

Urban sociology
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Lecture 6. The place of the « other »

« *L'enfer, c'est les autres* », Jean-Paul Sartre, Huis clos, 1944

« *A city is a place where people can learn to live with strangers* » Richard Sennett, 2004

Introduction

I. The place of the “other”

“National identity” and migrations: Integration vs. assimilation, multiculturalism vs. universalism: are these models still valuable?

II. Migration and generations

“The “three ages of immigration” (A. Sayad)

III. The places of hospitality in the city

Relegation, assignation... vs. welcoming and hospitality

IV. Capital and the city: “from rigidity and strangeness to flexibility and indifference” **(TEXT, R. Sennett, 2004) (NB. Ce texte est mentionné à titre indicatif, sa lecture n’est pas nécessaire pour l’examen)**

Introduction

- Different types of co-presence in the city: multicultural societies, melting pot, segregated societies. The limited efficiency of the notion of “integration”
- More than “models”, these figures of “making society” are historical constructions, and can change by time. How are they observable?
- The question of the “place of the other” is also depending on the scale of observation (local vs. national)
- Urban societies present different figures of reception and hospitality: what are their emblematic places in the city? Key- workers in the city.

I. The place of « the other »

“National identity” and migrations: Integration vs. assimilation, multiculturalism vs. universalism: are these models still valuable?

Being a main topic for sociological, philosophical and political sciences research, the question of national identity is also often a matter for political uses and possible manipulations.

The understanding of each national historical backgrounds (the formation of the states) and also international relations (including colonialism) is necessary to build a correct analysis of “the place of the other” in societies.

Binary models are often proposed to built this understanding: “*ius sanguinis*” vs. “*ius solis*”, assimilation vs. integration; multiculturalism vs. universalism. Such models allow only incomplete understanding. There are often mix in societies.

- Let’s take the three notions : **assimilation; integration; insertion** (*J. Costa-Lascoux, De l’immigré au citoyen, Paris, la documentation française, 1989*)

The common understanding often sees a graduation of immigration society: from imperialist or colonialist societies (assimilation) to open mix democratic societies (insertion). There is also a political interpretation: integration would be left oriented while assimilation would be right oriented.

Assimilation: the dominant meaning of the term, resulting from European history, refers to a process of transformation and fusion. The “other” is more or less rapidly absorbed in the arrival society. At the end of the process, the “other” has become a “same”. There is no “otherness” anymore. Two conditions are required: 1. the new comer must be (considered as) potentially to be assimilated; 2. The new comers may not be too numerous otherwise the whole process is in danger (“seuil de tolérance”). In France, this notion is obviously linked to the colonial history (but not only) and it can be considered as an extreme figure of the “republican model” (full equality, nation is only one, no minorities, “good and bad foreigners”)

Integration: The term, object of controversial debates, refers also to a process: in the integrative process, both parts (the new comer and the arrival society) are supposed to be in an interactive and in a way more liberal process. In the process, the “other” accepts to

be part of the whole (society); he can preserve some individual or collective characteristics (right to difference, in principle). Historian and sociologists put the emphasis on “integrative dispositions” in society that can be more or less efficient according to the context: labour market and unions, school, housing and neighbourhoods, leisure. The full integration is quite similar to assimilation: naturalisation (citizenship) being a crucial point.

Integration fits with the figure of the “French republican model” (full equality, nation is only one but composed by persons belonging to different backgrounds, there are no “minorities” in the political meaning of the word but some “specificities” or “differences” can be recognized)

Actually “integration” is also considered as a basis to formulate social problems in the Anglo-Saxon world. Minorities being components of the society, it is fair that they are integrated. That leads to “positive discrimination” principles and policies.

Insertion: This notion appears to be more neutral since it indicates a light juxtaposition. The new comer is just taking place in society. His retreat is possible at any moment and doesn't change anything neither for him nor for society.

Insertion implies no specific requirement to the new comer. In such context, groups composed by “others” can develop themselves according to their own rules.

Since naturalisation is not possible in the “insertion” model, it is more likely to be found in the states where “*ius sanguinis*” is dominant (as Germany).

But if insertion refers to juxtaposition of groups in the city (vs. fusion), it can also describe multicultural cities (North America).

Evolution and adaptation of « national models »

When integration was considered as a banal process leading the new comer to a progressive “taking place” in the arrival society (Chicago School), it is now a matter of huge debates: In France, as immigration issues are more and more concerned by following generation (2, 3, and now 4th!), the term of integration, addressed to natives is not accepted since it put the emphasis on their immigrant backgrounds - while the question is much more felt in terms of inequalities, exclusion, marginalisation.

Integration refers to a general process, not only migrants.

In Anglo-Saxon countries: multiculturalism and minorities rights have not been able to prevent society from racism, discrimination and fragmentation: integrative policies are also at stake.

In both case, there is a clear shift between local and national: national principles (republican model, multiculturalism) are rarely adapted in /and to local contexts. Urban environments put at stake these principles, and local authorities as well as inhabitants are pushed to invent their own solutions (hospitality vs. reject in the neighborhoods; access to labor market; mix unions; etc.)

The notion of integration put the responsibility on both parts (immigrants should integrate society, society should integrate immigrants). It has become very prescriptive. Consequently, is “integration” anymore useful to analyse processes of “making society”? **It is more convenient to analyze the conditions in which the “other” is welcome (or not), by whom, where, etc. (school, housing, labor market...) In this context, it is possible to observe historical variations into the different types of societies (universalistic, multicultural)**

- The question of « National Identity » has been put again in the core of politics during the French presidential electoral campaign of 2007. As soon as N. Sarkozy has become president, he has created the controversial "ministère de l'Immigration et de l'Identité nationale", which never existed in French Republic history. 8 historians have immediately given their demission from the « Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration » arguing that such a title could only strengthen prejudices against migrants. One of them, Gérard Noiriel, shows in his last book how the identity logic, emerging in the 19th century, has always given consistence to nationalist discourse. He reminds that in the 1980th, National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen has been the one who popularized the expression « national identity ».

II. Migration and generations: understanding immigrations' diversity

« The three ages of Algerian immigration » A. Sayad:

First statement: extreme diversity of immigrants populations. Immigrants belonging to the same historical period don't behave in the same way, while immigrants far in time can be very next one from another.

Second statement: different phases of immigrations correspond to different phases in the internal transformation process of rural communities the immigrants belong to.

Third statement: One should always consider both departure conditions and arrival conditions (economy, policies, state of public opinion etc.)

For the Algerian community, three ages can be identified

First age: from the beginning of the colonial period to the 2nd World War, immigrants were produced by a dominated rural society and were a mean for the village's economy to survive

Second age: after 2nd world war and until the Independence (1961) peasants became proletarian and try to change their condition by migration; but at the same time, their belonging to the rural community and their very poor condition on the labor market in France prohibited such a change.

Third age: After the Independence, a relatively independent immigration succeeded to put roots in France (shantytowns but familial regrouping possibilities)

A Forth (problematic) age of Algerian migration? (See J.L. Richard).

III. The places of hospitality in the city

Relegation, assignation... vs. welcoming and hospitality

Migrants and "key-workers": Where do they live? And how are they accommodated?

Last arrived, worst housing conditions: "from shantytown to HLM"

Solidarity networks

Discussion: What are the conditions for a city to be hospitable?



A brief history of an emblematic accommodation in Paris: furnished hotels for people without furniture (to know more: see C. Lévy-Vroelant, A. Faure, *Hôtels et meublés à Paris, 1860-1990*, Créaphis, 2007)

In the 1920th, more than 10% of the Parisian population was accommodated in « hotels meublés », kind of « bed and breakfast ». It was a sign of hospitality of the city and at the same time, the expression of a cruel shortage of affordable housing for the working class people and the newcomers.