

## AJEI Webinars (2022) : « India Matters »

**Organiser** : Johan Krieg (LESC) and Khaliq Parkar (CESSMA)

**12/01/2022** : “*Understanding Caste among Muslims: Classic Debates and New Scholarly Developments*” by Julien Levesque (Ashoka University)

**Summary** : From colonial census administrators to social scientists, scholars have debated whether Muslims in the subcontinent can be said to have castes. In recent decades, the discussion also entered the political arena over the issue of reservations in India. This presentation will first sum up the key historical moments of the scholarly debates on Muslim caste since colonial times. Julien Levesque will then turn to more contemporary scholarship to highlight its contribution and the avenues it opens for further research.

**08/02/2022** : “*Trails of an Indian Community in Padova: Chasing the invisible migration of Indian students (re)shaping spaces in this Italian medium city*” by Daphné Reguissé (PhD, Iuav University of Venice) ; discutant : Andrea Drocco (Ca' Foscari University of Venice).

**Summary**: Chasing the invisible migration of Indian students (re)shaping spaces in this Italian medium city». The purpose of this presentation is to show the link between migration and urban transformation in terms of urban policies and social practices within a specific local territory: the city of Padova (North East Italy). Daphné Reguissé will particularly focus on the question of Indian students-migrants in Padova through different angles -generally difficult to tie- while keeping a strong sociological base.

**08/03/2022** : “*Mediated Ecologies of Feeling*” by Vibhushan Subba (Independent Researcher) ; discutant : Wafa Amid (Lady Shri Ram College For Women–Delhi University).

**Summary** : Media technologies have increasingly become the connective tissue that shape and structure our everyday lives, rhythms, experiences and memories. From love to death; compassion to fear, hate and anxiety; through the intersection of the public and the private, the historical and the lyrical it organizes our bodies, emotions and objects. This talk navigates the digital landscape of micro archives and online communities of the Darjeeling and Kalimpong Hills in India to offer vignettes of the emotional landscape of a people caught in the eddy of multiple histories, legacies of colonialism and uncertainties of belonging. Tracing these local digital interventions, the talk engages with the questions of home, belonging, identity, digital memories and alternative histories from the Darjeeling Himalayas.

**12/04/2022** : “*Environment and Security in India*” by Damien Carrière (École Supérieure des Professions Immobilières-ESPI) ; discutant : Edna Peza (CESSMA-Université Paris Cité).

**Summary** : Damien Carrière will examine security as an infra-structuring process comprising of material elements, discursive techniques, norms and regulations that create orders over the rhythms of the city. These infrastructures form a networked grid that filters the dense temporality and rhythms of people across spaces while maintaining and synchronizing the metabolic functioning of the city (Tripathy and Carrière, 2020). This order is more or less functional, decentralized at different scales, disjointed and heterogeneous, it is neither harmonized nor centralized. Security cameras may not be connected, and the surveillance monitor is most often just playing in an empty room. Drawing on Lefebvre, we employ rhythm analysis to explain how security infrastructures mediate, filter and regulate multiple rhythms in the city.

**07/06/2022 :** “*The use of social networks in rural South India*” by Cécile Mouchel (Centre d'Etude des Mondes Africains, Asiatiques et Américains-Université Paris Cité) ; discutant : Frédéric Landy (Université de Paris-Nanterre - UMR LAVUE-Mosaïques).

**Summary :** How have rural populations in India mobilised their social networks in times of forced “social distancing”? Focusing on a rural region in Tamil Nadu, mixing Social Network Analysis (SNA), descriptive statistics and qualitative interviews conducted before the lockdown, during the lockdown and its aftermath, this presentation shows that kinship ties and caste-based relationships are still used as inescapable economic resources, especially when it comes to survive in this unprecedented worldwide economic and social crisis. The region under study has undergone profound changes in recent decades, combining the disappearance of agrarian forms of dependency and the strengthening of intra-caste interdependence among the lower caste group with a focus on access to credit and self-help to access employment. The crisis put these social networks to the test. Subsidised food, the main pro poor measure of the Indian government, prevented famine, even if it did not prevent severe malnutrition. Although kin and caste solidarity played a key role in helping households to survive, they did not prevent the resurgence of old forms of patronage.

### **AJEI Seminar (2023) : « India Matters in Comparative Perspective : Politicization of Space »**

**Organiser :** Johan Krieg (LESC) and Khaliq Parkar (CESSMA)

L'Association Jeunes Études Indiennes organise un séminaire en mode hybride intitulé « India Matters in Comparative Perspective : Politicization of Space ». En croisant approches historiques, anthropologiques, géographiques et politiques, ce séminaire s'emploiera à interroger les relations dialectiques entre espace (lieux et milieux géographiques), société (individus et groupes) et politique en Inde. Cette thématique sera traitée au cours de plusieurs séances organisées à l'Université d'Aix-Marseille, Maison de la recherche (salle 2.44).

**21/10/2022 :** “From the 'Attila of the jungle' to the 'big cat' of the Zoo : a study of a century of representations and reactions around Bengal tigers (North India and South-West Nepal)” by Nolwen Vouillier (EHESS-Ulîège) ; discutant : Philippe Ramirez (Centre d'études himalayennes – IrAsia).

**Summary :** “If we had no tiger, what could you wrote?”, said Jagat on the 31st of July 2019, during my first three-month field trip to Nepal, during the monsoon season, on the border of Bardiya National Park, in the southwest of the country. This guide, like so many others, is passionate about the famous *Panthera tigris tigris* and does not hide it. However, seeing the tiger as a force of nature, as a king or as a big brother, is not unanimous. Over the decades and in different places, the Bengal tiger has been subjected to various human representations and has undergone direct (elimination, confinement, rescue, etc.) or indirect (actions on the environment, on its prey, etc.) treatments. I propose to focus this presentation on a part of my research, on this species specifically in its encounters with humans, by going through a century of history and politics where the tiger has gone from being a sought-after prey to a precious heritage to be saved and now, more and more, to a dangerous problem. The surroundings of Bardiya National Park, which have been my field for the past three years, will be my main focus, but I will not omit to base my

presentation on the available literature concerning the tiger in the Tarai of Nepal more generally and in Northern India. I will do my best to highlight the ambivalence and opposing points of view among the populations during the major hypothetical phases mentioned above. The challenge is to understand how humans have organized and adapted, individually and collectively, until today, in the face of this impressive "cute killer".

**18/11/2022** : "Women's commuting strategy and digital adoption. The case study of employees doing desk work in the IT sector in Pune, India" by Pauline Baudens (Lam - UMR 5115).

**Summary** : This paper investigates the transformation of commuting practices of highly privileged women doing desk work in a multinational in Pune, India. The digital, accelerated by COVID, is at the origin of new transport strategies, facilitating mobility and making teleworking possible. Qualitative interviews were conducted with 15 female participants, belonging to a homogeneous social group in appearance. Their (im)mobility strategies were analysed. The results demonstrate that the evolution of commuting practices is closely related to comfort and the adoption of digital solutions. It argues that diverse strategies were adopted within the sample. However, considered as a constraint, commuting seems commonly avoided, privileging teleworking when possible. Therefore, we conclude with the adoption of new (im)mobility strategies that result in teleworking, and in using applications to order transport and commute.

**27/01/2023** : "There be Sufis ; Fatehpur Sikri and the building of Hindustan" by Raffaello DE LEON-JONES DIANI (Paris – EHESS).

**Summary** : The curious traveller visiting India is almost bound to gaze upon the glorious remains of one of the most important sites in Indian history, and certainly one of the most beautiful monumental complexes in the world: Fatehpur Sikri, the erstwhile capital of the Mughal padishah Akbar. The beams and rooves of the buildings therein, mimicking the moveable tent capitals typical of the Timurid heritage are now often presented as a mingling of different strands of architecture : Hindu, Muslim and Jain. This popular understanding of the monument serves largely to satisfy a modern narrative that is offered up to the tourist, but echoes a lively debate around the heritage of India. In a day and age where the so-called Muslim heritage of India is by some seen as foreign to her national history, our presentation will look at a Sanskrit description of the city, found in Padmasāgara's Jagadgurukāvya, and try to highlight the role Fatehpur Sikri had in Akbar's sedimentation of Empire and rule.

**3/03/2023** : "Ecofeminism and ecological nationalism in contemporary India" by Julie Ucendo (ED 395 – LAVUE) ; discutant : Jean-Marc de Grave (IrAsia).

**Summary** : Environmental crisis has doubtless become the major challenge of the century. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have in response identified spheres of action, but implementation of solutions remains a significant obstacle. This presentation will focus on the SDG-5 related to gender equality from the perspective of both ecofeminism and ecologism in contemporary India. It aims to provide a better understanding of gender inequalities in access to natural resources, but also to draw attention to potential risks of redefinition of ecologism. To do so, we will explore how Indian ecofeminism has contributed to promote a nationalist vision of the relationship between women, men, and nature. We will therefore attempt to propose a definition of what we call "ecological nationalism" through an ecofeminist perspective, while questioning the relevance of this concept itself.