Tradition and Transformation of Data Science in Sociology: Modeling Mental Health in Urban Neighborhoods

Date: 18 December 2018 (Tuesday)
Time: 4:00pm to 5:00pm
Venue: P7303, 7/F, Yeung Kin Man Academic Building (YEUNG), City University of Hong Kong

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Guest Speaker’s profile
Qiang Fu is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at The University of British Columbia (UBC). His major interests include urban studies, health, demography, social capital, and statistical/machine-learning methods. He has now published over 25 articles in peer-reviewed journals including American Journal of Sociology, Chinese Sociological Review, Communications in Statistics, Environment and Behavior, Environment and Planning A, Health & Place, International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, Population, Space and Place, Social Science & Medicine, Social Science Research, Sociological Methods & Research, Sociology of Health and Illness, and Urban Studies.

Abstract
While the theory-oriented research paradigm has been widely regarded as a fundamental presupposition of data science in sociology, advances in statistical modeling and data analysis have motivated major shifts in sociological frameworks and subsequently affected how social problems are perceived, measured, and explored in empirical research. This talk tries to provide a preliminary assessment of the co-evolution of data science and conceptual frameworks in sociology by revisiting a long-standing research theme, mental health in the city. In particular, I critically examine the conceptual and methodological advances in recent decades that may sharpen our understanding of the possible mechanisms linking urban environment with depression. These advances are further employed to guide Structural Equation Modeling of the mentality issue in China’s urban neighborhoods.