ABSTRACTS

Michaela Sedovicova, “Anomy in 21st century - revisiting the concept”

Note: This paper derives from the my bachelor thesis submitted on December 11th 2013 at Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic and successfully defended on January 23rd 2014.

This theoretical paper explores the concept of the anomy, as defined by Émile Durkheim in the late 1800s and later used as a part of the sociological canon for more than a century, and its relevance in the postmodern times. It aims to answer the question of the relevance of using the concept in the 21st century. The analysis strongly focuses on the changes that appear on the level of solidarity in the Western society over the time since defining the anomy.

I draw my conclusion on a base of the works of theoretical (Beck, Bauman, Giddens) researches who describe the present as a liquid modernity. Moreover I work with pool of empirical researches (Brown, Rabusic and Mares, Teevan, Eckart and Durand and more), who show in their quantitative studies inapplicability, multidimensionality and ambiguity of the concept of anomy (alienation respectively), measured by existing scales such as Srole.

With all the respect to the canonic concept and without any doubt of its importance in sociological theory I evaluate changes in solidarity as critical to such an extent that for the purpose of using it in postmodern era, which is far too atomized and heterogeneous for the original definition, I suggest redefining the concept including all the currently used quantitative scales spotlighting the alienation and anomy.

Son Aeseong, “Sociological Research of Gentrification”

This paper is about how ecological changes by gentrification affect local community.

Gentrification means the process in which residential areas of the class are replaced with those of the middle or upper class. Gentrification is one of the most striking features in Seoul, Korea these days. Seo-chon district, Hongdae area and Itaewon-Haebangchon area were once underdeveloped places but are now ever so fancy. These areas are undergoing gentrification or have been undergone.

This research focuses on Seo-chon district. This place is located in the west side of Gyeongbokgung Palace, which is the palace in the Joseon Dynasty, and Cheongwadae, the Korean presidential residence is close by. Therefore, development of this area has been restricted for a long time. Many traditional Korean-style houses
and old alleys still remain. Because of low rental costs, artists began to settle in Seo-chon a couple of years ago. That made unique and cultural sceneries of Seo-chon, which attracted tourists. Old houses and stores have continuously been replaced with fancy cafes and restaurants.

This process is called gentrification by culture resources. The local development is not led by government and does not need huge capital. This may be called a new type of local development. On the other hand, there is a danger of local community disintegrating. Because the rental costs are getting higher, the relatively weak has to leave this area. Conflicts between house owners and tenants are rising. Seo-chon is a longstanding town but is undergoing changes due to gentrification. That is what this paper focuses on.

Lee, Hyun Kyung, “Restructuring local community through community building movement: A case of Usadan village in Seoul”
This study focuses on community building in modern city. How bottom-up community building movements in local level are constructed and what the result would be? Through a case study of Usadan village in Seoul, this article explores restructuring local community in the city.

Community building activities in Usadan village are a grass-root movement challenging the loss of sense of community caused by urbanization. The background factors which enable the movement are characteristics of space and actors. Spatial characteristics of Usadan Village are summarized as coexistence of rich village with poor village, openness of ethnic, religious and cultural diversity. These characters brought young challengers such as artists and entrepreneurs who are key actors leading the community building movement. An impetus to Usadan’s community building is the voluntary participation and cooperation process based on social links among residents. On the other hand, there is the problem of sustainability caused by the issue of gentrification. The outcome of community building movement is expanded from economic aspects to sociocultural aspects. By strengthening social relations among residents, local community in Usadan is restructured.

The case of Usadan provides the implication for possibility of new city life. In modern society, representative democracy cannot fully embrace the civic needs. It is argued that community building movement can be an alternative model which allows the citizens to choose and change the contents of their everyday lives by themselves.

Gary Pui-fung Wong, “Exhibiting Hong Kong: Hong Kong Pavilion at British Empire Exhibition 1924 and 1925”
In 1924 and 1925, British governments organised two rounds of British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, London. With the participation of all British colonies, the Exhibitions aimed to demonstrate national strength, establish economic ties and construct a sense of community among the coloniser and her colonies. Hong Kong participated by constructing a Pavilion with exhibits that produced in Hong Kong. This paper outlines the politics between Hong Kong and London during the organisation of the Pavilion, examines the representation of Hong Kong in the Pavilion and discusses the reception among local Chinese community. This is an archival research that draws on historical archives, official catalogues and archival data of other kinds. This paper includes three major observations. (1) Politics between Hong Kong and London: Hong Kong government originally declined to participate as they failed to identify appropriate exhibits that London expected and found it financially unfeasible. However, Hong Kong government participated shortly before the event with the support by local Chinese elites. (2) Representation of Hong Kong: Hong Kong is exhibited as a Chinese community through its exhibits (e.g., showcase of Chinese medicine and demonstration of silk production) and the Pavilion (i.e. a China street with a building with Chinese architectural style). (3) Identity construction: The Exhibitions failed to create an imagination of a British community among local Chinese community. Having said that, this paper concludes that the Exhibition successfully strengthened Hong Kong government’s collaboration with local Chinese elites. Such a collaboration is particularly critical to the governance of Hong Kong during 1920s amid the surge of Chinese nationalism and imperialist expansion of Britain.