

## CONFINEMENT SPACES

France was again condemned for inhuman treatment of prisoners on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2011. For many years, the European Court for Human Rights has complained of French overcrowded and derelict jails. The current record incarceration rate, the highest since the end of World War 2, doesn't prevent numbers of poor male youngsters particularly, from "disadvantaged" areas, showing with bravado and sometimes with songs, that they have no fear of imprisonment.

In France (as elsewhere) increasing imprisonment goes along with the multiplication of other places of confinement which are both constricted and intended for populations serving extended periods of time: closed educational centres (for young people), administrative retention centres (for undocumented foreigners), *etc.* Powerful leading nations, most of them pretending to be "democratic", as well as poor nations, are implicated. This confinement is located either in derelict or in "high tech" places. The management is either public or private (or in partnership). The status is either civilian or military (Guantanamo for example). Some alternatives emerge, such as the electronic bracelet or different sentencing arrangements. These places may also be either open or closed to families and NGOs, internally managed either by administrative staff or certain prisoners (in most cases by a combination of both) and located either in cities or in rural areas. What are the specific characteristics of the places where these confinement institutions are placed and of those from which their prisoners have come?

This call for papers seeks to understand the logics and the spatial effects of both inflationary imprisonment and proliferation of confinement spaces, in France and elsewhere, both inside and outside of prisons. What is the relationship between the inside and the outside, between the place of confinement and the local political and associational society? What is the impact of the jail on the real estate market and on local firms, lobbies and/or trade-unions? If jail remains the best crime and rebellion school, what are the economic and cultural exchanges with local radical groups, as well as with delinquent and criminal organisations?

In relation to the specific context of each place, what are the arguments, traditional and/or innovative, which can explain the overcrowding and the proliferation of such places: economic crises and/or economic injustice, consequences of war and/or *Apartheid*, demographic and urban evolutions, migrants belonging to *mafias*, war refugees, *etc.*? Is such a situation perceived as a regional, national or international problem? How do the local and the global interpenetrate?

The relationship to space inside confinement places is another relevant issue.

Jail first evokes boredom but also danger and control. Spatial control increasingly is more sophisticated with new technologies and devices: cameras, alarms, drugs, "situational" prevention in urban planning, *etc.* It is also an extremely hierarchical space, grouping prisoners into cells, floors, blocks, according to many criteria: their presumed danger to others, the length of their sentence, their origin and/or their religion, also their social class. Jail also is a place for trafficking with its drug addicts as well as its seriously ill prisoners, its religious fundamentalists, its persecuting and its persecuted prisoners, and/or prisoners with psychiatric disturbances, aggravated by punishments such as solitary confinement, strait jacket, *etc.*

Jail has become the "poor man's psychiatric hospital". It is full of forbidden spaces and of authorized places in which prisoners are at risk of "gang killing", racket and rape, *etc.* Unsurprisingly the suicide rate also is high. Notwithstanding such violence, some long-termed containment confinement places may also become spaces for professional training, friendship and even love, formal education, severance and health recovery, conceptualisation and artistic

sublimation of living experience, political awareness, religious conversion and even mystical “rebuilding”. It may even become a place of relative freedom, for prisoners employed as

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**DEADLINES**

20.11.2013: reception of full papers  
1.01.2014: feedback to the authors

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*Potential authors with doubts on the relevance of their proposal  
may contact the co-ordinators*

*Notes:*

- Only full papers are assessed.
- Paper maximum length is 42 000 signs, including text, spaces, footnotes, references and appendices (abstracts are not taken into account in the paper length).
- Advice to authors and manuscript presentation norms are on the website:  
<http://www.espacesetsocietes.msh-paris.fr/conseils.html>