



Workshop Groupe Dupont: WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THEORY IN CONTEMPORARY GEOGRAPHY?

CHAIR: Isabel Marcos (Groupe Dupont | CICS.NOVA)

Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas | Universidade Nova de Lisboa | FCSH-UNL | Av. de Berna, 26 C, 1069-061 Lisboa | Edifício I&D

14h00-19h00	WORKSHOP	FRIDAY 5 JUNE 2015	SALA MULTIUSOS 2 Piso 4
14h00-15h00	WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THEORY IN CONTEMPORARY GEOGRAPHY? LUIIS BAPTISTA confirm Director CICS.NOVA REGINA SALVADOR (GEOGRAPHY PhD. Director) CICS.NOVA Interdisciplinary Centre of Social Science FCSH New University of Lisbon ISABEL MARCOS (Groupe Dupont) CICS.NOVA Interdisciplinary Centre of Social Science FCSH New University of Lisbon DEBATE	OPENING GRUPO DUPONT PRESENTATION	
	HENRI CHAMUSSY Groupe Dupont Grenoble University DEBATE	CONSTRUCTION OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISCOURSE	
15h00-16h00	AN OTHER METHODOLOGY FOR SPACE ANALYSIS: FRACTAL THEORIES ANDRÉ DAUPHINÉ Groupe Dupont Nice University DEBATE	UNDERSTANDING AND EXPLAINING A FRACTAL WORLD	
	PHILIPPE MARTIN Groupe Dupont CNRS - UMR ESPACE Avignon University DEBATE	FRACTAL PARABOLIC APPROACH AND EVOLUTION OF ALGERIA'S SETTLEMENT BETWEEN 1907 AND 2008	
16h00-16h30	COFFEE-BREAK FCSH-UNL Ed. I&D (4st floor)		
16h30-17h30	PLACE AND POVERTY CATHERINE SELIMANOVSKI Groupe Dupont, ART-Dev, CNRS, UMR 5281 Montpellier University DEBATE	GENERAL REFLEXIONS	
	FRANÇOIS DURAND-DASTÈS Groupe Dupont CNRS - UMR Géographies et Cités University of Paris Diderot DEBATE	A CASE-STUDY IN INDIA	
17h30-18h30	GEOGRAPHY AND GLOBALIZATION CHRISTIAN GRATALOUP Groupe Dupont CNRS - UMR Géographies et Cités University of Paris Diderot DEBATE	WHY IS IT UNAVOIDABLE THAT GLOBAL HISTORY HAS TO BE A "GEO-HISTORY"?	
	ISABEL MARCOS (Groupe Dupont) CICS.NOVA Interdisciplinary Centre of Social Science FCSH New University of Lisbon	MORPHOGENESIS OF URBAN GLOCALIZATION	
18h30-19h00	DEBATE		
14h00-19h00	VISITE D'ÉTUDE	SAMEDI 6 Juin 2015	CASTELO DE SÃO JORGE



ORGANIZERS: Isabel Marcos and Regina Salvador (CICS.NOVA | Interdisciplinary Centre of Social Science)

LISBON WORKSHOP 5TH OF JUNE 2015 | ABSTRACTS: “WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THEORY IN CONTEMPORARY GEOGRAPHY?”

CONSTRUCTION OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISCOURSE HENRI CHAMUSSY | Groupe Dupont | Grenoble University

For a long time, at least in French geographical production, the « discourse » has belonged to a literary type, wording descriptions, suggesting explanations for the questions that could be set before geographers concerning phenomena observed at the earth's surface. This discourse was not at all formalised, except in the texts written, by the geographers interested in climates, and, moreover geographers had no idea of the necessity to conceptualise, except in geomorphology; but, in the latter case, conceptualisation, though it was certainly present, was implicit, an unconscious production. The geographical discourse was verbal, and not verbo-conceptual.

By contrast, what do science philosophers tell us? That this branch of learning is centred more on nature, form, finality scientific method, than on explicitation, description, history of ideas, content of theories. In other words, it was difficult to build a real epistemological research on geographical discourse.

On the other hand, the lack of explicit theories (for there were implicit theories) in geography made impossible to take part in a scientific debate common to all the fields of knowledge, namely the debate about the status of theories; a real reappearance of the “querelles des Universaux” (a medieval controversy about the universality of concepts), applied to theories, and no mote to concepts only. Does theory show the reality of the world of sensations, or is it a ghost with no reality, a “flatum vocis” as certain medieval philosophers used to say ?

Let us take an example from a theory that has played an important part in the geographical production of the last decades, systems theory.

Claude Bernard used to say that systems where in the heads of the humans, and not in nature, and such is the belief of many geographers. But, contrary, others believe that systems are operating in the real world, that the interaction loops have an “existence” that causes the evolution of processes active in “nature”.

For the geographical discourse to become scientific (and it becomes such since a few decades) one has to be conscious of the fact that the dominant current of the philosophy of science is a philosophy of language (a fact that is far from excluding formalised discourses), but there are two manners to enter into the study of the discourse: one is to acknowledge the primacy of reference (Wittgenstein and Popper) another, the primacy of signification (Kuhn and Feyerabend).

I should like to show that the geographical discourse has no reason to choose between those two primacies: the primacy of reference is unavoidable, because the object of geography is the study of the “things” present in the real world and, above all, the totality of the immaterial links between those material “things” and the immateriality of the social processes that change the face of the earth.

But a geographer cannot fail to see also the primacy of signification, because he cannot be content with the establishment of a sort of catalogue of material and immaterial objects. He has to show the meaning of the processes at work, the processes considered as material being included. For instance, it is the responsibility of geophysicians to study earthquakes and tsumamis. They may find a lot of explanations. But it is the responsibility of geographers (using extensively the work of geophysicians) to study the meaning of such phenomena and the processes, natural and social, that they will set at work on the face of the earth.

AN OTHER METHODOLOGY FOR SPACE ANALYSIS: FRACTAL THEORIES

UNDERSTANDING AND EXPLAINING A FRACTAL WORLD

ANDRÉ DAUPHINÉ | Groupe Dupont | Nice University

The World is fractal. Since the work of B. Mandelbrot the term “fractal” has designed three realities. An auto-similar fractal shows that the parts of an object are similar to the whole. This similitude is of a geometric nature. An auto-affine fractal is of a statistic nature: a similar character can be observed at every time or space scale. Last, a multifractal is a generalisation of a fractal object or process. Those three types of fractals can be observed in nature, as it is shown by clouds, river networks and topographies. They are also constructed by human societies, as it is shown by the arrangement of built up areas in towns, metro networks, the evolution of economic crises, and, in more general terms, urban networks. Many other examples of fractals are described in the very rich literature on the subject. To explain this fractal world, the geographer has at his disposal four theories: the theory of Reaction-diffusion (Fisher, Kolmogorov, Turing), the critical self-organization theory (Bak), the constructal theory (Béjan) and the scale relativity theory (Nottale). These theories have a common character: they integrate a movement, let it be a diffusion, a simple transport, or a turbulence. As all the mathematical equations that formalize movement are scale-invariant it is thus movement that is at the origin of the world's fractality.

FRACTAL PARABOLIC APPROACH AND EVOLUTION OF ALGERIA'S SETTLEMENT BETWEEN 1907 AND 2008

PHILIPPE MARTIN | Groupe Dupont | CNRS - UMR ESPACE | Avignon University

The study of Algeria's settlement network through the relationship between the population (p) and the rank (r) or reverse frequency (rF) shows that the relationship exhibits a Pareto character (a parabolic fractal).

Thus it appears a curvature that can be determined by fitting a second order polynomial over the log of variables. The adjustment is then usually "almost" perfect. The Algerian's settlement network becomes increasingly globally proper Paretian (power model) from 1907 to 1977 and less and less Paretian (increasing curvature) from 1977 to 2008. This second development is associated with a size deficit for the extrema ranks.

By computing tangents (local scalar Pareto exponents on a limited range of rows) in sliding windows, it can be shown that the relationship between the two variables ($\ln(p)$ and $\ln(rF)$) is in fact much more complex, but the structure of the relationship is stable from 1907 to 2008. It integrates changes in several size orders, at least a large oscillation and more scalarly local oscillations, still to be studied in detail.

A comparison with theoretical series (normal and lognormal distributions) shows that the experimental series can be seen in light of the latter distribution (Galton) which exhibits gradual transitions over the set of scales. In all cases, there is thus no clear cutoff that would define an intrinsic threshold between what falls within the urban and what would not, from the data themselves.

But, as the calculations for the post-Independence period were made on the basis of the enumeration of the population present in sets of at least one hundred buildings, the weight of this bias, which refers to a definition of the conglomeration by the Algerian's census administration, should be evaluated. This was done using the exhaustive list of all inhabited places in 1998. This analysis refines the structure highlighted with the use of the incomplete censuses, but does not change it: It is statistically and historically highly resilient. It remains to formalize the power law that would reflect such distributions.

PLACE AND POVERTY

GENERAL REFLEXIONS

CATHERINE SÉLIMANOVSKI | Groupe Dupont, Laboratoire ART-Dev, CNRS, UMR 5281 | Montpellier University

This communication deals with the necessity to build theories on the spatial dimension of poverty. In that way, innovation consists in showing the importance of the effects of place associated with poverty and highlighting the “unthought of” about territory as regards the implementation of public policies dealing with poverty.

The absence of social, economic and ecological amenities, the social and /or spatial distance from services and equipments, stigmatizing representations, a use of space limited by a blockade of residential migrations and a weakening of usual mobilities are the main effects of place which worsen the lack of social autonomy of populations in situation of poverty. Therefore it is not only a question of determining where the populations in situation of poverty actually live, but also of explaining why they are living there and what the difficulties related to their residential location are. The acknowledgement of the “unthought of” as regards territory in the implementation of public policies against poverty meets the issue of effects of place. Therefore we are led to wonder what are the paradoxes generated by the definition of these policies and their territorialisation? The first paradox is linked to the tensions between protection and social disqualification, the second one to the tensions between equalitarian policies and territorial inequalities. We must bear in mind that equalitarian process is determined by the pre-existing territorial inequalities. The third paradox is linked to the tensions between the fight against the poverty of populations and the requalification of deprived neighbourhoods. In the latter case, the staging of the territory, through the mediatization of these deprived neighbourhoods, ends up with a naturalisation of the social issue in the territories of the city.

Does this mean that the weight of negative effects of place in deprived spaces doesn't enable their inhabitants to escape a social and or spatial determinism? Indeed, the issue of poverty has to do with a problem of anchoring, confinement and of social reproduction, but it is also an issue about going beyond assigned identities. It is a well-known fact that in deprived areas, in places of confinement, social withdrawal, being anchored to a territory enables people to mobilize local resources and to build social links which can be very fruitful. This culture has nothing to do with a culture of traditional poverty because it is not confined within an impenetrable pocket of society. On the contrary, it percolates from the margin to the centre of the double boundary which reveals here its property of interface.

Does that mean that the policies of struggle against poverty are useless? Certainly not! The optimisation, as far as the improvement of what already exists is concerned, has to take into a more precise account this “unthought of” about the territory in the implementation of public policies. The optimisation in the sense of creation, utopia has to do with the conception and creation of public spaces at a local scale, at the scale of society as a whole in favouring employment, sharing with others, artistic creation, in a context of acknowledgement of various cultures at world level.

A CASE-STUDY IN INDIA

FRANÇOIS DURAND-DASTÈS | Groupe Dupont | CNRS - UMR Geographies et Cités | University of Paris Diderot

Indian planning organizations have, for quite a long time, acknowledged the existence of regions where development actions are particularly necessary; they usually define them as “backward regions”. By mapping those regions, using official definitions and many socio economic variables we shall give precise indications on the contents of the notion of backwardness as it is seen in the culture of planning politics in India, and try to explain the localisation of the “backward areas” in the country. The discussion of the factors of this localisation shows the part played by natural spatial characteristics and by relative positions. As these factors have direct and indirect actions, and there is a good deal of interaction between factors, explanation of the spatial setting of backwardness must use systemic logic, and can be based on a systemic sagittal diagram.

GEOGRAPHY AND GLOBALIZATION

WHY IS IT UNAVOIDABLE THAT GLOBAL HISTORY HAS TO BE A “GEO-HISTORY

CHRISTIAN GRATALOUP | Groupe Dupont | CNRS - UMR Geographies et Cités | University of Paris Diderot

For the last forty years or so, since globalisation has become an evidence, a history at the worldwide scale has been developed (“World history,” changed into “global history in the 1990s”). The main option is based on a desire to sever the links with a too much eurocentric vision of the past of humanity, without forgetting all the same the part played by European actors (it would be quite difficult to do so in Vasco da Gama’s and Pedro Alvaro Cabral’s own country!). Thus, history has become multipolar. The geographical position of societies relative to one another becomes a central issue, and sets a lot of problems for map building and spatial modelling.

This historiographical evolution converges with the interrogations that the French historian Fernand Braudel (1902-1985) had put together under the expression of “geo-history”. This goes farther than a simple historical enterprise, that of “connected history”, the most symbolic work of which is precisely Vasco da Gama’s biography by Sanjay Subrahmanyam (“A carreira e a lenda de Vasco da Gama”, CNCD, 1998); the whole social sciences, Geography in particular, are concerned. Such an opening up is a tentative endeavour to face the challenge set by globalisation.

MORPHOGENESIS OF URBAN GLOCALIZATION¹

ISABEL MARCOS | Groupe Dupont | CICS.NOVA | FCSH | New University of Lisbon

In this communication, we shall introduce research which we have been developing for some years. The perspective of analysis is that of morphodynamic semiotics, and our subject of study is *the deployment of globalisation and its impact on urban phenomena*. The delimitation of this subject follows reflections concerning the four globalisations: terrestrial, maritime, aerial and virtual. We shall also show in this communication how, in the space of a *cusps* the city in its local (Fl) and global (Fg) dimensions is structured following the rhythm of each new technological development; by this fact, it confronts us with new modes of production of space² (b) and of time³ (a). The globalised city obliges us to reconsider the city itself in order for us to be capable to propose a new paradigm for its future. The technological fact mentioned above has penetrated a ‘world in the World’; in other words, all of a sudden, the techno-scientific instruments arises as a ‘virtual world’ on the Web, provoking a double decomposition of the notion of space, such that the individual is no longer only represented in the concrete space of the territory – local – but also in the interactive space of communication – global. Consequently, this virtual world necessarily expresses a ‘world of communication’ and this world of communication is expressed in the space of our cities. As an example, I shall focus on the effects that this virtual world has on the concrete space of the city by using the example of Rem Koolhaas’s *Harvard Project on the City*.

¹ The term ‘glocal comes from the contraction of two words: ‘global’ and ‘local’. As we shall demonstrate in the present article, at this level of analysis, we have distinguished four spaces of ‘glocalisation’: the market, the port, the airport and the web page. Each of these spaces maintains a ‘balance of forces’ (local and global) that are in conflict within the system of urban networks. Over time, we observe that the conflict between the ‘forces’ (local and global) diminishes down to a total ‘glocalisation’, or fusion between these forces, the web page being the perfect example. The spaces that we have enumerated are ‘glocal’, spatial nodules.

² Here, we use the notion of space as a ‘balance of forces’ (local & global) that are in conflict inside the system of urban networks.

³ Here, we use the notion of time, as historical time, viz., the time of cultures and of societies that spread and which regularly settle firmly into a ‘state of morphological stability’.