

Call for Papers

Kachemak Bay, Alaska at low tide. Photo: NOAA Fisheries

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE SEDIMENT BALANCE: COMBINING SOCIAL AND GEOMORPHIC APPROACHES TO RIVER SYSTEMS AND DELTAS

Workshop, 29-30 May 2019

Institute for International Studies, UC Berkeley
Organized by the University of California Berkeley and Sciences Po

Convenors: Giacomo Parrinello (Sciences Po) & G Mathias Kondolf (UC Berkeley)

Rivers carry not only water, but sediment. Hydroelectric dams, canals, sand and gravel mining, and other human uses alter sediment fluxes, often with detrimental consequences on the river morphology and ecology as well as on coastal land, including the retreat of many the world's river deltas. The scale and scope of these physical changes in river systems, deltas and coastal geomorphic processes is tightly linked with economic growth, technological change, and political choices and conflicts over multiple spatial and temporal scales. This workshop aims to investigate the nexus of social and natural processes behind the modification of sediment balance in river systems. We are particularly interested in investigating the long-term geomorphological changes in sediment at a river basin scale, as well as the evolving understanding of sediment-altering activities and the regulation (or lack thereof) of these activities. Understanding the mutual influence between social drivers and geomorphic processes is essential to make sense of river system changes and the responses to these changes (or lack thereof).

Fluvial geomorphology has developed a sophisticated understanding of the links between upstream basins and deltas, including the impact of dams on sediment fluxes, the consequences of sand and gravel mining, or the construction of embankments. Environmental history, historical geography, and science and technology studies (STS) have shed light on the entanglement between river systems and social dynamics, emphasizing the crucial role of technology and engineering and the complexity of policy and politics of river management. We believe that there is much to be gained in combining the insights and approaches of these disciplines to the study of sediments in river systems. The workshop will therefore convene fluvial geomorphologists, environmental historians, historical geographers, and STS scholars with a shared interest in geomorphological change of rivers and deltas, to compare and discuss research questions, methodologies, and empirical cases. Our aim is to lay the foundation for a sustained interdisciplinary dialogue. This workshop is part of a collaborative effort funded by grants from the France-Berkeley Fund, the UC Berkeley Social Science Matrix and Institute of International Studies, and an Émergence(s) grant from the City of Paris. Within the limits of available budget, we will cover travel expenses and lodging of selected participants. We especially welcome applications from junior scholars (PhD candidates, postdoctoral fellows, and other early career scholars).

Your proposal should consist of an abstract (ca. 300 words) and a brief biographical note (ca. 150 words).

Please submit proposals to giacomo.parrinello@sciencespo.fr by 31 January 2019 with the subject "Sediment Workshop."

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