

---

# Everyday market encounters in Zambian markets

Solange Guo Chatelard\*<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sciences Po Paris – Sciences Po – France

<sup>2</sup>Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology (MPI-SA) – Advokatenweg 36 06114 Halle (Saale),  
Germany

## Abstract (in French and English)

Historically, the assimilation process of the first generations of Chinese migrants who moved to and settled in North America, Europe and South Africa in the 19th and early 20th centuries was largely characterised by exclusion, socio-cultural backlash, and discriminatory policies imposed by host countries. Social and economic segregation went hand in hand. Nowadays, in contrast, new waves of Chinese migrants living in Zambia are often charged of spreading their influence and economic footprint in an unfettered manner while socially retreating from local society by employing strategies of self-exclusion. This tension appears to have transformed historical patterns of assimilation of Chinese diaspora groups. While Chinese economic markers in Zambia are increasingly visible throughout the country – Chinese billboards, products, restaurants, street vendors, public markets and new residential areas – relatively little is understood beyond the commercial realm of market interaction. The nature of social relations and everyday practice, both public and private, are largely overlooked. Based on 18 months of ethnographic fieldwork among the growing Chinese community in Zambia, this paper explores the tensions and contradictions of social dynamics underlying China's growing commercial presence in the country by focusing on local public markets. The remarkable intensification of Chinese presence in Zambian markets through street vendors, produce and consumers, represents not only an illustration of an appropriation of space, but also reflects the broader changes taking place in Zambian society. This paper asks what are the social implications of China's increased integration into the country's urban economy.

**Keywords:** Chine, Afrique, China, Africa

---

\*Speaker