

Living at the Margins in and of Cities Social sciences approaches

Wednesday 19th December 2018

Venue : 54 boulevard Raspail 75006 Paris, 7^{ème} étage, salle 737

Why margins matter?

Since the late 2000s, the world has witnessed the fragility of high levels of market integration and the vulnerability induced by globalization. The ensuing rampant inflation of capital values around the globe as well as changes in people's lifestyle in many places have made much to rethink anew the meaning of inequality. Some evidences indicated people and governments begin to opt for developmental strategies leaning on protectionism, conservatism and localism, in many societies – West or East, wealthy or poor.

These new trends have led to put old problems into new perspectives. The global emergence of protectionism, conservatism and localism has subjected those who have been conventionally considered as marginalized – e.g., labourers, lower class actors, forced migrants and refugees, elderly, disabled and sick people – to an even more extreme “othering” process, including more neglect and contempt than sympathy. These tendencies lead to new problems and new marginalization. For instance, increasing evidences suggest original urban residents feel marginalized by the growing presence of outsiders who compete with them for community resources. Besides, local dwellers are forced to move further to the city peripheries due to the rising real estate valuation and cost of living at the centre. All the while, in certain areas, social activists upholding the values of equality and sustainability feel increasingly ostracized by the expanding populism and its related public policies.

This workshop is concerned with the most recent emerging production of margins in different areas of the world - South America, India and China. Study cases and field researches will discuss about people who feel, at best, ignored by and, at worst, further or newly marginalized by the most recent systemic changes in the labour/capital movement and/or local state programmes/policies.



Programme

9.15 Coffee and welcome

9.30 Introduction

Florence PADOVANI (Centre franco-chinois, Beijing, China) & Katiana LE MENTEC (UMR China, Korea, Japan ; CNRS)

Keynote by HO Wingchung (City University of Hong Kong, China)

9.45 Session 1: Dealing with margins in cities

9.45 Alexis SIERRA (Université de Cergy-Pontoise-ESPE) : *Defining urban fringes by political informality: Citizens' arrangements within municipal conflicts and the production of indeterminate territories in Lima (Peru).*

The municipalities of Lima (capital of Peru) are involved in many disputes due to the lack of clear political and administrative boundaries between them. Consequently, new territories take form from the fringes, where municipalities develop strategies of control and where various forms of informal arrangements between inhabitants and authorities come together to build a particular citizenship. We make the hypothesis that these fringes are a particular spatial manifestation of political informality and that they are key in (re)thinking an urban geopolitics.

10.25 Rémi De BERCEGOL (PRODIG/CNRS, France) & Shankare GOWDA (Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi) : *Marginalizing policies: rethinking the modernization of the waste sector in Delhi*

One important aspect of sustainability involves the flows of materials and energy, extracted, consumed, transformed and disposed of in the functioning of urban societies. In particular, the question of urban waste, a sector previously neglected in the field of urban policy, has slowly become a major issue in world urbanization. Through an analysis of the case of Delhi, this chapter aims to undertake an exploration of the valorization of waste. It studies in particular the marginalization effects of waste management policies in Delhi (that essentially promote large centralised technical systems such as waste-to-energy plants), on waste recycling markets and the people working with waste (whose work is -partly- informal and poorly recognized). Hence, the main objectives of this text are (1) to question the marginalization effects of the current reforms on the waste informal sector by looking at the life at the margins of the waste workers and (2) to analyze the potentialities of re-integrating marginalized industries to complement the overall system in an adapted way.

11.10 Maylis BELLOCQ (Université Bordeaux Montaigne, France) : *Cemeteries Beyond the City's Limits : The Case of Shanghai*

My paper will try to understand the dynamics at work in the expulsion of cemeteries from the central city of Shanghai. In the first part I will show how the marginalisation of cemeteries is both linked to representations of death and to politics. The second part will deal with the issue of cemeteries as a mirror of the city and as such the producers of their own margins. Then finally, in the third part we shall see how the authorities are seeking to push cemeteries further away by aiming at their dematerialisation. developing countries

11.45 Session 1 discussion

12.15 Break

14.00 Session 2: Dwellers and resettlers at the margins of cities

14.00 HO Wingchung (City University of Hong Kong, China) : *From Society's Margin to City's Peripheries: Ambivalent Mobilities of Three Gorges Dam Young-adult Migrants in Guangdong, China*

The Three Gorges Dam project (1994-2009) in Chongqing of China has created 1.35 million forced migrants. As the region adjacent to the reservoir could not afford to accept all the displaced; 96,000 were relocated to 11 provinces/cities. Among these “out-bound” (*waiqian*) migrants, 9,007 were moved 2,300 km away to coastal Guangdong during 2000-2004. Through soliciting testimonies from 32 young-adult “dam migrants” (aged 18-39) in Guangdong, this paper identifies a commonly shared ambivalence over the meaning of displacement such that the informants – after more than a decade of resettlement – still maintain different degrees of feeling both a stranger and local, a Guangdonger (*Guangdong ren*) and Chongqinger (*Chongqing ren*), and a sojourner and dweller. It is argued that they possess more complex *movement imaginaries* than older migrants, and experience a specific mode of marginalization.

14.40 Véronique Dupont (IRD, CESSMA, France) and R. Dhanalakshmi (independent researcher, Chennai, India) : ***Living at the margins of the legal city in Chennai, India. Critical issues in a precarious settlement along the Buckingham Canal in the southern periphery***

This paper examines critical issues faced by the people living in a precarious settlement located in the southern periphery of Chennai, India. The specific location and characteristics of this settlement allows us to approach the meaning of “living at the margins” from several angles. First, the settlement is considered as an “objectionable slum” due to its location on the banks of the canal, hence at the margins of the legal city, with no tenure security and subsequent threats of eviction. Some of the houses were indeed removed in 2002 and their inhabitants relocated in a resettlement colony where they faced other difficulties. Second, the locality was considered as rural till its inclusion in the Chennai Municipal Corporation Area in November 2011 following the extension of the corporation limits. We show that living in the city – as per its administrative limits – or outside, on its margins, has a significant impact in terms of access to urban services. Third, due to its geographical marginalisation, the settlement has remained out of the reach of the main social mobilisation movements of the city, and is rather characterised by a weak social organisational structure. Fourth, the settlement grew in a low-lying area prone to flooding, at the margins of land meant for sustainable urbanization, with dramatic consequences at the time of the 2015 devastating floods. Lastly, we question the social marginalisation of urban poor considered as squatters by the urban authorities. Our main argument is that one type of marginalisation goes hand in hand with other types of marginalisation, entailing cumulative deprivation.

15.20 Session 2 discussion

15.40 Tea break

16.00 Session 3: Tourism inducing margins in cities

16.00 Florence PADOVANI (Centre franco-chinois, Beijing, China) : ***When a marginal area is transformed into a touristic high spot : Tianzifang in Shanghai***

Chad Alan Goldberg wrote in 2012 an article called “Robert Park’s Marginal Man: The career of a Concept in American Sociology” (*Laboratorium*, Vol4, N°2, 199-217) in which he explains why this concept has such a longevity and how it is still relevant today. He underlines that marginality suggests a potential maladjustment and disorganization but at the same time creativity and innovation. Today the notion of marginality is extended to a broad range of social phenomena well beyond race and ethnic relations, which were the main points developed by Robert Park. While analysing the case of Tianzifang, this paper will underline different forms of marginality. The people living there, coming from various background, have or have not legitimacy to live there and are being marginalized or not. There are different kinds of actors playing a role in the safeguard of this area in addition to residents, such as administrative cadre, developers, etc. We will analyse how these actors express their legitimacy. The link between marginality and legitimacy is a key to understand the situation. Marginality is not only about humans beings (their origin and status), it is also about buildings and heritage. Tianzifang is a good example of marginality linked with creativity and innovation. Being a small area quite dilapidated made it possible to create a new model of urban development at a micro level.

16.40 CHAN Alex Siu Kin (City University of Hong Kong, China) : *The production of estranged urban space: community homogenisation and identity politics in Hong Kong since the late 2000s*

The late 2000s in Hong Kong has witnessed the emergence of public grievances against the massive influx of mainland Chinese tourists and rampant parallel trading. The ways these outsiders changed local community landscapes and residents' original lifestyle had brought about a series of unprecedented protests against mainlanders during 2012-2015. Fueled by the fruitless political struggles during the same period that demanded Beijing to give Hong Kong democracy, these protests have seemingly prompted more locals to self-identify with "Hongkonger" rather than "Chinese". This paper examines this radicalized identity politics from the perspective of spatiality. Empirically examined are the changing street views in three Hong Kong communities (by the novel method of "google mapping") and the meanings that a dozen of young residents (aged 18-34) endow to the change. Results suggest that the spatial change constitutes an "estranged space" to the informants that has spurred both their discontent against Beijing and nostalgia for the original lifestyle.

17.15 Session 3 discussion

17.40 General discussion : How to deal with margins on a theoretical level

Discutants : Florence PADOVANI (Centre franco-chinois, Beijing, China) & HO Wingchung (City University of Hong Kong, China)

18.10 to 19.10 Wine reception

Organizers: HO Wingchung, Katiana LE MENTEC and Florence PADOVANI

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