

Boundaries and urban worlds: the contested ethnoscape of expatriates in Geneva¹

Fronteiras e mundos urbanos: a contestada ethnoscape dos expatriados em Genebra

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ABSTRACT

After having for long time been neglected by social anthropologists, cities are nowadays central in numerous researches, and more particularly in the field of migration and transnational mobility. However, studies of the impact of migrants on cities themselves remain insufficient. Based on

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ethnographic work within the United Nations office in Geneva, this paper argues that the impact of international civil servants on the city's settings and space lies in an expatriates' "ethnoscape" (APPADURAI, 1990) transforming Geneva's architecture, public space and patterns of sociability. The paper also analyses in what terms these urban mutations get contested in a central neighbourhood where inhabitants criticize gentrification, the rise of rental prices and eviction. Not only do the results of this study shed light on the process through which the presence of the UN office transforms Geneva in a global city, but they also show how such transformations of the urban space may produce the symbolic and spatial boundaries of contested territories that bring inhabitants to negotiate oppositional identities. In a broader theoretical perspective, this paper allow us to defend, along authors such as Boltanski and Thévenot, a *pragmatist* approach of boundaries, paying attention not only to their role in the discursive drawing of specific communities and public problems but their actual anchorage in every day practices. In other words, boundaries — in their various phenomenal manifestations — participates in the phenomenological and practical separation of contrasted urban worlds, that is of differentiated ways to organize — and relate to — urban everyday experience. This raises the question of how a boundary actually works as a separation and differentiation process, how it influences perceptions and actual experience of the world.

Keywords : Elite migration, Ethnoscape, Public problems, Gentrification, Geneva

RESUMO

Depois de terem sido negligenciadas por antropólogos sociais há muito tempo, as cidades são atualmente centrais em inúmeras pesquisas, e mais particularmente no campo da migração e da mobilidade transnacional. No entanto, os estudos sobre o impacto dos migrantes nas próprias cidades continuam a ser insuficientes. Com base em trabalho etnográfico realizado no escritório das Nações Unidas em Genebra, este artigo argumenta que o impacto de servidores públicos internacionais nos espaços de expatriados que Appadurai (1990) chama de “ethnoscape” transforma a arquitetura, o espaço público e os padrões de sociabilidade de Genebra. O artigo também analisa em que termos essas mutações urbanas são contestadas em um bairro central onde os habitantes criticam a “gentrificação”², o aumento dos preços de aluguel e despejo. Não só os resultados deste estudo iluminam o processo através do qual a presença do escritório da ONU transforma Genebra em uma cidade global, mas também mostram como tais transformações do espaço urbano podem produzir as fronteiras simbólicas e espaciais dos territórios em disputa que levam os habitantes a negociar identidades adversárias. Numa perspectiva teórica mais ampla, este artigo nos permite defender, com base em autores como Boltanski e Thévenot, uma abordagem pragmática de fronteiras, prestando atenção não apenas ao seu papel no desenho discursivo de comunidades específicas e problemas públicos, mas sua ancoragem real em práticas diárias. Em outras palavras, as fronteiras — em suas várias manifestações empíricas — influem na separação concreta de mundos urbanos contrastantes, ou seja, na definição de formas diferenciadas de organizar e relatar a experiência cotidiana urbana. Isso levanta a questão de como uma fronteira realmente funciona como um processo de separação e diferenciação, como ela influencia as percepções e a experiência real do mundo.

² Nota da edição: O termo *gentrification*, que não tem tradução consagrada em português, refere-se à migração de pessoas de classe média para uma região antes desvalorizada, gerando diversos problemas ligados à especulação imobiliária.

Palavras-chave: Migração de elite; Ethnoscape; Problemas públicos; Gentrificação; Genebra

I - INTRODUCTION

Cities have generally been undertheorized in anthropology (LOW, 1996), and major concepts such as solidarity, power or ritual have been developed in “cold” settings, away from urban worlds (HANNERZ, 1980). This has however less been the case in the research fields of migration and transnational mobility. Cities have indeed been analysed since almost a century as central nodes for the constitution and reinforcement of networks and solidarity among migrants. This explains why migration is commonly described as “an urban phenomenon” (PORTES, 2000).

Two major research traditions have since early on addressed the changes induced by migration within cities. Researchers of the early Chicago School, also known as the Ecological School, studied the implementation of migrant communities and their impacts on this city that grew significantly and got strongly transformed. Practicing fine-grained ethnography of the urban space, these early urban sociologists considered the city of Chicago as a “laboratory” (PARK AND BURGESS, 1984). Concepts such as the “ghetto”, “urban minorities” and “moral regions” conduced researchers to describe empirically the migrant’s impact on the urban morphology of Chicago in the early twentieth century (PARK AND BURGESS, 1984; WIRTH, 1938, among other researchers).

Another set of researches explored how migration flows reshape social interaction in African cities. Anthropologists of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, also known as the Manchester School, sought to shift the analysis from the background of the migrants — or their “culture” — to the interactional context (MITCHELL, 1987). With a strong focus on social networks analysis in urban settings, scholars of the Manchester School offered considerable understanding of the dynamics of redefinition of ethnicity in African industrializing cities for rural-urban labour migrants negotiating colonial encounters.

With the advent of studies dealing with globalization processes and cosmopolitanism in the late twentieth century, the analysis of the impact of migrants on cities took a “deterritorializing” turn. Noting the intensification of global mobility and the rise of information technologies, prominent researchers described the link of individuals to place and space as becoming “liquid” (BAUMAN, 2000), “risky” (BECK, 1992) or tightened through the emergence

of a worldwide “network-society” (CASTELLS, 2011). All these works were driven by a strong focus on uncertainty in contemporary societies. However, apart the description of the social networks, little is said in this literature of the day to day migrant’s experiences in a specific urban context (BEAVERSTOCK, 2002; LEY, 2004). Nevertheless, as we will argue here, it is this daily experience and the way it takes place within the material and institutional frame of a specific urban order that accounts for most of the urban conflicts related to migration.

One of the most influential authors that has contributed to the “deterritorializing” turn is the Indian-born social anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, who has elaborated the concept of “ethnoscape” to analyse urban expressions of global migration flows.

In relation with this seminal work, this paper aims at redirecting the focus of the inquiry from migration global “flows” to the dialectics between migrants and cities. It argues that this dialectics is embedded in the individuals’ experience of physical and political space and place. To do so, it discusses the actuality of Appadurai’s concept of ethnoscape and its implications in contemporary urban cities under the influence of migrant newcomers. We will therefore propose a more spatially embedded interpretation of what we should consider as ethnoscares. Ethnoscares are not only a matter of a cartography of international migrant’s flows but it concerns the way migrants are more or less able to shape the cities they live in to take place within them, drawing at the same time social and spatial boundaries that constitutes their everyday world and its relation to the broader urban order. We will base this reinterpretation work on an ethnographic study of the “expatriate” community in Geneva (also named the “international community”) that lives temporarily in this city that hosts the European headquarters of the United Nations and a great number of multinational companies³.

What are the impacts of this population on the urban morphology of Geneva? What is the city’s reaction to the presence of these newcomers? These two questions compose the first part of this paper, which is dedicated to an ethnographic account of Geneva’s transformations analysed in terms of an embedded “ethnoscape”. In the second part, in order to go deeper in the analysis of the social and material impact of this high-end migration on the common order of the city, this concept is put in discussion with Jacques Rancière’s concept of the “distribution of sensible” (1995; 2004). This discussion will lead us to give insight on the way cities are the very place of the experience of power and the constitution of symbolic and at the same time material boundaries. The notion of boundary will be questioned here not only as a cognitive device —

³ According to official statistics, international civil servants in Geneva constitute approximately 10% of the Canton’s population.

essential in the delimitation of social groups (LAMONT AND MOLNAR, 2008) — but also in its phenomenal dimensions, essential in the shaping of the everyday experience of those groups and the delimitation of their place within a common order. The way boundaries manifest themselves — and are experienced — is an essential part of the qualities of the common world they draw.

The results presented in this paper shed light on the importance of practicing and developing ethnography *of* the city with a special focus on the experience of public problems, allowing to analyse the dynamic process linking political questions and the situated experiences of everyday life.

II - GENEVA'S INTERNATIONAL ETHNOSCAPE

As we suggested, Arjun Appadurai among other researchers contributed to the diffusion of the concept of flow in anthropology. In a classical article published in *Public Culture*, a review that strongly focused on globalization processes and transnational or macro-anthropology, Appadurai (1990) used for the first time the suffix “-scape” to explore markers of global economic and cultural flows. Taking stock on the development of media and information technologies as well as the intensification of people’s mobility, he argues that anthropologists are forced to study communities that have – citing Meyrovitz – “no sense of place” (1990, p. 585). Based on the rhizome theory by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), Appadurai calls for a “macro-anthropology” and by doing so he encourages a larger scope than anthropologists commonly did in order to understand “the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogeneization” (1990, p. 588).

The materiality of ethnoscapes

The complexity of contemporary cultural forms that Appadurai calls heterogeneization precludes according to him to use of center-periphery models. The world he describes is made of “disjunctures” between economy, culture and politics (1990, p. 588). The idea of disjuncture is at the center of the theoretical framework that Appadurai develops in this article. He terms five dimensions of global cultural flows: *ethnoscapes*, *mediascapes*, *technoscapes*, *financescapes*, *ideoscapes* (1990, p. 589). All together, these five landscapes build what he calls the “imagined worlds”, “constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the

globe” (1990, p. 589). He insists on the fact that those imagined *worlds* are more than just “imagined communities”, they imply indeed the relation of people to “globally defined field of possibilities” (1990, p. 589). Imagination is conceived here as an “organized field of social practices” (1990, p. 587) and concerns, according to our interpretation, not only what happens in the mind of the people but the situated interactions with all the affordances that enable those social practices. The various “scapes” identified by Appadurai should help us draw the global reconfiguration of those affordances and the “imagined worlds” they enable.

Nevertheless, we will not follow this path in our analysis but concentrate on another aspect of those landscapes — and especially of the ethnoscape — which is less developed by Appadurai and even to a certain point paradoxically ignored. Indeed, one of the assumptions of his insistence on the imagined *worlds* is that people living in alternative worlds are able to contest “the imagined official worlds of the official mind and of the entrepreneurial mentality that surround them”. The idea — and interesting aspect — of such a contestation is that the conflict is not only virtual but takes place in the materiality of the world and the forces that shape it. At stake, there is more than a representational conflict but a question of situated power and exclusion processes. It is therefore intriguing — and even slightly paradoxical — to consider that the various “landscapes” of globalization are about deterritorialization. This interpretation tends to reduce the question of landscape to a matter of “mapping” flows or the distribution of various entities, ignoring the spatial and anchored dimension of those landscapes. But, the increasing conflictuality of European cities (GEROMETTA *ET AL.*, 2005) suggests that the growing heterogeneity, the disjunction of the “imagined worlds”, has a strong territorial dimension that needs to be investigated in order to understand the dynamic of contemporary urban conflicts.

Expatriates and the production of dominant ethnoscaapes

The question of ethnoscape, that is of the flows of migrants and the imagined and situated worlds they locally produce, calls therefore for a careful ethnography of the dialectic between the migrant’s everyday experiences and the context that frame it. How do global flows participate to the local reconfiguration — the *re-scaping* one could say — of the urban order? The ethnoscape appears here as the result of various “investment in forms” (THEVENOT, 1984), that is of work and money invested either by the migrant communities, the State or the private actors, in order to accommodate in the city the daily practices of the migrants. Said differently,

the ethnoscape is constituted by the sum of the migrants' oriented *affordances*⁴ in a given urban context. This bundle of affordances is at the same time what constitutes the imprint of a specific but shallow migrant community on the city and what allows each individual of this community to forge its own "integration" — or at least its "accommodation" — within the pre-established spatial and social urban order. One of the interesting aspect of this approach lies in the fact that it helps differentiate between more or less powerful ethnoscares, that is either ethnoscares that are developed at the margin of the merchant and formal city — such as the migrant's "moral regions" described by the Chicago School — or the more "dominant" ethnoscares (contributing to the gentrification of poor migrants' neighbourhoods) produced by the "expatriates" in Geneva. In other words, the boundaries, through which a specific community constitutes itself and develop its mode(s) of living within the city, can be more or less legitimate and integrated to the broader formal and economic established order.

Nevertheless, in migration research, "expatriates" — as a category of analysis — have constituted the very figure of the "deterritorializing" turn. Skilled migration thus has for long been studied following Appadurai's call for a "macro-anthropology", meaning by giving little attention to individual's actual agency one the one hand and to the physical and material space that these migrants frequent on the other side (BEAVERSTOCK, 2002). In numerous researches, expatriates or skilled migrants are considered as frequenting "non places" (AUGÉ, 1992), locations that are "an arbitrary physical context" copy-pasted all over the world (Jones 2002) and as developing a "place polygamy" (BECK, 1992). As suggested by our reading of the spatial — and political — implication of ethnoscares, such macro and de-territorialized approaches aren't sufficient to account for what is at stake in contemporary cities. We must therefore turn to authors who have analysed expatriates' cosmopolitan practices as territorialized practices (SMITH, 1999) and, more generally, under which conditions "transnational elites" bring with them networks, cultural practices and social relations (BEAVERSTOCK, 2002). Migrants, whether in precarious or in privileged situations, have indeed to be considered as detaining the capacity of reconfiguring urban landscapes through their social practices, economical investments and to contribute to the development of cities.

Our description of Geneva's international ethnoscape goes along this second perspective. It is an attempt to extend the macro analysis of ethnoscares into a situated analysis of the embeddedness of those migrants' landscape. It should help shed light on two fundamental

⁴ The concept of "affordances" refer here to the theory of situated cognition (and action) as developed, among other, by J.J. Gibson (GIBSON, 1986).

dimensions: the individual experience and the political implication of ethnoscares. Paying attention to the phenomenality of boundaries should help us bridge those two dimensions.

The next section focuses on the first aspect of this question (the individual experience), using one of our informants' experience of the Geneva's social and spatial space. Following her experience, we see the many affordances that constitute the ethnoscares and how it contributes to her "integration" within the city.

III - AN EXPATRIATE EXPERIENCE OF THE CITY

Kim's worlds

In order to interview Kim in the cafeteria of the international organization where she was working, we first had to obtain a badge letting us access the building — *the international world*. When we first met her, Kim was twenty-five years old. She arrived from Korea in Autumn 2011 with a six-months contract for an internship at the UN. She was hoping to extend her contract or to convert it in a consultancy one to remain in the organization. Just like Kim, we met many young graduate students who had accepted an unpaid internship for a few months in an international organization in Geneva dreaming of a stable position within the UN. The concurrence, Kim said, is very harsh, adding that although she holds a BA degree in environmental science from a Canadian university she had "little chance" to remain in Geneva.

Except from stabilizing her professional situation, finding an apartment was also difficult for Kim, as it is for many residents of a city that shows the lowest vacancy rates in Europe⁵. Before she arrived in Geneva, she hadn't found a place to stay but fortunately, after having spent a few very expensive nights on her arrival in the city, some colleagues provided her with advices that helped her find a room in an international home.

Of particular help to Kim were the website *Glocals.com* and the Geneva Interns Association's *Facebook* page, she said. The former is addressed to a large scope of "expats" in Geneva, being UN employees or multinational companies ones. It is commonly used for classifieds adds, especially housing information: what are the nice neighbourhoods to live in, how much should a rent cost, advertisement for rooms to rent, etc. Many of our informants describe *Glocals.com* as being their main tool to find an apartment but also to establish social

⁵ According to official statistics, the vacancy rate in Geneva is of 0,2% and is stable since ten years (OFFICE FOR STATISTICS OF THE CANTON OF GENEVA, 2011).

relations. Richard per example, an Australian consultant for the UN, was regularly watching at the classifieds on *Glocals.com* to buy second-hand furniture and in the end, he used this website to join a literary club and to organize hiking trips with people he knew in this network.

Many events are organized through *Glocals.com* and much of them aim at welcoming newcomers as it is showed in this announcement:

Hi everyone, are you the new kid in town? Come to a New in Town meetup to mingle with other new and not-so-new locals. Find fun people to talk to, cool places to go to or to discover and a bunch of friends to come with you! (GLOCALS.COM, September 2012).

Analyzing the exchanges on this website provides interesting information about the *international* ethnoscape in Geneva. It permits to map the frequent places where users meet, but also the *emic* categories used by expatriates.

But as Kim mentioned it, *Glocals.com* was not her only resource to find a room in Geneva. She also used the Geneva Interns Association's *Facebook* page. This page is more specifically directed to UN interns and consists mostly in an information exchange on housing possibilities. It is moderated by the GIA which organized several social events during our fieldwork. Apart of "life beyond work", as stated on the association's website⁶, it's objectives concern also the work conditions of interns within the UN. In this perspective, the GIA participated in 2012 to a campaign called "UNpaid is Unfair". This campaign denounced the fact that unpaid internships in UN headquarters cities with a high cost of living such as New York, Vienna or Geneva prevents lots of candidates to apply for a position.

But the two resources mentioned by Kim are not the only vectors that impact the city of Geneva' *map* of expatriates' accomodation. A flourishing business has appeared due to the strong housing shortage in the city. Relocation agents are numerously used by newcomers and more particularly for those with higher incomes, as it was told by our informants. Conventionnaly, relocation agents offer various kinds of services including housing and schooling insisting on the fact that everything is handled, which is presented as being precious for people with heavy working schedules, as this advertisement shows :

⁶ www.internsassociation.org

Figure 1: Advertisement

GENEVA RELOCATION – FOR YOU AND FOR PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

Since 1996, Geneva Relocation has been proposing a large range of mobility solutions to large and medium size multinationals.

Specialized in handling home search programs, education counseling and school search programs, immigration services (visas, work permits) and customized settling-in programs, Geneva Relocation handles every detail of your transition and your integration. With an excellent reputation developed over the past 15 years, covering the cantons of

Geneva and Vaud, as well as neighboring France, Geneva Relocation offers the appropriate level of support to successfully integrate Geneva's life in the best way.

Geneva Relocation services are also available to individuals and to the numerous international officials that are working in the regions. We offer customized services at a very affordable price.

Source: www.genevarelocation.net

Another important institution used by our informants is the Geneva Welcome Center. It provides newcomers working in international organizations or in multinational companies with housing offers and various advices concerning health insurance and other administrative issues. It is located in a former rural domain on the edge of the city, now in the heart of the international neighbourhood where the UN and most of the international organizations are situated. This property, which also hosts numerous associations and services in favour of the so-called “international community”, organizes frequent events “in order to encourage meetings and exchanges between internationals and the local population”⁷.

This place, called *La Pastorale*, appears like a landmark of the international *ethnoscape*. Indeed, all the international organizations advertise for this place to their new employees. Moreover, by organizing guided city tours as well as “afterwork partys” in several bars in town, the influence of the Geneva Welcome Center is spread throughout the whole city.

We practiced participant observation in this place and noted that the participants to the events were mostly groups of colleagues meeting after work. Indeed, it has been told by most of our informants during the interviews that social relations with colleagues outside of the workplace constitute a very precious resource for professional promotion, information exchange and network strengthening.

⁷ www.cagi.ch

Although the Geneva Welcome Center officially aims at “encouraging meetings and exchanges between internationals and the local population” (see above), we almost never met any person during our fieldwork that wouldn’t define itself as belonging to the “international community”. The relation to “locals” is commonly described as being distant, it is even said that the locals are “invisible”. It seems according to our informants that “locals” on the one hand and “internationals” or “expatriates” on the other compose worlds that coexist without contact. This phenomenon is described by Paul, a French UN high commissioner as “an ignorant cohabitation”.

Coming back to Kim, this is also her case. She says, when asked about her relations to locals: “I always remain with foreigners who can speak English at least”, adding that she feels “like a stranger in the city”. In her words, the invisibility of locals goes with a strong engagements in constituting new social relations among “internationals”. In her experience, this is especially the case of young interns who might not come with a family:

Interns want to make friends, to go out with everyone, they are strangers in this city, they don’t know anything and they want to be part of a community... they feel lonely and isolated, they want to be in a group and that’s why they participate to the UN drinks (KIM, 19 April 2012).

These words show an important dimension of the international ethnoscape, that is the role held by language in dynamics of sociability. According to Kim and many others, English is the main speaking language among “internationals”. It reinforces the sense of belonging to the community and in the same time it excludes those who don't speak it as a daily practice. This appears also in the words of Richard:

For us one of the great things about Geneva in particular is the large expatriate population, which is mostly English speaking. Not having any French language skills it enables us to survive here (RICHARD, 14 September 2011).

At a more general scale, English appears as an integration tool — helping the expatriates to decipher the city — as it is shown by World Radio Switzerland, a radio station essentially composed of English-spoken programs. One program called “The connectors” is dedicated to expatriate newcomers and gives information about all what has to be done from an

administrative point of view (schooling, housing, taxes, insurance), where to do cheap grocery, fancy shopping, how to grasp some elements of “Swiss culture”, etc. This program could be part of what Appadurai would call a “mediascape” and so do a great quantity of newspapers, websites, blogs or forums dedicated to the condition of being an expatriate in Geneva. The mediascape — functioning as a translating device from a reality to another — contributes in this case to the connection between the life in the ethnoscape and the life in the city at broad. It allows to cross such diverse — and mainly cognitive — boundaries as the ones constituted by the language and the complexity of administrative demarches or the lack of familiarity with the setting of the city. Time and learning help overcoming those boundaries but as stated by the interviewees, they are also affordances allowing to take place in the city without having to completely cross those borders. Those affordances draw the boundaries of another way of taking place in, or belonging to, the city.

The question here is not anymore that of a “local” population opposed to a migrant one in the path to integration, but of contrasted — but also largely intertwined — urban worlds. Each of those modes of “taking place” implies a network of spaces but also of specific mediascapes, financescapes and ideoscapes, drawing the different boundaries — and their respective expectations and requirements (language, financial means, administrative status, and so on) — of those alternative ways of belonging to the city. They participate also to the determination of more or less dominant positions within the urban order. In this perspective, the problem of the delimitation of a local population set against a foreign one doesn’t disappear but, as we will see in the second part of the paper, it has to be understood in relation with the dynamic of spatial conflicts and the making of public problems involving ethnoscapes and their material and conventional boundaries.

As mentioned, English language has in the same time a segregating impact since in several bars, per example those where “UN Drinks” are organized, almost no French can be heard. This participates to the constitution of the common qualification of “expat bars”, namely bars frequented by expatriates and where English is the main language. “Expat bars” look most of the time like Irish or English pubs where beers are served in *pints* and different sports are broadcasted on large Plasma TV screens.

Such bars are becoming commonplace in the Pâquis neighbourhood, close to the central train station, the Lake of Geneva and the international organizations. This neighbourhood is composed of 56% foreigners and could be described as the *multicultural* neighbourhood in Geneva. Indian or Afghan groceries, Senegalese or Lebanese restaurants, Portuguese or Spanish

bars are common sights in Pâquis. It is also a neighbourhood of important street prostitution and where the incomes are the lowest in the city. In contrast, new-build gentrification can be observed in the whole neighbourhood with fancy penthouse apartments being built on top of historic buildings. The neighbourhood concentrates the lowest and the most expensive rental prices per square meter in Geneva (ADLY, 2013). Besides, lounge bars and exclusive clubs are flourishing.

Pâquis hosts also several Anglican churches frequented mainly by Anglophones, as well as evangelical churches where African or Latin American people can be encountered mostly. Indeed, as Kim says, churches are important places to enlarge social networks and remain integrated in a community. She frequents a Korean church in order “to build social relations because it’s a source of information about Geneva and to make friends from different countries”, she says.

IV - RE-TERRITORIALIZING THE POWER OF ETHNOSCAPE

In the previous section, the revisited or extended concept of *ethnoscape* allowed us to describe a part of what the daily practice of city might be for the so-called “international community” in Geneva. In the same time, this description made appear how the city gets impacted from the embedment of expatriate modes of living and their attempt to accommodate themselves with the established urban order. Since many expatriates possess a legal status, financial means⁸ and organizational skills, they are able to develop many facilities helping them to get together and also to live in Geneva even without speaking the language. Furthermore, market mechanism — seeing expatriates as a consumer niche — and public authorities — fostering the competitiveness of the international role of Geneva — participate both to the various investment giving shape to this specific ethnoscape. This situation raises tension between — in Sharon Zukin’s words (2009) — two “landscapes of power”: the “corporate city” and the “urban village”. On the one hand, the international role of Geneva symbolizes growth, openness and the adaptation to metropolitan standards with the development of the international ethnoscape. On the other hand, this international ethnoscape allows for local-scale and social class solidarity.

⁸ It must be noted that not all expatriate are “rich”, even in comparison with illegal workers, as, like Kim, many of them are not paid (internships). Nevertheless, they are also a large amount of very well paid expatriate living in Geneva that contribute to the development of the ethnoscape to the benefice of the “poor” expatriate who can access it anyway (which is not the case often of the illegal immigrants).

As a consequence, places such as churches, bars or welcome centers offer as many affordances and scripts (AKRICH, 1992) that draw the broad frame within which the international community constitutes itself. These affordances, as well as the actualization of the ethnoscape in media- and ideoscapes composed of websites, newspapers, architectural standards, language and rituals, allow people from all over the world to take place in – to “integrate” in a certain way - the locality of Geneva.

The exclusion power of dominant groups

It is through this process that spatial and symbolic boundaries arise between the different communities in the city, namely what is seen as an “international” one and what is seen as a “local” one. Following Kim’s trajectory, or sometimes taking some distance to follow other informants’ experiences, practices and discourses, we acquired a “macro-anthropologic” perspective, such as Appadurai (1990) encourages doing in order to describe the flows more than the places.

However, as we suggested the concept of ethnoscape, proposed by Appadurai, prescribes us to remain at a descriptive level of the impact that is held by migrants in the city. This concept doesn’t allow for a deep analysis of the process through which the *ethnoscapes* are created, get negotiated, maintained or transformed. What happens when the symbolic and spatial boundaries constituting the international *ethnoscape* in Geneva enters in conflict with what is outside, to the already institutionalized boundaries framing the established order and the expected status and skills to take place in it ?

To understand this a little bit further, Ulf Hannerz (1992) proposes a slightly different perspective than Appadurai (1990). Without denying the changes induced by globalization over culture, especially in cities, Hannerz argues that these changes have a strong impact on the local experience and that “even being constantly in motion, being recreated, meanings and meaningful forms become durable” (LOW, 1996, p. 394).

This perspective is shared by Olds (2001) who aims at examining closely the urban impacts of globalization. In that sense, the postures of Hannerz (1992) or Olds (2001) differ from globalizing perspectives that were common following Saskia Sassen’s *Global City* (1991) or Manuel Castells’ (2011) “space of flows”, described as more important than the “space of places”.

There is then a need to focus more on the cities' normative dimension; i.e. the constitution of a legitimate urban order, at the same time symbolic and material. In this perspective, mobile people in cities, as it appears in the case of Geneva, do have a power of exclusion. Where the major part of the literature on immigration in urban settings has concentrated on dominated communities and precarious lives, the increased heterogeneity within contemporary cities invites us to tackle the dimensions of power and exclusion that are induced by dominant migrant communities — a kind of dominant “minorities” — such as expatriates in Geneva

V - ETHNOSCAPE AS A “DISTRIBUTION OF THE SENSIBLE”

As we suggested, it is in the constitution itself of a specific ethnoscape, and the way it impacts the spatially and symbolically institutionalized urban order, that dominant and exclusionary processes develop. In other words, if we follow Rancière's analysis, the power dimension of an ethnoscape lies in the way it contributes to the determination of a specific “distribution of the sensible” (RANCIÈRE, 1995; 2004), that is a practical and visible delimitation of the place and function of each person in the shared order. Rancière uses the concept of the “distribution⁹ of the sensible” in order to avoid abstract discussion on power — conceptualized as something that exerts an influence on space — but rather, radicalizing Foucault's approach, to consider it as something that is intimately linked with any configuration process and the devices and operations that make them possible (RANCIÈRE, 1995; 2004).

In this perspective, boundary making reveals at the same time its classificatory power and its phenomenal impact within the materiality of the world. Said in a more radical way, they are no symbolic boundaries without a material and conventional dimension. As Boltanski and Thévenot suggested in their classic work the strength of a legitimated order is not only linked with the justification principle that sustain it but depends also of the various material and conventional devices allowing to inscribe those principle within the situations of everyday life (BOLTANSKI AND THÉVENOT, 2006).

Indeed, the expatriate community doesn't constitutes itself within some kind of abstract realm of symbolic distinction but through the sharing of a language, of specific places and institutionalized networks; i.e. all the affordances that allow to enact on a daily base the form of

⁹ Distribution is the clumsy traduction of the French « partage » which means at the same time the process of sharing and the process of dividing.

integration within the urban order which is recognized – and experienced - as the one of an “expatriate”. It is those material and conventional settings that account for the double performative dimension of boundaries¹⁰, that is 1) as affordances for social judgement (allowing to divide for example the world between them and us) and 2) as scripts framing how to interact within the delimited context (how to act within a specific community or place).

VI - THE EXPATRIATE ETHNOSCAPE AS A PUBLIC PROBLEM

Considering the ethnoscape as the process — and the product — of the configuration and imposition in time and space of a specific mode of living/integration within a given urban order allows us to better analyse how and why it might generate territorial conflicts. In this perspective, ethnoscares raise the question of the power of migrants and more broadly of the link between situated experience of migration and the politics of place.

Looking closer at what impact do expatriates have on the city of Geneva, the presence of this dominant community creates several social and spatial conflicts. Among others, the expatriate’s ethnoscape was linked with gentrification by an inhabitants association of the Pâquis neighbourhood, Geneva’s traditional locus of low-wage — and illegal — immigration.

To better understand what is at stake here, we need to link our territorialized conception of ethnoscape with the theories of “public problems”. Of special interest for our understanding of urban conflicts is the theory of Joseph Gusfield on the development of public problems (1980). The works of this American sociologist have been prolonged in France by researchers close from the Pragmatic School (CEFAÏ, 1996; LABORIER AND TROM, 2003; CEFAÏ AND TERZI, 2012). These authors all propose, in line with Gusfield’s work and more fundamentally the one of John Dewey (1991), to analyse the dynamic constitution of public problems and especially on the way they are anchored in everyday experiences. Focusing on public controversies allows us in particular to see how the boundaries delimitating different social groups – affected publics – are constituted (GOULD, 1995). In this perspective, we should not start directly from the pre-given existence of a well delimited expatriate community but rather look at the way its various components – and especially its complex ethnoscape – become the

¹⁰ Wimmer develops a definition of social boundaries linking those two dimensions: a division of social world in terms of “us and them” and a script for action in each of the respective situations (WIMMER, 2008, 975).

target of critic, contributing in return to the constitution of a well identified expatriate community. It is in this dynamic interplay that the ethnoscape acquires its full political dimension. The ethnography of the public problems arising around the physical presence of expatriates in the city is what will allow us to fully grasp the complexity and breadth of migrant's ethnoscape.

In this public conflicts the same affordances that were framing the specific integration of expatriates to the urban order are the sources of the troubles that nurture the public denunciation. In other words, it is in their confrontation on a daily base on expatriate bars or with the newly built luxury apartments, that the inhabitants build a denunciation of the impact of the international community.

After having described some of the main aspects of the international ethnoscape, we must now focus on the contestation and critique it provokes. As the theories of public problem teach us also, the qualification of a public problem is rarely without history, on the contrary most of contemporary controversies are framed within previous qualification of the disputed entities.

Place struggle and boundaries

Looking at how the “international” community” is perceived — and detached — from a “local” point of view, the image of this mobile population has considerably changed during the century following the installation of the League of Nations in Geneva in 1920. The choice of this small city to host a peace organization and the coming of delegates from all over the world have first been received according to local media with great enthusiasm and curiosity (ADLY, 2013). Adly (2013) showed that during the 1960's, this image starts to change with the need for expensive infrastructure to control important post-war urban expansion. International civil servants, who benefit from tax exonerations, become the object of a critique that denounces the lack of contribution by this population to the city's expenses. A right-wing political party named Vigilance carried and formulated this critique first but it got appropriated afterwards by larger parts of the population.

In reaction to this growing critique, the Swiss authorities started for the first time to publish statistical reports on the international community in the 1970's. The scope of these reports was to underline the fact that despite the lack of fiscal contribution, internationals stimulate the local economy and industry and contribute to the international reputation of the city. These reports achieved to appease slightly the critique.

However, the impact of this critique is still embedded in many local residents' representations concerning expatriates. Many residents of the Pâquis neighbourhood where our study on the urban impact of expatriates has been conducted consider expatriates as belonging to a privileged community for whom the city's authorities make great efforts without being asked to contribute. This representation is anchored in the intimate experience of the physical changes and gentrification induced by the expatriates' presence in the neighbourhood and has strong impact on the dynamics of interaction between the two communities. Indeed, given the long-lasting housing shortage in Geneva, new-built gentrification in Pâquis area has a strong impact on social interaction between "internationals" and "locals". Julie per example, living in a low-income building that has been elevated with luxury penthouses, says that "there are now two different standards" and she defines herself as "a person of modest means". When asked who the others are she answers, "they are rich and they change frequently". Furthermore, the expatriate bars are well identified (english service, "cosmopolite" aesthetic) and part of the inhabitants denounce their substitution to more local "around the corner" bars.

Coming back to the question of boundaries, we see here that the critics they raise come not solely from the cognitive categorization of an abstract expatriate community but more directly from the way the boundaries of this community — its phenomenal inscription within the neighbourhood and the scripts it fosters — impact their daily life.¹¹ Part of the delimitation between the people belonging to the expatriate community and other inhabitants of the neighbourhoods — a lot of them being also migrants — is entailed in the socio-sensitive experience that some feel at ease in the urban world of the expatriates and other not. We need therefore to pay attention to the phenomenality of the boundaries — the way they manifest themselves and perform — to be able to understand how they influence the experience of the city and enact the division of urban worlds. As Raffestin (1980) reminds us the linear border is one type of boundaries, closely linked to the historical rationalisation of the territory (modern cartography, establishment of the cadastre, and so on). Very different in its phenomenality was the thick forest acting as the defensive border of the medieval village (RAFFESTIN, 1980, p. 150). In a similar perspective when Deleuze and Guattari (1987) distinguish between the rationally informed "patterned space" ("espace strié) and the more poetic "smooth space" ("espace lisse"), they also suggest that one orients itself differently in each one; i.e. what

¹¹ It has been noted elsewhere that in order to fully understand the way gentrification works, one need to pay attention to the alteration of everyday life (and not only the shift in rental prices) (PATTARONI AND AL., 2012).

constitute a boundary is phenomenally quite different in each of those spaces. The “patterned space” is based on visual and cognitive grasping of the metered affordances while the “smooth space” implies a more haptic relation to boundaries, based on the capacity to grasp the “tactil and auditive qualities” of the surrounding (DELEUZE AND GUATTARI, 1987). This open up a all different perspective on boundaries that we believe is essential to understand the relation between boundaries and urban worlds, that is between the cognitive delimitation between social groups and the sensitive experience of their everyday situated interactions.

An analysis of the public problem caused by the expatriates in Geneva shows that the boundary between the “locals” and the “expat” wasn’t only categorized historically but is also activated in the everyday situated interaction between the people living along the lines of the ethnoscape and the one “outside”. In the end, what the historical public problem concerned with the economic contribution of expatriates has lead to is a situated problem of coexisting modes of living and their respective identities. There is then a iterative movement going from the situated experience to its public problematization (CEFAÏ AND TERZI, 2012).

Finally, as Rancière suggests, any “distribution of the sensible” — implying always a work of police delimitating who can take place in the common order and how — has an exclusionary effect. In this perspective, the denunciation of the international ethnoscape can be seen as a moment of what he calls “politics” (*la politique*) where the consensus is questioned and the practical order challenged along the elements constituting it.

VII - CONCLUSION

The impact of mobile people on cities’ settings and space needs a precise description, which we tried to achieve by giving a territorial and historical twist to the concept of ethnoscape proposed by Appadurai. Our goal was to *politicize* and *territorialize* the impact of newcomers especially when they constitute a “dominant” community, that is a community able to influence in a strong way the everyday context of a given city (consummation places, housing solutions, spoken languages), imposing the boundaries of the expatriate community and its mode of living to the established urban order. To a certain extent every migrant community do build an ethnoscape both globally (flows) and locally (urban landscape). Nevertheless, it seems important

to understand how those ethnoscares relate to the dominant urban order and the role they play within the dynamic of conflict in urban development.

In this paper, we proposed therefore to discuss Appadurai's concept on a micro-scale to analyse the way expatriate cultural expressions get spatialized in the city of Geneva. We developed a substantial conception of boundaries in order to help us understand the relation between the cognitive delimitation of the so-called expatriate community and the everyday inscription of its members within the city. This allowed us to describe the actual *landscape* of Geneva's international ethnoscape, which is composed of the bundle of affordances that offer opportunities for expatriates to construct their belonging to the community, in other words, the various places and spaces associated with the international community of Geneva. By developing its affordances, this ethnoscape constitutes a specific "distribution of the sensible" — i.e. the assignation of a specific place and role not only to the members of the international community but also to the inhabitants who don't belong to it — and therefore becomes embedded in local and political controversies.

Finally, we suggested that in order to fully grasp the dynamic of ethnoscares and the role of elite migrants in the political and spatial reconfiguration of contemporary cities, we needed to couple the ethnographic study of the everyday experience and spatiality of ethnoscape with an ethnography of their involvement within public conflicts. By coupling these two perspectives we should be able to fully grasp the role of ethnoscape as the frame of the relation between the individual experience of mobility and the collective production of an urban order.

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