

3rd Workshop on Ideology, Propaganda, and Political Discourse in Contemporary China

Organized by the Oriental Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences.

Date: Friday, October 27, 2017

Venue: Conference hall 206, The Czech Academy of Sciences, Národní 3, Prague 1

PROGRAM:

9:00 – 9:10 Opening remarks

9:10 – 9:30 *Protecting Ideological Security: New Trends of Propaganda under Xi*

Lance Gore (National University of Singapore)

9:30 – 9:50 *Sleepwalking back into the Future: 16+1 as a Reenactment of the East
European “Bloc”*

Martin Hála (Sinopsis.cz)

9:50 – 10:30 Discussion

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee break

11:00 – 11:20 *China's Mass Media Events: Lessons on Public Discourse
Management from Hu to Xi*

Florian Schneider (Leiden University)

11:20 – 11:40 *The Political Discourses of the Urban in Hong Kong:
Democracy In/Action?*

**Maurizio Marinelli (University of Sussex and Institute for
Global Prosperity, The Bartlett, UCL)**

11:40 – 12:25 Discussion

12:25 – 12:30 Concluding remarks

For queries, please contact Ondřej Klimeš (klimes@orient.cas.cz).

This event is funded by the Czech Academy of Sciences' Strategy AV21 within the “Global Conflicts and Local Interactions” research program. It is also part of the Oriental Institute's “Power and Strategies of Social and Political Order” research platform.

PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS:

Protecting Ideological Security: New Trends of Propaganda under Xi

Lance Gore (National University of Singapore)

Xi Jinping's first term in office has been marked by a revival of some Maoist themes and practices. The sharp left turn is prompted by a deep sense of insecurity that the CCP is losing its identity, organization integrity as well as ruling efficacy. Xi's effort to rebuild the Party's ideological faith however has been hampered by many unresolved theoretical and practical difficulties in a market environment. As a result, the effort has been limited to tightening ideological control as a way to clear the stage for resurrecting the Party's ideological hegemony. The effort reflects the imperatives of a Leninist regime and hence will probably continue for the foreseeable future.

Lance L.P. Gore is a Senior Research Fellow at the East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore. He previously taught at Bowdoin College in Maine and the Fletcher School of Tafts University in Boston. His recent publications include *Chinese Communist Party and China's Capitalist Revolution: the Political Impact of Market* (Routledge 2011); *Chinese Politics Illustrated: the Cultural, Social and Historical Contexts* (World Scientific 2015), "The Social Transformation of the Chinese Communist Party: The Prospects for Authoritarian Accommodation". *Problems of Post-communism* (2015) and "Labor Management as Development of the Integrated Developmental State", *New Political Economy* (2014). He can be reached at eaigore@nus.edu.sg.

China's Mass Media Events: Lessons on Public Discourse Management from Hu to Xi

Florian Schneider (Leiden University)

The People's Republic of China (PRC) began the 21st century with a new-and-improved public relations approach. In the eyes of China's propaganda experts, the PRC's increasing economic, political, and cultural relevance in the world needed to be matched with a communication strategy that would alleviate suspicions about a potential 'China Threat' abroad while simultaneously showcasing the leadership's policies to a domestic audience. A corner stone in this communication strategy has been the mass media event. Since the turn of the millennium, the PRC government has spent billions of RMB to host international spectacles like the Olympic Games and the World Exposition. Each of these endeavors has been hailed by China's state media as the grandest and most impressive event of its kind, and as China's ultimate arrival on the world stage. In this talk, Florian Schneider (Leiden University) examines such large-scale projects to show how mass media events fit into cultural governance approach in China. The talk explores the communication strategies that informed events like the Beijing Olympics and the Shanghai Expo, arguing that these events were far more than simple propaganda exercises; they have provided crucial experiences for the ruling Chinese Communist Party to refine and hone its practices of managing public discourse. China's mass media events have provided

arenas for experimentation and innovation, allowing various elite actors in the PRC to create networks of political collaboration and recalibrate discourses about the Chinese nation. The talk will ask what the implications but also the limits of this approach to cultural governance are, and it concludes with a discussion of how the lessons from these events have carried over into the Xi Jinping era.

Florian Schneider (PhD), Sheffield University, is University Lecturer in the Politics of Modern China at the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies. He is managing editor of the academic journal *Asiascape: Digital Asia* and the author of *Visual Political Communication in Popular Chinese Television Series* (Leiden & Boston: Brill 2013), which won the 2014 EastAsiaNet book prize. He is a VENI laureate, whose research on 'Digital Nationalism in China' was funded by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), and he was awarded the 2017 Leiden University teaching prize for his innovative work as an educator. His research interests include questions of governance, political communication, and digital media in China, as well as international relations in the East-Asian region.

Sleepwalking back into the Future: 16+1 as a Reenactment of the East European "Bloc"

Martin Hála (Sinopsis.cz)

16+1, an initiative, or platform to bring together 16 post-communist states in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) for cooperation with China, emerged as a new political and spatial construct in 2012. Bringing together the eleven EU member states in the region with the five non-member states in the Balkans, it essentially reconstructs the old East European "bloc" that many in the region were eager to leave behind after 1989.

Despite frequent references to the EU - China partnership, 16+1 effectively re-divides Europe into East and West, and draws the eastern part closer to the new treaty system emerging from "Eurasian Integration", or closer geo-strategic cooperation between Russia and China. This strategic "rebalancing" in CEE presupposes fundamental changes in the local political elites' outlooks and aspirations. Is the "China Model" now preferable to European Integration that dominated the political discourse after 1989? How is this fundamental shift communicated by policy-makers, and decoded by the public? Where does the Chinese narrative of "Belt and Road" and "Globalization 2.0" fit in this new ideological landscape?

Martin Hála (PhD) is a sinologist currently based in Prague. Educated in Prague, Shanghai, Berkeley, and at Harvard, he has taught at universities in Prague and Bratislava, and conducted research in China, Taiwan, and the U.S. He has worked for several media-assistance organizations in Europe and Asia, and from 2014-2015 served as the Asia Pacific regional manager at the Open Society Foundations. At present, he is the Director of the new nonprofit [AcaMedia](#) and its project [Sinopsis.cz](#), and also teaches at Charles University in Prague. His latest publications in English are *Investigative Journalism in China* (Hong Kong University 2010, co-edited with David Bandurski) and a chapter in *Samizdat, Tamizdat and Beyond: Chapters In Transnational Media* (Berghahn 2013).

Maurizio Marinelli (University of Sussex and Institute for Global Prosperity, The Bartlett, UCL)

This research project investigates the intersection between the physical, the socio-economic, and the political dimensions of transforming community living in Hong Kong, focusing on the progressive annihilation of street markets to create space for even more ultra-modern high-rise buildings. Street markets offer a unique lens to investigate the political discourses of the urban¹ and to analyze the negotiation processes between the vertical strategies of gentrification and the horizontal tactics of urban resistance. Street markets are barometers of equity and economic development, collective sociality and sustainability, social prosperity and community cohesion. This paper will concentrate on the Sham Shui Po markets area in Kowloon, Hong Kong, to analyze two main elements: 1) the nexus between politics and policy; and 2) the critical role that place-making and people-making play in the construction of collective identity in public space. Located in a district characterized by a high number of post-war public housing estates, Apliu Street is well-known for its hawkers' stalls and shops selling electronics and electrical components. However, the wider area has progressively witnessed an increasing numbers of formal, semi-formal and informal street-level economic activities (i.e. the Yen Chow Street Hawker Bazaar, the Tung Chau Street so-called 'temporary market', etc.), which are now operating for at least eighteen hours a day. In this paper, I engage with the concepts of stratification, precarity, and democracy in-action, both in a spatio-temporal and a political sense, to unpack the multi-layered identity of the Sham Shui Po markets area. Adopting this angle of analysis, will allow us to better understand the role of concerned civil society organizations vis-à-vis Government authorities in the battle 'to save the market'.

Maurizio Marinelli is a Senior Lecturer in East Asian History and Co-Director of the Asia Centre at Sussex University. He is also a Visiting Senior Research Associate at the UCL Institute for Global Prosperity. The focus of his research is located at the crossroads of Chinese history, politics and society, connecting socio-spatial transformation in China to wider themes of colonialism and globalization, territoriality, identity formation, citizenship construction, and the impact of gentrification. Marinelli has worked for a number of years on the port city of Tianjin, from the foreign concessions era (1860-1945) to the present. On this topic, he has recently co-edited a volume titled *China: A Historical Geography of the Urban* (2017, Palgrave). His research has been published in several languages in various journals, including *Theory and Society, Emotion, Space and Society, China Information, Urban History, China Heritage Quarterly, Cultural Studies Review, Postcolonial Studies*. He is currently writing a new book entitled *Hong Kong: Markets, Street Hawkers and the Fight against Gentrification* (2018, Zed Books).

¹ I am particularly interested in the implications of the historical re-writing and re-signifying of what Lefebvre, in his pioneering 1970 work *La révolution urbaine*, refers to as 'the urban', which includes: built environment, urban phenomenon, urban space and landscape, urban practice, and ultimately urban ideology. I will use 'the urban' in this sense, both to indicate 'more than the city', and the complexity of a field of inquiry. The urban holds together the contexts of embodied experience of individuals living in the city, and allows us to explore both individual creativity and social relations.