

Living in the Deleuzian World of a Digital Grid of Control: The Case Of Korea



A Talk by Kwang-Suk Lee
University of Texas at Austin

Executive Seminar Room, Level 1 AS7
Shaw Foundation Building, NUS
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Lee will talk about the shift in the social formation of South Korea from a disciplinary society (the visible and physical violence of power) to a control society (the modulating and normalizing techniques of power, especially initiated by digital technologies).

At the institutional level, during the period of repressive and disciplinary society in Korea (1963–1992), the regulatory control systems of the state were mainly the province of two formidable apparatuses: the national ID system and the National Security Law. On the other hand, the deployment of institutional power since 1993 has been based on the logic of free-floating control, dispersion, normalization, and modulation. The present study examines how the techniques of power were gradually transformed from a centralized and hierarchical model into a distributive and dispersed network model, based on flow, speed, and mobility. Lee concludes that the public engagement in the decision-making processes of privacy-related policies in Korea should be greatly extended, in order to lessen the codification of power inside a technical artifact. He will also argue that structural/social constraints inscribed in technology should be considered temporarily closed ones; the alternative model begins with the realization that technological development never points definitely toward any particular path, but rather opens onto many potential branches.

About the Speaker:

Kwang-Suk Lee is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Radio-Television-Film at the University of Texas, Austin. His research areas include the political economy of communication, the social construction of technology, critical geographies, surveillance, and alternative media in the Internet age. He has contributed numerous columns and essays related to the digital society to Korean newspapers, magazines, and the like. He is the author of three books, *Digital Paradoxes* (Seoul, 2000), *Cultural Politics in Cyberspace* (Seoul, 1998), and *The Art & Politics of Digital Avant-gardes* (Seoul, forthcoming). Lee's scholarly writing has appeared or will be forthcoming in major journals, including *Media, Culture & Society*, *New Media & Society*, *The International Communication Gazette*, *The International Journal of Cultural Policy*, *Info* and *The Information Society*. He has also contributed to *The International Encyclopedia of Communication* and several edited volumes.