



Call for Papers

8th Cultural Geography, Anthropology, and Cultural Studies International Conference in Occitanie

A joint production

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International Conference

“Why identities...?”

Relevance and limitations of a contested notion

June 21-22, 2018, Nîmes University (South of France)

The 8th Cultural Geography, Anthropology, and Cultural Studies International Conference in Occitanie will focus on the contested and hotly debated notion of “identity”, with the dual purpose of developing a scientific reflection while asking questions of an immediate and concrete social nature, relevant both for academics and social players faced with contemporary challenges regarding the way to build and conceptualize identities.

Applied since the end of the Second World War to individuals, the notion of identities has experienced a dramatic expansion at the end of the 20th century when it was expanded to minorities, at the very moment when sociological and geopolitical evolutions led to a redefinition of the status of many groups or regions. However, the many subtleties and intricacies of the notion were never clearly explored, and the term has remained vague, imprecise, confusing. It applies to group as much as to individuals, has a historical scope or is limited to the span of a single human life. Also, it has become commonplace to speak about national, regional, religious, professional, sexual identities, and the list is not exhaustive. Whatever the scale, identity remains a notion manipulated by the media and the political sphere. It resists clever deconstructionist attempts, and is a fixture of populist rhetoric, whether it be to develop images of belonging or to deploy fears against an instrumentalized

Other. Despite globalization processes and the apparent erasure of cultural differences, the notion of identity has never been so present, so widely used.

The inconsistency and lack of substance of the notion of identity has led numerous scholars to stop using it, contest its relevance, and suggest other terms and notions. If for some, identity remains an unavoidable reference (Anderson, Laplantine, Amselle, Bauman, Bhabha...), others have initiated a lively debate around it (Descombes, Balibar et Wallerstein, Castells, Debarbieux, Lévy, Lussault, D-C Martin...). Moreover, the term still has currency in everyday language, which amply justifies studying and analyzing its uses and impact.

Why identities? Why are they still used as useful references when their epistemological shortcomings are so obvious? Why haven't they disappeared in the 21st century with the global overhaul of systems of belonging? Why do they remain significant when everyone responds to the same technological injunctions to adopt virtual attitudes? Why haven't they become a second rate, obsolete argument, at a time when solidarity and sharing have become priorities to save a threatened environment and humanity? Why are they so successful when it comes to voice the claims and display the specificities of groups and individuals? How is it possible to make the difference between what are "identities", and what are localisms, traditions, uses, etc.? Doesn't the term "identity" hide rather a lack of values? Isn't it rather a case of multiples identifications rather than a quest for identity? How can we articulate visible with lived identities? How can we negotiate identities between individualism and networks of interdependence, individualizing processes and collective structuration?

This conference aims at tackling the notion of identity from scratch, on the basis of the cross-disciplinary practices that have become the hallmark of the Nîmes' Cultural Geography, Anthropology, and Cultural Studies International Conferences for the past two decades. The previous conferences have successively explored the notions of territory, celebration, development, heritage, displacement, resistance and utopia. On each occasion, the goal has been to gather specialists of different disciplines to clarify these notions by complementary perspectives and show their relevance to explain and think our daily lives and the issues to which are confronted contemporary societies. Economists, urban planners, geographers, ethnographers, sociologists, cultural studies specialists and active members of civil society are invited to propose analytical or critical papers to tackle the multiple dimensions of the notion of identity in contemporary societies. Reports on personal, lived experiences, and testimonies from field players are also welcome.

Papers may focus on the following axes:

- Constructing collective identities today
- Identity performances
- Political instrumentalization of identities
- Commodification of identities, *nation-branding*, place marketing
- Heritage management
- Identity paradoxes
- Identities, between collective perspectives and individual expectations
- The new vocabulary of identities

Deadline for proposals: June 30, 2017

Organizing committee

- Catherine **Bernié-Boissard**, catherine.bernie-boissard@wanadoo.fr
Géographie, Université de Nîmes, UMR 5281 ART-Dev, Université Montpellier 3
- Claude **Chastagner**, claud.chastagner@univ-montp3.fr
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- Dominique **Crozat**, dominique.crozat@univ-montp3.fr
Géographie, UMR 5281 ART-Dev, Université Montpellier 3
- Laurent-Sébastien **Fournier**, laurent.fournier@univ-nantes.fr
Ethnologie, EA 3260 CENS, Université de Nantes

Summer 2017: evaluation of the proposals by the Scientific Committee.

October 15, 2017: notification of the decision to the authors.

Proposals (between 2000 and 4000 signs, 1 to 2 pages, in English or in French) must be sent in Times New Roman 12, 1.5 line spacing. They shall feature the first and last name, field, status, affiliation, and electronic address of the author, as well as 5 key words.

The document will be saved under the following name: LASTNAMEfirstname.doc, and sent exclusively to christiane.lagarde@univ-montp3.fr

The papers can be delivered either in French or in English.

Please, note carefully: Speakers are requested to take part in the two days of the conference since round-tables will be organized throughout the conference requiring the participation of all the speakers.

Scientific Committee

Jean-Pierre Augustin, professeur de géographie, Bordeaux
Alessandro Dozena, professeur de géographie, UFRN Natal, Brésil
Guillaume Faburel, professeur d'urbanisme, Lyon
Philippe Joron, professeur de sociologie, Montpellier
Régis Keerle, maître de conférences en géographie, Rennes
André Micoud, directeur de recherches en sociologie (CNRS), Saint-Etienne
Claire Omhovère, professeur de littérature anglophone, Montpellier
Jean-Marc Stébé, professeur de sociologie, Nancy

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