

International Research Laboratory (LIA) CNRS/INSHS - CAS

“Post-Western Sociologies in China and in France”

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stitution and discrimination in Chinese cities

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# Research problem: understanding the biographical careers of low skilled women involved in prostitution

- **A. Rise of the sex industry in China and a prohibiting legislation**
  - First paradox: prostitution is widely on the rise in China although a new legislation that represses fiercely the phenomenon has been reinforced in through the 1990's.
  - Context: upheaval on the labour markets, dismantling of social protection and rise of inequalities
    - > emergence of a sex market

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- **B. Discriminations, resistance and subjectivity**
  - The sex market as an option to resist to discriminations on the labour market and socio-economic marginalisation
  - But prostitution goes with more discriminations and another form of marginalisation

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- **C. Assumptions and first findings**

- Prostitution in the city and family life in the village : 2 highly disconnected social spaces
- A legitimate space and a deviant one: different amount of social legitimacy
- Prostitution as an active strategy to resist to inequalities suffered in the first space: women enter the prostitution space so as to acquire new resources there that they will use to improve their situation in the first space

# Methodological cosmopolitanism and research on prostitution

- A. « Prostitution » in Europe

- Paola Tabet : « continuum of sexual-economic exchanges » : from free marriage to prostitution
- Viviana Zelizer : cultural taboo of money and feelings trade

> “prostitution” as the result of a process of negative labelling of a relation, that occurs when the trading between sex and money is explicit

# Methodological cosmopolitanism and research on prostitution

- B. « Prostitution » in China
  - A definition in economical terms: 卖淫嫖娼
  - Pan Suiming: 嫖娼卖淫, 性产业
  - Li Yinhe : marriage, partnership and prostitution as a triangle

# Research posture and fieldwork practice

- Cultural and social distance: being young European research student with privileged socioeconomic background // inquiring about low-skilled migrant women involved in prostitution in China
- Options: the associative field and collaboration with Chinese scholars