

Contemporary China Research
Global China and the Future of Capitalism Seminar Series
Mapping Capitalism: Thinking Difference and Diversity, with Hong Kong and China

Abstract

In conventional mappings of capitalism, the locations of Hong Kong and China could hardly be more different. Hong Kong has long been portrayed as a paragon of free-market capitalism, sanctified as a pristine case of laissez-faire governance and small-state development. China, meanwhile, is sometimes not even on the map at all, its *sui generis* model of development being taken to confound even the most basic categories of analysis, perhaps including capitalism itself. Taking issue with both of these commonplace formulations, the presentation will explore established and emergent approaches to questions of capitalist difference and diversity, successively through the analytical rubrics of variety, uneven and combined development, and variegation, developing the case for conjunctural modes of inquiry in which special places are reserved for border zones, for boundary objects, and for world regions like South China.