

Elites, Knowledge, and Power in Modern China

The formation and transformation of elites in modern China

International Workshop
Aix-Marseille University
7-9 October 2019

Conveners: Christian Henriot (IrAsia, Aix-Marseille University)
Sun Huei-min (Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica)
Cécile Armand (IrAsia, Aix-Marseille University)

In the century that followed China's forced entry into the world order shaped by the advancing Western empires (1832-1949), the nature of elite groups in China experienced a tremendous and radical transformation. The ruling group that had dominated the country for a millennium — a narrow elite of Confucian-trained civil and military scholar-officials selected through a double process of education in the Chinese classics and the highly competitive imperial examinations—eventually faded away in 1911. Power and social prestige shifted to socially, intellectually and ethnically more diversified groups that included not just Chinese, but foreigners who operated within interlocked transnational networks. Within and beyond China, this period saw the rise of the first global elite that set the pace of multiple entangled histories.

The ERC project “Elites, Networks, and Power in Modern Urban China” investigates how elites and elite networks in their various configurations and articulations emerged and operated not just in major cities in China, but beyond, across the Western and Japanese empires, and the power nations (Great Britain, France, United States, Japan) themselves. It focuses specifically on individual actors rather than state institutions or community organizations. The workshop seeks to address a number of core issues about the individuals and groups that emerged as *elite* and the modalities and processes of elite formation and (re)deployment of elite networks; the vectors, patterns and timelines of the involvement of elites in public action, from acting in an official capacity, in self-organized associations but also assuming the role of opinion leaders.

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Program

Monday 7 October 9h00-12h00

- Christian HENRIOT
 - Introduction
- Cameron CAMPBELL
 - Family Background and Career Outcomes for Exam Degree Holders in the Qing (1644-1911) Civil Service
- SUN Huei-Min
 - Redefining the Elites: Chinese Who's Who Publications in the 1930s Shanghai

Monday 7 October 14h00-17h00

- James LEE
 - Mutable Inequalities: Meritocracy and the Making of the Chinese Academe, 1912-1952, A Data Analytic Approach
- Peter HAMILTON
 - The American-Returned Students: New Forms of Business and Eliteness in Republican China
- LIN Yi-Tang
 - Scientists at the Service of the States: Chinese Rockefeller Fellows in Chemistry and Biology and their Career Trajectories from 1949 to 1966

Tuesday 8 October 9h00-12h00

- Marilyn LEVINE
 - Evolutionary Roads: An Integrative Analysis Utilizing the Chinese Biographical Database
- Cécile Armand
 - Rotarians in transcolonial networks in early twentieth-century Shanghai
- Henrike RUDOLF
 - Structures of Empowerment: A Network Exploration of the Collective Biographies of Women Activists in Twentieth-Century China

Tuesday 8 October 14h00-17h00

- Brett SHEEHAN
 - Middling Elites: Middle Managers at the Shanghai Bank of China on the Eve of the Communist Revolution
- LIEN Ling-Ling
 - Service to the Empire and to the Community: The British Women's Association in Shanghai, 1921-1941
- Alan BAUMLER
 - Aviation and elite culture in transnational China 1909-1955

Wednesday 9 October 9h45-12h00

- Open discussion