

The APHELEIA Conference Series 2025



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Speaker: Nathalie Lemarchand



Nathalie Lemarchand is President of the International Geographical Union and a full professor at the University of Paris 8 Vincennes-St-Denis. She is a member of the CNRS LADYSS research centre (laboratoire dynamiques sociales et recomposition des espaces), and a member of the Council of the French National Committee for Geography (CNFG). As a specialist in the geography of retailing and consumption, her work is based on cultural and social analysis and focuses more specifically on new retailing territories. As an expert, she regularly takes part in programmes on public affairs, and operates with public and private decision-makers. Her latest publications initially address the issues of consumption patterns, proximity (local/global) and the commercial landscape. In her most recent work, she demonstrates that part of retailing has moved from a retailing position associated with the production society to an entertainment position associated with the consumer society. This change is taking place at the same time as the emergence of new forms of retailing space, whether in protest against globalisation or in support of it. Very involved in academic institutions at all levels, she has been reflecting for several years on the languages of scientific production.

“Globalisation, retailing and sustainability”

Trade is one of those things Human do that make them a social being. Exchange of goods and even services has been at the heart of human activity since we settled down and developed the capacity to go beyond self-sufficiency. Combining an economic, social and cultural dimension, trades go along with movement and distance from production to delivery, crossing various scales, from the local to the regional, to the national, to the international. The 19th century saw an acceleration in the large-scale production of goods and commodities, the capacities to transport them, the distance it travels. Over the course of the 20th century, the so-called consumer society spread to cover almost every region of the world at the start of the 21st century, albeit unevenly and in different capacities. Retailing has multiplied its spatial forms: from the open-air market to the shopping center, via the department stores' and today's online retailing, each stage combined with innovations, new trade routes, and the search for new consumer markets. It involves private enterprises, as well as public and state entities. But there is a growing concern on the environmental limits of the actual all-in consumption models, which, one can say, characterizes the Anthropocene. Inspired by a case study, this presentation focuses on the question of scales and the challenge of complexity in connection to trade and consumption.