



Social Sciences Winter School In Pondicherry



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Fifth Edition

Heritage, Communities, Sustainability



Call for participants
December 2nd to 6th, 2019

At French Institute of Pondicherry and Pondicherry University

The **Social Sciences Winter School in Pondicherry (SSWSP)** has been designed as a programme of intensive and multidisciplinary training workshops addressing theoretical, methodological and practical issues in social sciences research.

The major thread of this 2019 edition will be to address issues at the interface between **Heritage, Communities, and Sustainability** through the lens of social sciences, with different thematic focus, scales of interpretation, theoretical questioning and methodological frameworks, and in interaction with various stakeholders. Heritage, Community, Sustainability as distinct and overlapping interdisciplinary fields of research intersect in a number of disciplines of science. These concepts in general, suggest a preoccupation with memory, preservation and modes of expression of the people. Interrogating heritage, along with communities, while engaging with visions of sustainability, is a way to engage with the possibility of creating “living” archives. And in it lies the hope to create renewed relationship between science and society.

“Living” archives, as both material and immaterial, are vectors of knowledge, memories, identities, practices, conveyed through diverse modes of expressions which are grounded in hierarchies of economic and social life of a people. They are also vectors of power and domination, lending themselves to be appropriated, controlled and render current exercise of hegemony possible. How to refer to archives as “living” archives constantly evolving? Could we reimagine the archive to assist counter-hegemonic practices of the marginalised people? This might require a critical reading of scholarly practices and their orientation. To realign these practices with the marginalised and help reimagine the objectives and practices of sustainable futures could also draw upon initiatives, which have worked toward alternative forms of the relationship between science and society.

From a theoretical perspective, such ambition has been part of various debates. From a methodological point of view, collaborative research, participatory and community-based research practices count among several academic initiatives, to build and implement research protocols in close relation with the people. Both in the fields of archives, heritage conservation and in the production of history, dominant and often homogenous visions of the past have been questioned, with the aid of different techniques and theories. Perspectives of science which will consider processes of making consent and dissent, needs of a people to reimagine histories

and practices to shape probable futures along with its contingent struggles and constraints would constitute the common areas of reflection for all the participants of the Social Sciences Winter School in Pondicherry. In a context of rapid global changes and claim for a sustainable future, the emergence of critical heritage studies implies too taking in consideration the changing relations between societies and their natural environment, as much as their relation to the fabric of their heritages.

This year, the objectives of the Winter School will be to expose students to research frontiers between **Heritage, Communities and Sustainability** in interaction with various stakeholders. Three different workshops will pull different threads of the knotting between Heritage, Communities, and Sustainability issues, while focusing on archives, histories, knowledge, and conservation, and mobilising different approaches and disciplines across the social sciences.

Following the framework of the past editions, the Social Sciences Winter School will be organised according to three complementary axes:

- (a) **Training in plenary sessions at the beginning of the school:** presentations will introduce different thematic and methodological facets of research and field practices.
- (b) **Three thematic workshops lasting four days** will address issues at the interface between Heritage, Communities, and Sustainability from various cross-cutting angles, focusing on archives as living cultural practices (workshop 1), the process and meanings of rewriting-reconstructing histories (workshop 2), and gendered local knowledge and the conservation of biodiversity in agroecology (workshop 3).
- (c) **Restitution, discussions, exchanges:** participants of each workshop will work on a research design as a group based on the four days of training and make their presentation.

Short summaries of the workshops

Workshop 1. The creation of memory: archives as living cultural practices

Whether the term is traced back to the ancient Greek *arche*, “the beginning”, the illustrious antiquity, or to the Latin *arca*, a box for safe-keeping, which preserves and transmits, the notion of archive refers to the journey in space and time of any trace worthy of its name and therefore implicitly refers to dynamics of transfer across ages and cultures. Moreover, archives cannot be reduced to a storage place or to the array of preserved documents, as in various cultural contexts they take the form of very different technologies and practices and gather various kinds of materials. Filing, preserving, giving public access to, and even interrogating are practices that constantly evolve and refashion our cognition of the archive. Seen from such a perspective, archives allow us to “deconstruct” the history and the narratives of our own civilisations.

The workshop will be articulated around three focuses: a) the archival heritage: interrogating the past through documents; b) archives at the present tense: the “digital turn” and its effects on archival practices; c) the future of our memories: community archives and non-documental archives.

Workshop 2. Reconstructing histories: theories, methods, and practices

This workshop will address the process of rewriting histories of marginalised people. It will explore three central questions: why construction of histories continues to remain an important exercise for marginalised communities? What are the perspectives, theories, and methods available from attempts to reconstruct such histories? How far such histories have helped transform the lives of the marginalised?

We shall engage with these questions in light of ways to confront hegemonic histories and seek critical alternatives in history making projects of the people. The primary focus would be to address methodological issues in relation to these three questions. In this process, we will bring together historians, social scientists, writers, community leaders and activists to collectively understand the significance of reconstructing histories in the context of current social, political and environmental challenges that people face. We will study select movements in historiography and literature to situate them in the changing political trajectories and consciousness of different marginalised sections of the people. Given the overwhelming presence of tools, techniques and media in circulation today, how do we ensure that these do not subvert the struggle for recognition and dignity? In this workshop, we will address all these issues with the specific focus on fisher labour and lives.

Workshop 3. Socio-anthropological approach of local knowledge in agroecology

In a global context of crisis of the conventional food production and processing model, agroecology questions the contemporary heritage of peasant knowledge regarding the conservation of local seeds and breeds, and techniques to maintain soil fertility (including micro-hydrology). These seeds, breeds and techniques are the result of socio economic history based on specific cultural context and ecosystem. There have been marginalised by colonial and postcolonial development programmes such as recently by the Green Revolution. Agroecology is based on a dialogue between local and scientific knowledge. Each of these knowledge questions the history of their elaboration, inscribed in a context of intersectionality gendered power relations that value certain propositions and can make others invisible. The workshop will question the socioenvironmental heritage of agroecology and its gender issues with an interdisciplinary approach of social sciences and genetics of plants.

Based on grounded theory and shared experiences between scientists, grassroots organisations, citizens, the workshop will be articulated around the following: a) conceptual contributions on the feminist and decolonial approach of agroecology questioning the “sociology of absences”; b) systemic approach on what it means preserving the heritage of biodiversity; c) links between biodiversity and identity (from individual ontology to collective level) and the methodological tools to understand and preserve “living” archives (seeds, breeds, recipes).

Participants

The Social Sciences Winter School in Pondicherry is open to Doctoral and Master Students of all fields in social sciences. Trainees will be selected on the basis of their qualifications, while taking into account the value of the training with regards to their research or professional projects.

The trainers will be from various disciplinary background and the teams will be international, composed of young and senior researchers originating from Indian universities and research centres of excellence, as well as from abroad.

Venue

The plenary sessions will take place at **Pondicherry University** (School of Social Sciences and International Studies, Silver Jubilee Campus) and the trainings at the **French Institute of Pondicherry** (IFP), from December 2 to 6, 2019.

Registration

- The deadline for submission of application is **October 27, 2019**
- Please fill in and submit the electronic application form via the following link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfl7G8t_soa8SDaT2bwcvVnBJBtrjfdW_NQxCUr4_Uu3qDeJ_Q/viewform
- The application should further include a **full CV** and the **Postgraduate degree certificate**. These two documents should be sent by email to winterschoolpy@gmail.com
- The **registration fees of Rs.3,500** are payable on arrival (**Rs.1000** for students from the Pondicherry University)
- Selected students will be offered accommodation and food in Pondicherry for the duration of the programme

Contact

All correspondence should be addressed to the team of coordinators: winterschoolpy@gmail.com
More information and detailed programme will soon be available on the website of the Winter School: <http://winterspy.hypotheses.org>