

Markets as sites of flows, technologies, and social and affective connection and innovation:

A comparative, transnational approach

Funded by the Australian Centre on China in the World at ANU and the RMIT University School of Media and Communication Research Development Fund

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Markets are primarily treated as sites for the exchange of economic goods and tradable products. This workshop positions them as transformational places, which operate in transnational/regional flows of goods and labour, but which are also subject to the political, historical and semantic structures of their location.

Our interest lies in the potential offered by a comprehensive, transnational study of markets, both as sites of commercial activities and as places of social and cultural interaction. In this project, markets are places where one can see the emergence and negotiation of collective and individual identities, materialised within a set of implicit and explicit traditions and cultural practices. Group identities (i.e. vendors, consumers, associations, and even passers-by) can be studied through narrative processes, which take into consideration the historical consciousness of the markets on the one hand, and their value as sites of tangible and intangible heritage on the other.

Our research on Chinese markets combines two fundamental concerns: a) the analysis of the material arrangement of place; and b) the investigation of how individuals live, operate, interact, and attach meaning in place (both in the past and in the present). Markets as everyday spaces, as urban environments, as architecturally designed, as temporally and spatially limited or informal are places where material and immaterial relationships produce emotional perceptions and affect.

However, without a shared vocabulary that adequately canvasses the theoretical and descriptive terms used in relevant languages (and we are specifically interested in Chinese and English) it is difficult to be sure of one's conceptual ground. This workshop will concentrate on the issue of realising a cross-linguistic grounding through careful discussion on points of translation and in deliberating points of incommensurability or coherence.

Schedule:

11am Introduction. Presentation of research – parameters, contexts and methodologies. Facilitated by Stephi Donald and Kirsten Seale.

12pm Case Study. Hong Kong Street Markets: Stories of Resistance, Survival and Metamorphosis – Maurizio Marinelli. Responses

1pm Lunch - Building 9, Level 4

2pm Conceptualising Markets. Thinking through the problematics of translation and situation with 10 min case studies from participants

4pm Break

4.30pm Outcomes. Discussion of position paper from workshop and proposed collection Informal Urban Street Markets

7pm Dinner - 400 Gradi, 99 Lygon Street, Brunswick East (drinks not included)

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Date: Thursday 19 July, 2012

Time: 10:30am to 6:00pm

Venue: Building 9, Level 3, Room 8
RMIT University, city campus