged two Westphalian assumption of the territorial state: one is the role of static national territory that naturally defines the power and two, the internal-heterogeneity of the state itself that give rise to various collaborations of government, corporates, elites, and associations. Scholarly attention has been called to a networked perspective that breaks through dichotomic understanding of inside and outside, public and private, formal and informal, fixed or divisible.

This research will follow this account to explore how could spatiality of power be reconfigured as an outcome of negotiation of the ensemble of actors in and beyond the Phnom Penh Economic Zone. Additionally, in this networked perspective, the territory is both re-worked on in this network of powers and also functions as areal resource for political and economic activity and node for connection.

By examining the process of Chinese enterprises' investment in Phnom Penh SEZs, this research will interrogate the relative relationship among ensemble of actors in practice and its connection to the territory. Drawn upon insights from Arrighi's World System, Mann's Infrastructural Power and Agnew's effective sovereignty, this proposed research will explore how extra-territories are demarcated, regulated, developed and managed as special zones, so as to allow collaborative utilizations by Chinese enterprises, Chinese and Cambodian political authorities, Cambodia private company and related associations; what are the power relations in this process of re-territorialisation, what are the varying driving forces, and eventually, how is sovereign power effectuated in external territory through this process.

This proposed research aims to build up a relational networked sovereignty regime model measured by two axes: the first is relative position among this ensemble of actors; another is the spatial reconfiguration. Additionally, these differences in space depends on the logic of treating the territory as a tool or the final end.

During the research process, the candidate will follow the capital, mainly the enterprise, Beijing Properties Holding Limited, and the foreign aid program, to investigate the evolving development of Phnom Penh Special Economic Zone against the broader context of B&R.

Ethnography

approach will be the main method for data collection, supplemented by interviews. Secondary data, such as official documents, will be collected as well.

*Key words: extra-territoriality, special zones, network, territory, capital*