

CONFERENCE KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Professor Ching Kwan Lee
University of California at Los Angeles

Title of keynote:

The Specter of Global China: Politics, Labor and Foreign Investment in Africa

Biography

Ching Kwan Lee is a professor of sociology at UCLA. Her research interests include labor, political sociology, globalization, development, China, Hong Kong, global south and comparative ethnography. She is the author of three multiple award-winning monographs, forming a trilogy of Chinese capitalism through the lens of labor: *Gender and the South China Miracle: Two Worlds of Factory Women* (1998), *Against the Law: Labor Protests in China's Rustbelt and Sunbelt* (2007), and *The Specter of Global China: Politics, Labor and Foreign Investment in Africa* (2017). Her articles have appeared in the *American Journal of Sociology*, *American Sociological Review*, *Theory and Society*, *New Left Review*, *the China Quarterly*, and *Journal of Asian Studies*. Her forthcoming co-edited volumes include *Take Back Our Future: an Eventful Political Sociology of Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement* (Cornell University Press) and *The Social Question in the 21st Century: a Global View* (University of California Press).

Abstract

China has recently emerged as one of Africa's top business partners, aggressively pursuing its raw materials and establishing a mighty presence in the continent's booming construction market. Among major foreign investors in Africa, China has stirred the most fear, hope, and controversy about labor rights and national development. This book talk analyzes the peculiarity of outbound Chinese state capital by comparing it with global private capital in copper and construction in Zambia. Refuting the rhetorical narratives of "Chinese colonialism" and "south-south cooperation", I draw on ethnographic data collected over a six-year period to chronicle the multi-faceted struggles that confront and differentiate these two varieties of capital, and discuss their uneven potentials for post-colonial African development.