

## **INTERNATIONALISING CITIES**

### **Urban fabric and urban policies in a globalising world**

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## **INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP**

**23 September 2016**

**Paris, France – Val-de-Seine School of Architecture**

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## **Minutes of the workshop**

**Transcribed by Félix Adisson**



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## **1st session. Smart cities: between internationalization and specific trajectories**

### **Presentation**

#### **Antoine Picon (Harvard University and École des Ponts ParisTech)**

In the last 10 years, **'smart'** has become part of the discourse on cities both in developed and developing countries: the smart is **really part of the international question**. But what is it?

- A set of technology?
- A mix of technologies and imaginaries?
- An urban ideal?
- An urban model?

Firstly: How have the smart cities discourses and practices developed and spread?

Secondly: What smart cities may be?

Thirdly: What are the limits of the dynamics observed?

Some questions neglected: environmental limits of Smart technologies (e.g. cloud).

Antoine Picon wants to stress the **necessary diversification of the models of smart cities depending on the contexts**.

Background of Antoine Picon: historical perspective and design (architecture, urban design).

### **1. Origins and development of smart technologies and smart cities**

**Mid-2000s: large companies** like IBM, Cisco began to use intensively the term 'smart'. They are seeking new markets for their software suites. Because of the international scope of these companies, it is from the beginning a global phenomenon.

Issue of the relationship between these firms and the local governments / urban governance. This is linked to the issue of 'public relations': the frontier between the 'real' and 'public relations' is never clear with 'smart' cities. Comparison with the race to the moon: the objective was to make a picture of an astronaut with an American flag (i.e. public relations) and big infrastructures have been created to reach this objective: smart cities do have pictures like that (e.g. photography of the Rio operations centre).

Figure 1: The Rio operations centre



Source: David Levene / The Guardian

Big turn a couple years after, discovery that **big data** was the new edge. Development of new apps on smart phone for data mining: the public becomes an actor of the smart cities.

**Last step (around 2010): traditional companies and institutions of the urban infrastructures** began to develop different strategies as regards to the smart grid and the big data (e.g. in France, Veolia, Caisse des dépôts et consignations).

At this stage, the smart cities become to coalesce all the discourse on cities: economic knowledge, start-up, environmental concern, etc. In other words, smart agenda was progressively integrated with other policy objectives: growth, environment, etc. The block chain could be the next “big thing” about smart cities.

Some remarks on this process:

- From the start it is an international movement, initially lead by actors that are not ‘urban’.
- A process that has **common features with other urban / technological changes in the past**, like the electrification of cities at the turn of 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century: international companies, involvement of municipal powers, etc.
  - Impact of urban infrastructure (form, management, etc.) *and* everyday life of people who live in cities = **new subjective experiences** / lifestyles.
  - Link with new imaginaries, production of narratives (digital cities, etc.): **self-fulfilling character of the smart city**.

## 2. What are smart cities?

Is it just about public relations? In some cases. But for several reasons it is more than that:

- There is **technological change** behind that (sensors, monitoring, etc.)
- A lot of **experiments** worldwide, not limited to developed countries

**Smart cities as a mix between technologies, experiences, and ideologies/utopia.** Two utopias: the top/down perspective (integrated system) VS fully empowered individuals and collectives (e.g. Fablab).

Proposition: rise of a **new socio-technical paradigm** which can reorient the relationships between cities, technology and (?). The 19<sup>th</sup> century networked city was a kind of paradigm or model, and maybe we are seeing the rise of a new model.

Urban model:

- New kind of objects, “dispositifs”, etc. (typically the sensors).
- New professional cultures
- New experiences, practices of the city (the flâneur of Benjamin was inseparable from the networked city).
- **New rationalities** (what matter? What is the substance of rationalization, on what rationalization operates?). In the networked cities, it was all about flows. Now, we can look **beyond the flow**, at the scale of the “atom” (or “traces”). We can go to the **individual occurrence** (e.g. geolocalisation: “you are here, as an individual event). From aggregated flows to individual objects: change in the substance of what is rationalized.

## 3. Limits

The smart city is **not yet a model, just a possibility** of a model. There are differences between cities. For instance in developed countries the sensors are installed on existing networked infrastructures. There is not this kind of networks in developing countries, so the implementation of the smart city is a different problem: individuals and e.g. smart phones are much more crucial in this implementation process. The smart city as a diverse set of possibilities. The **issues are not the same from one region to another**. For example, in African cities, a central question is the relation of the city with its countryside, of urban and rural land (how farmers connect to the city?).

For Antoine Picon, the central issue is not what will happen in London or Singapore. The **biggest challenge is how the smart will help to improve the informal**: the smart is a more agile technology, so how it can be used in this context?

## Discussion with the moderators

### Alberto Vanolo (University of Turin, moderator)

Different kind of smart cities depending on the region concerned: business district, smartification of existing cities (Europe) new towns (e.g. in India: not solve existing problems, but create new problem free cities), new infrastructures where there is not previous networked infrastructures (in Africa), Rio de Janeiro (produce (an idea of) security. Smart city technologies are mobile. There is a **geography of smart cities**, raising variegated problems from one context to the other.

Usually, there is an academic discourse on a topic which progressively appropriated by urban actors/elites (e.g. sustainability). Here, it is the contrary. **First private companies developed discourses on smart cities, and then academics tried to interpret** this question.

There is thus a fracture:

- On the one hand technocratic and celebrative discourses followed by expertise-like research, supported by (massive) European (and national) funding;
- On the other hand, critical research that emphasizes new social divides between areas where it is profitable to implement smart technologies, and other where it is not (e.g. splintering urbanism), between people who have been “improved”, who are the winner of this process, and the others (e.g. between activists like the hackers and the other kind of mobilization facing new forms of surveillance and control).

**Old problems are reframed:** e.g. in Italy, the debate about the divide between northern cities and southern cities has been reframed in terms of lack of (smart) technologies.

Is the smart city a "typology" (type) of city, as the industrial city, or a very broad notion/generic slogan?

The term of **smart city introduces a moral judgement** (smart VS stupid, vacuous). Who does not want to be smart?

The smart city concept can be **useful in producing alternative visions** of the future. "We" now have to fill the smart city with value(s), with its political dimension: in which kind of smart city we decide to live? How different social groups interpret this general idea of smart city?

The problem is that **most discourse** so far on the smart city has been **very “solutionist”, celebrative** (e.g. on the website of the EU, “decorative” image of what the smart city should look like: science fiction); but are techno-intensive futuristic solutions what "we" want?

**Gilles Pinson (Sciences Po Bordeaux, moderator)**

The **main problem with smart city is to study it**. How do you research "smart cities"? The issue is mostly **methodological**.

*First methodological point:*

The problem with the academic field of **urban studies** is that we have **notions, objects that are imposed from outside**: sustainable development, smart cities, urban development projects, etc. It implies to **transform practical concepts into analytical concepts**.

So is the notion of smart city useful in urban studies? Is it really a big, a "genuine revolution" (A Picon)? It seems that all researchers (both experts and critical researchers) agree on the point that this is a revolution, and a global one, at least, it is the sole hypothesis explored (incremental changes are not).

There are **many uses of the notion** of smart cities, depending on the actors producing discourses about it. For some is just about technological changes, for other it is about individuals and human/social capital. In many cases, it is an extension of the previous buzzword in urban affairs: sustainable development.

Due to these different sense, should we not speak of "**cities and digital technologies**" rather than of "smart cities" in order to **disaggregate this big notion**? That would allow us to get free from IBM narratives and the like. It would be empirically more traceable, and thus will help us to design research agendas to **look sector by sector**, what is changing with digital technologies. This, because the management of cities, the urban policies, are sectorised. The smart city is presented as something that treat the city as a whole without sectors, but maybe, changes vary a lot from one sector to another in terms of actors, rationales, financing, etc. (e.g. water and transportation).

*Second methodological point:*

What kind of **empirical objects/entry points** do you choose? Who do you go to interview? What do you go to observe? In Bordeaux, planners etc. consider the "smart city Bordeaux" as bullshit; and so do my colleagues. Everybody is sceptical. Practitioners don't see it, or consider that it is a new term for an old reality: "we are smart since twenty years". So what is changing?

To Antoine Picon: you emphasize the notion of "events" and "individual occurrence" (and how it is replacing flows). Could you develop this point?

**Antoine Picon (in French):**

En tant qu'historien, pas de problème avec les ruptures épistémologique. Plutôt tendance à penser que du moment que les acteurs commencent à parler de façon compulsive de quelque chose, c'est qu'il se passe quelque chose. Pas sûr qu'il faille inventer d'autres termes pour parler de ce dont parle les acteurs. D'accord sur le fond: travail depuis 15 ans sur la ville numérique et ses relations avec

l'architecture. Les acteurs ne me disent pas la même chose, e.g. à Veolia : il y a un tournant.

Il faut **partir des problèmes et des contextes** (e.g. Rennes et sa vie associative, tradition d'expérimentation VS Nice).

**Le smart est top-down**, en général cela vient du maire et il y a de très fortes résistances au niveau des services. Mais il y a des choses nouvelles : (i) les capteurs qui permettent d'agir en temps réel ; (ii) le big data ; (iii) les changements de l'expérience des villes (à travers notamment les smart phone, qui renvoient à la question du cyborg, e.g. applications de partage d'informations sur le trafic).

Avant la méthode, il y a l'enjeu de l'identification des bonnes questions. Pourquoi et comment les villes, en France, malgré des trajectoires très différentes, abordent la question du smart avec, paradoxalement, **un peu le même discours** ? Quelles relations avec les firmes (en France, plutôt Veolia et la Caisse des dépôts qu'IBM).

### **Discussion with the audience**

#### **Adèle Esposito (CNRS, Ausser)**

How are individuals, persons, represented in smart city projects? Role of the state?

#### **Antoine Picon**

Smart city projects have to address individuals.

#### **Erik Swnyngedouw (University of Manchester)**

At least two things are systematically silenced:

- Smart city technologies are also technologies of death. Think of Bagdad!
- Most people do not live in smart cities and never will.

What if in a context of planetary urbanization the two are combined? Relational perspective on the smart city implementation: Slum cities are a condition of the development of smart cities in the wealthy parts of the world.

#### **Antoine Picon**

Every technology has its death side, there is nothing new from this point of view.

#### **Olivier Coutard (CNRS, Latts)**

Political economy of technological promises. Who pays, who profits, who benefits? Why is IBM withdrawing from the smart city business?

Diversification of smart city models: what actors in charge?

Referring to A. Vanolo (who is against being smart?): Is "Smart city" a post-political notion?

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Session: Urban policy mobility: the international circulation, translation, and impacts of regeneration “models”

### Presentation

#### Elisabeth Peyroux (speaker)

Interest in urban studies for the policy mobilities/circulations initially developed in political sciences and sociology. **New interdisciplinary field of urban policy mobility:**

- new forms of transnational policy making
- circulation of planning ideas and expertise
- policy models

Publications on mobile urbanism and relational urbanism = renewed interest for policy concern.

Urban policy making became more transnationalized/globalized, stronger intercity connections across national scales, extensive exchanges of ideas and practices: how elements for elsewhere travel, are mobilized and are embedded in local politics? Long history in town planning and architecture of transfers, hybridations between Europe and North America, but also between northern and southern cities. This is also the case for the cooperation between cities and inter-municipal networks.

What is new is that **cities of the south, of emergent economies have become influent in the production of models and transfer**. Example of Johannesburg international relations strategies: Johannesburg both import and export models.

**Intensification** in the current context of economic globalization and neoliberalization. Context of acceleration related to new infrastructures and new technology of communications that support and developed the exchange between cities, the diffusion of knowledge, policies and experiments.

Increasing economic competition between cities: city governments are under permanent pressures to develop best practices, benchmarking, and international comparisons: analysed as part of the entrepreneurial and neoliberal agendas.

But the novelty comes from **a new thinking about the city**. This is what is addressed in the presentation:

- Mobility turn: a new relational ontology of the city of identity and space
- Role of technology and network infrastructure in policy mobility (assemblage thinking)
- New ethnographic methods of inquiry

Some key issues in urban policy making are underestimated. Central interrogation:

How to address **the question of power and authority** in the current context of policy mobility and transnational policymaking? Where the power comes from and how it is exercised? How does it shape policy making? What are the consequences for the social and spatial organisations of cities?

Two contemporary trends must be considered to address this question:

- An intensively, **technologically mediated world** that shape the forms of power. Technologies used to:
  - Diffuse ideas, meanings, perceptions, values, solutions,
  - To mobilize people, to seek their consent, to oppose,
  - To control, securing surveying urban space
- A context of **reconfiguration of power** and authorities:
  - New forms of transnational policy making challenging the traditional relation between the state and the local authorities,
  - New spheres of authority (e.g. governance of climate change)
  - Blurring of boundary between private and public actors
  - New geopolitical order due to the rise of the economic and diplomatic role of emerging countries.

To expand the understanding of contemporary forms of power, need to connect different fields:

- Language and power (interpretive approaches): how discourses shape meaning and interpretations
- Socio-material processes (STS, ANT, assemblage)
- City political agency at the international scale (international affairs, global governance)

Identifying the value and limits of the use of these different insights in the question of urban policy mobility. Main results:

Power lies:

- with the producers of urban policy mobility, with their capacity to select, promote, and legitimate, and sometimes impose policy models, with their capacity to produce a dominant discourse to shape perceptions and meanings
- with the models itself: powerful images, norms, rationalities travelling with the model
- with the complex arrangement that support and drive the circulation of policy models: entanglement of political, social and technological processes

Examples from **Business improvement districts** (BID): emblematic examples of travelling models. Started in North America in the 1980, travelling all over the world since the 1990s (e.g. Johannesburg). New York, Philadelphia as successful example of policy making in successful global cities.

BIDs are managed by landowner associations, sometimes through PPP. A tax is collected to add services in the perimeter (basically security and cleaning services, but also advertising/branding and landscaping of public space; and sometimes social services), combined with the renovation of buildings, facilities and commercial spaces. Goal: attract customers with higher purchasing power and inhabitants with higher salaries.

BID are criticized by scholars and social movements for being exclusive, for discriminating people, and for reinforcing segregation. Associated with the debate of privatization and commodification of public space, the increase control and surveillance of public space, and also for contributing to gentrification process.

Main contributions of UPM:

- New relational ontology of cities, of identity and spaces (Leitner and Shepard, 2003; Massey, 1994).
- Mobility and mutation VS transfer and transaction (Peck and Theodore, 2010)
- Relationality and territoriality (McCann and Ward, 2010, 2013)
- Cities as processes, shaped by flows of people, commodities, information (Nigel and Thrift, 2002)
- The local politics of policy mobilities (Temenos and McCann, 2012)
- Modes of learning of urban policy making (McFarlane, 2011)

How context specific are policy experimentations? How these experiments reach the status of model?

Transnational **city networks, epistemic communities make policy models mobile**, they make the model visible at an international scale through conferences, site visits, videos. Important to look at the individual actors who are both proactive in these professional networks and prominent figures in their local milieu. Case of political entrepreneurs in Johannesburg developing BID solutions by using their international connections to address the problem of the decline of the city centre.

To understand how parochial ideas, locally embedded experiments become global: use of the interpretive, socio-cognitive approaches. Allow understanding the “**management of social representations**” (van Dijk, 1993). Application to the case of two business plans of two BID in Johannesburg: they use generalized assumptions to give a universal status to a particular representation and vision of city and governance:

- city have similar problems to resolve
- necessity of the private sector to solve the problems

The generalization of assumptions is a power strategy. But it is **not a hegemonic process. They are disruptions and changes**, there are contestations of the BID in Johannesburg: more social improvements have developed and the discourse accompanying the BID evolved.

It is important to integrate in our understanding of cities their **socio-material dimension** hence the use of ANT and STS that offer new conceptualizations of space and the city. At an epistemological level, the ways we conceptualize, our interpretations of the worlds are mediating by social and material technologies. It is thus important to understand how these technologies shape our understanding of UPM.

Assemblage thinking: How different entities came together and produce something which have an impact on social relations and urban space.

ANT: how knowledge and technology coalesce into forms that are travelling. It is not the model itself that is powerful, but the assemblage surrounding it. Application of a definition of power from the ANT to the BIDs: “the formation of common interest and single will through the translation of initially disparate entities that stabilizes an actor network” (Müller, 2015: 33): power arises from making connections across space. Look at the actual working of power.

**BID as an assemblage of different set of actors, discourses, goals, and technologies enrolled in an actor network.** There is a material dimension in this assemblage.

Limits of UPM:

- They look at what is observable. What about failed ideas? What about alternatives?
- They are dealing with fast, direct, conscious imports of established policy models
- They do not take into consideration the role of the central state in UPM
- The political agency of cities in the international relations is not addressed.

Limits of assemblage: it is something that name rather than something that frame the problem: question of structuration and causality, the attribution of agency are not solved.

### **Discussion with the moderators Nicolas Maisetti (Latts, moderator)<sup>1</sup>**

Your paper contributes to the rising interest among urban scholarship for “urban policy mobilities” both among geography and political science which deals with the place of urban spaces in globalisation dynamics, as well as the policy-making processes.

Today’s contribution comes in the wake of two special issues that you have led. One in International Journal of Urban and Regional Research in 2012 with Claire Benit-Gbaffou and Sophie Didier. The other in EchoGéo, on last spring, with Thierry Sanjuan that was more specifically about the « international strategies of cities and urban models ».

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<sup>1</sup> Text of the author.

You are interested in transnationalization of urban policy-making and you address the question of mobile urbanism to qualify the fast transfer between cities in the context of globalisation processes. The famous «good practices» that are references and circulate through copy-pasting all around the world.

One of the starting point of this concern is about the «serial reproduction» of certain policy forms brought on by intensifying inter-urban competition. To quote Tom Baker and Christina Demenos which have led a debate and development issue in IJURR last year: “policy mobility accounts explore the processes, practices and resources brought together to construct, mobilize and territorialize policy knowledge”. The concept of policy mobilities in urban studies helps us to understand, describe and explain how the urban territories emerge through parts of elsewhere, as Allen and Cochrane wrote.

The paper combines a constructivist approach of the notion of mobility, and it pays a very close attention to ideas, discourse, and representations as social practices, with, a study of materiality, and so, it looks at new technology and network. Here, I have a first methodological question about this combination between symbolic and discursive way to produce urban spaces and the materialistic dimension: how do we investigate to document this issue, in practical terms?

Consequently, the paper combines both urban studies, politics of international relations, sociology of public policy and sociology of science.

The question which it raises is about “arrangements” or “assemblages” (to refer the deleuzienne terminology commonly used in this literature)... which drive the transnational circulation of models of urban policy. But you go further by questioning the powers which are at the basis of these circulations, or which are exerted through these arrangements.

The investigation centred on the international journey of Business Improvement Districts (BID) in Johannesburg; and the paper shows how to look at these trajectories. And looking at these trajectories does not only require to understand where they come from, but also and especially, to study in under which conditions they arrive and they are embodied as well as translated in the language of the urban context where the models are eventually anchored.

There is now a growing literature on this subject. And we know quite well the function of cities network, nomadic consultants and new technologies. Works made by critical geographers have underlined, as it is acknowledged in the paper, that the circulation expressed or was the instrument for domination of Northern cities or, more generally speaking, for neoliberalism. Consequently, these phenomenon have been commonly grasped as strategies that aimed to command and control behaviour in the South by models made for and in the Northern cities.

The paper discusses this argument by showing how a model, originally made for Northern cities, has been translated in a South-African city and so becomes itself a regional model at the African scale and beyond, for the Southern cities.

It then shifts the focus from an approach in terms of trajectory to translation: “the real power it is the translation” you said. Many authors work on the departure, especially those who are interested to understand the rapid circulation of neoliberal policy prescription. However, Jennifer Robinson recently called for investigate the arrival, suggesting to reorient the attention towards the way places, actors and models arrive at those policies. From my understanding, you stand for a third position, and the three can be articulated, when you look more precisely the journey of policies.

In other words, the paper calls for renewing the ways to look at transnational mobilities bearing in mind processes of hybridization, syncretism, local adaptations, multiples arrangements (*accomodements*) with the benchmark model, or the reference model. It drives to build other models that can provide other references for other contexts that in turn will adapt them, and translate.

Then, the paper discusses the notion of « urban policy mobilities » itself, stressing its main limits and we can, if you are willing to, start to discuss these aspects.

Eugene McCann and Kevin Ward have brought forward three limits that are mentioned, for some of them, in the paper. They refer to « dualisms », implicitly present in the use of the concept of mobility. These dualisms help us to think, but could be traps, if they are too rigid.

First of all, the **question of success versus failure**. What is a successful model? Does the social construction of the success prejudice its future exportation and the conditions for its implementation elsewhere? Here, the constructivist approach could be useful in order to think anew the question of success or failure for model of urban policy.

Secondly, the couple or the **dichotomy between absence and presence** that you mention in the paper. McCann and Ward write about the BID when they refer to this duality. They said, I quote “the introduction of business improvements districts into England from Canada via the US was, in part, due to the absence of an existing model of generating revenues from business”. Maybe you could say a few words to expand on this second duality.

Thirdly, the opposition, or maybe the **fake opposition, between mobility and immobility**. Actually, we realize that when the model travels, they leave behind them entire sectors that were part of them. How can we distinguish the part that is circulating and the part that is left behind? It occurs to me crucial to understand the local translation of the models, isn't it?

Eventually, I wanted to raise a last question, based not from the English critical geography scholarship, but from French political science. In a recent paper, Renaud Epstein, Vincent Beal and Gilles Pinson elaborate on the “circulation croisée”, the **“crossed circulation”**. They put forward a discussion of policy mobility from the public policy analysis tradition and from French examples. They first acknowledge the limits of the concept of “transfer” to explain the exchange and the diffusion: too much mechanism, not enough sociologically embodied. But

they wish the geographers would **pay more attention to the State** regarding the regulation of transnational circulations. Therefore, how can we reintroduce the State in the urban policy mobilities analysis?

**Adèle Esposito (CNRS, Ausser, moderator)**

Five sets of question:

**Translation:** not only looking at the original model, not only looking at the local reception of models, but in-between. Saskia Sassen: what is important in globalization is not the result, but the process. Is the translation more important than the “text” translated? Is translation itself producing knowledge?

**Models:** Are the models recognized as such? In southern cities, is it a process of imitation or are they producing their own models?

**Ideas and utopias:** is there ideas underpinning the models (e.g. an imaginary of urban renaissance)?

The role of the **local actors** and local communities: use of policy mobility for establishing authority in urban space?

**Definition of cities** and/as collective actors: there are contestations around these models. What is left behind, overlooked beside or beyond the parts of cities that are the target of international/circulating models?

**Elisabeth Peyroux**

Entanglement of symbolic and material dimensions in BID and urban policies. We (researchers) are also mobiles and contribute to the circulation of idea, models, etc.

I am interested in the full journey of policies: emergence, circulation, reception. This is why an ethnographic method must be used: **follow the things, the actors, the models, etc. Question of the moment selected by the researcher.** BIDs are an ideal case to study because of the wealth of information and research available. We know the starting point, their diffusion, etc.

Success and failure: BID presented/interpreted as the proof of hegemony of the neoliberal agenda But BIDs have failed in Germany (Hamburg), and it is very interesting to understand why. But **academic works generally focus on successes.**

**The question is not absence/presence, the question is to be powerful or not.** In the case of Johannesburg: marginalization of the alternatives, of the other viewpoints, possibilities.

The role of the (central) state is important: the state is behind but sustain the strategy of the city.

On translation: it is a thread that is present in (and connects) all steps of policy mobility. Question of the power in the process of translation.

On the effects: **the city as a patchwork**, some parts renovated, other not. It is part of the reproduction of inequalities and discriminations.

On communities: they had a voice (social movements), but not powerful enough, not included in BID (only property owners). They frame the problem as an opposition between white business interest and black inhabitants.

### **Discussion with the audience**

#### **Christian Lefèvre (University Paris Est, Latts):**

Several important actors have not been mentioned: **International organizations** (World banks promote best practices)? City networks (talk about their experiences, in particular of urban regeneration)? **Scholars and international experts** for example in events such as "Urban Davos" where they speak with companies and city governments?

#### **Elisabeth Peyroux**

World Bank not so active in BID/CBD spaces, more focused on slums, low-income neighbourhoods, etc. City Alliance very active. But, most of all, professional networks. So it depends on the object of inquiry.

#### **Patrice Aubertel (PUCA)**

Suggestion of a link between urban assemblage and Bordeaux wine assemblage.

#### **Elisabeth Peyroux**

Important to differentiate the mix and the assemblage (continuously evolving).

#### **Olivier Coutard**

**ANT has a problem with the power:** the definition of Muller is symptomatic, there is obviously not a single will in any urban society. It is a question of dominant and dominated wills. In **ANT all is about enrolment, but the question is the capacity to exclude of the network.** So there is a limit in studying urban processes implying dynamics of inclusion and exclusion.

#### **Elisabeth Peyroux**

It is a question of scale. Assemblage is not about the society as a whole. The "single will" is limited to the set of actors strategically linked, it is about specific configurations linked to specific objects. Interest: mapping of the configuration. More interesting than governance, because there is a material dimension take into account.

**Erik Swyngedouw**

*Power* configurations. ANT don't care about power (Latour is honest about this). Reconstruct the process (structuration) of inclusion and exclusion imply to dismiss the ontological project of ANT.

**Gilles Pinson**

Doubts about the added value of mobility and assemblage. Works of Ward, McCann can be interpreted as a way to overcome structuralist and functionalist approaches of the first accounts of globalization. Reintroduction of agency and contingency in the analysis of the transformation of urban governance. But, even if they recognized contingency and agency, hybridation, at the end it is always about neoliberalization that is overwhelming.

**Elisabeth Peyroux**

They criticize the rationalities of the diffusion. They see neoliberalization everywhere, because their object of inquiry are neoliberal policies: there is a bias in their research (rather than a will to make neoliberalization an hegemonic process).

**Erik Swyngedouw**

Now, policy mobility is part of the project of deepening neoliberalization. But there is historical example of policy mobilities not linked to neoliberalization: modernism in urban planning (India, Brasilia, etc.), and this in very different institutional, political, economic, geographical contexts. Thus traveling models are not necessarily linked to a political visions or political-economic models.

## **3rd Session: European Cities and International Migration in the 21st Century: Crisis, Framing and Super Diversity**

### **Presentation**

**Jill Simone Gross (Hunter College, CUNY)**

Globalized world means migrations of people, their resources and their ideas. Cities function as nodes in this increasing interconnected world. Turning point: the situation is more difficult for people in different places (war, environmental crises): people search better places to live. Acceleration of the mobilities thanks to new technologies. Migration and related policies have been the most discussed topic in European elections in the past two years. Not surprising considering the impact of migration on European countries and most particularly on cities.

Some slides show the phenomenon. E.g. diagram of the flows of migration between 2000 and 2010. It allows to understand the diversity: where the people come from and where they go, how they are moving.

Supra-national (European) and national responses: surveillance of the border. But a limited impact: people will continue to move and migrate. It results in an increasingly diverse population (e.g. in London: 270 nationalities and 200 languages spoken, Amsterdam 176 nationalities, Brussels 163 nationalities, New York 800 (?) languages). We can be transnational, stateless, global citizens.

Diversity is viewed as something positive, socially enriching, potentially profitable, enabling ambition and productivity, and negative (trust).

How we (researchers) look at diversity? I suggest (following previous work) that **cities like New York are not diverse but superdiverse**. Maybe it can be considered just as a buzzword, but I argue that it is a useful concept, because when Burgess was speaking about diversity, it was not just speaking only in terms of nationalities that come to a city, or more languages, or more religions in a given space. **The question lies in the mix**. So we need to think to the following items: **Legal status, job market, sexual identity, historic narratives**. There is also the question of the migration paths: the **trajectories, steps**, etc.

**Issue of the statistics**: most of them are national statistics, but the picture is different when you look at the level of the cities (e.g. proportion of foreign born in UK VS London). The issue is even more complex (but necessary to understand migration and diversity) when you look at the infra-urban level and when you begin to disaggregate the origins of the migrant (e.g. the category 'Indian' covers different communities, religions, casts differences and thus inequalities).

For instance, the map a neighbourhood of London shows that there are many differences in the location of the migrants at the local level. Policies do not address the question at this level of micro-differences.

**Migration as a multiscalar process**, depending not only on where migrants are, but where they come from and what they did during their migration. This opens a

range of possibilities for (integration) policies. **5 major stands** concerning integration policies:

- **Assimilation.** Integration as one-way process. The migrant is expected to adapt to mainstream values. The migrant must become a national. Assumption that the national define culture and values and that must be protected;
- **Multiculturalism.** Multiple cultural group can coexist into a single jurisdiction. Each component of the pluralistic society must be protected. Each culture has the right to celebrate and practice. Normative assumption: multiple culture is desirable. Policies are oriented to accommodate religious practices, to integrate different worldviews in the classrooms. The reproach: emergence of parallel societies;
- **Interculturalism.** Emerge from the critic of the multiculturalism and the parallel society it can produce. Integration results from interactions between migrants and existing local communities. The goal is to build bridges between communities, rather than parallel societies. The assumption is that change is required for all (not only the migrants as in the case of assimilation, or for nobody as in the case of multiculturalism) = mutual adaptation. This is concretely implemented in urban policies (Berlin, Dublin, Barcelona) by creating forums for communities come together
- **Right to the city.** First counter-narrative. Some conditions (like a house, right to vote) are necessary to interact and give weight to migrants voices (voice comes with power). Non-citizen rights in some cities like Dublin or Amsterdam (right to vote at the local elections).
- **Cosmopolitanism.** Second counter-narrative. Integration is not linked to the locality but to each other, to humanity. Some interpret it as a middle ground between assimilation and multiculturalism, but Jill Simone Gross suggests to interpret it as an approach that internalize globalization: a process that de-territorialize integration that support the emergence of a global and shared future. Cosmopolitanism is linked to exchange, interactions with different groups. It transcends the city with values such as justice. Best hope to integrate cities and transnational migrants.

But cosmopolitanism must be localized since group struggles for social justice are situated on the ground. **Cosmopolitanism as a “movement of movements”** for global justice. But today we are moving toward a most polarized and populist world. So cosmopolitanism is more an utopia in which universal values are coming from below and through contestations: particular forms of domination, exploitation, and exclusion are challenged. Form this point of view, migration transcend borders but as the same time is locally contingent. Cosmopolitanism implies to empower residents (rather than citizens).

## Discussion with the moderators

### Eric Charmes (ENTPE, Rives-EVS, moderator)

Agree to not necessarily choose one model against another, but to be pragmatic and articulate them.

Three remarks and questions:

1. Why this focus on the conflict, problems, etc. created by diversity rather than on **social or economic inequalities**? Aren't inequalities (in arrival societies) at the core of the issues? In the long run, societies become less racist: so why a problem now? Hypotheses: resource shortening for lower-income groups, so it is more difficult to be generous.
2. From a political/philosophical perspective, it seems that you are influenced by the work of Chantal Mouffe. **A moral point of view is not sufficient on this topic**, and maybe counterproductive. How to confront racism from a political point of view. E.g. the "Polish plumber" dispute in France: two arguments in favour, the economic one (free market) and the moral one (right to leave and work here). Right to the city / cosmopolitanism lead to the same result of the neoliberal agenda to create competition between the social/welfare systems of the European countries. It is a problem for the left. The Brexit is the result of the same issue.
3. Focus on cities, esp. large city centres: beware of **methodological city-ism**... The (whole) world is urban now (not limited to the cities), which affects how to address right to the city issues. Rather than daily life experience of residents of large city centres vs. sub- and peri-urban areas, **problems associated with multiculturalism have to do with the accumulation of wealth in large city centres**. What is occurring for the migrants leaving outside the central areas of large cities? Is right to the city relevant for them?

### Jill Simone Gross

People is becoming more racist recently. It is changing. This is partly due to the economic and banking crisis and the austerity measures. Inequalities become more visible. For me, "rights to the city" are "rights to the place in which you live": you should have a voice in what is going on in the space where you are living. The differences between inner city and suburbs are not fixed. Some issues linked to the inner city are now moving to the suburbs.

### Daniel Kübler (University of Zurich, moderator)

You value 'Right to the city' and cosmopolitanism approaches more than the other approaches. Agree with the fact that the migrations in European cities cannot be stopped, that it is a growing issue, and that urban scholars must address it.

I **disagree with the cosmopolitanism/localism connection** argued by Beck. It is contradictory. In migration, like any major social change, there are winners and

losers on both sides (migrants and incumbent residents). It is creating new social and spatial differentiations in cities. I understand localism as local autonomy, capacity for local communities to govern themselves. But researches have shown that localism reduces (fiscal) solidarity and redistribution, produce institutional and social fragmentation. Confronted with migration, it will result in a situation where the rich are congregating in one area, and the poor in another, and thus that the resources needed to address the issues of migration will be available in areas where there is no need for such resources (and conversely): there is not an appropriate allocation of resources.

I (and colleagues) suggest distinguishing between diverse **"place equality regimes"**: sum of institutional mechanisms and policies that either reinforce or mitigate spatial inequality. There is different models in which localism translate in spatial inequality. So, institutions, fiscal regimes, intergovernmental relations must be integrated in the analysis of diversity. Is localism playing against migration and social diversity or not?

Is there empirical evidence that better right to the city improve social ties (beyond theoretical claims, democracy theory)? What local voting can do for building communities? But, are rights enough? There are some preconditions to exert your rights, for example to know language in order to communicate (linguistic issue).

2 questions:

- Lessons from Putnam for European cities? (through social capital, the negative aspects of social diversity can be overcome)
- "Denizens"? citizens who are denied their citizen rights? Where this concept comes from.

### **Jill Simone Gross**

**Denizens: simply he or she who lives there**, with no further assumption.

Rights to the city: they are enough. Language is a challenge. References in the field of urban planning about how participatory action works.

Concept of "place equality regimes" useful, for example in the case of the Brexit: it not only a vote against EU, but also against London, that express spatial inequalities.

Putman paradox (social capital to overcome social diversity negative aspects): Case of Canada, where there are policies of empowerment of native groups and local communities. E.g. Toronto is the most diverse city in Northern America, and their motto is "Diversity is our strength!"

Localism: often cosmopolitanism is viewed as a normative idea produced/happening at a global scale. Suggestion: **cosmopolitanism is produced at the local level, is a bottom-up process**. Especially with migrants, there is a knowledge produced there about humanity.

## **Discussion with the audience**

### **Patrice Aubertel (in French)**

Est-ce que la question du localisme se pose de la même manière aux USA, en France et en Suisse parce que la construction est différente en France et aux USA?

### **Daniel Kübler**

I was not speaking about localism that (cultural) way but in terms of institutional mechanisms. Emphasis on local autonomy (fiscal) in USA and Swiss, much more than in France. These are the important differences, not the cultural aspects. I cannot answer the question.

### **Erik Swyngedouw**

**Cosmopolitanism has been an ideal (a normative ideal, the geographical implant of globalized neoliberalism)** in all Global North cities during the 20th century (increasing the mobility of goods, people, etc.). But communities don't mix in private space. They just *share* public space. Are we not hitting the end of this ideal now? So I agree with Eric that the problem should be reframed in terms of (in)equality (e.g. the problem with the plumbers is that they are unequal).

### **Jill Simone Gross**

**Cosmopolitanism less as a normative idea and more as process to be questioned.**

### **Alberto Vanolo**

Why do you use this concept of right to the city in this context of diversity? Why on the contrary don't use the concepts of politics of difference (coming from feminist geography)? Or perhaps, I suggest the concept of situated cosmopolitanism.

## **4th Session: The Anthro-(ob)Scene: Interrupting Anthropocenic Urbanization**

### **Presentation<sup>2</sup>**

**Erik Swyngedouw (University of Manchester)**

The ecological condition of the world is one of the great challenges of the 21st century. I understand the ecological not as the non-human, but as an assemblage, a constellation of human and non-human entanglements. E.g. a **city is a human / non-human entanglement, it is an ecology**. Any ecology is political because always contested, contestable, transformable. And the city is the ‘point of capiton’, it is the place along which the political-ecological conundrum. The solution to the ecological condition had to deal with the urban.

Two French interlocutors cited in order to address this question:

Alain Badiou: “after ‘the rights of the man’, the rise of the ‘rights of Nature’ is a contemporary form of the opium for the people. [...] it is a gigantic operation in the depoliticization of subjects” (2008:139)

Jacques Rancière (to define the political, not the policies or politics): the interruptive staging of equality by the ‘part of no-part’ (1998). It appears when those that are not counted within the count of the situation make themselves heard and seen in the name of equality. The political is an immanent practice of appearance that interrupts a given order.

I assume that I have not to define the notion of anthropocene: we humans have become active agents of climate change, genetic construction of species, etc. The way anthropoScene, and in particular anthropocenic urbanization have been talked about is deeply depoliticised, that is what I call anthro(po)scene.

5 points:

- Anthropocenic urbanization or... materializing international urbanization
- The non-political event of the anthroScene narratives as depoliticizing terrains
- A radical new ontology to make sure nothing really has to change
- Deepening the immunological biopolitics of neoliberal urban environmental governance (e.g. smart cities: “we can survive!”... at the cost of the other).
- Politicizing planetary urbanization

### **1. Anthropocenic urbanization or... materializing international (or planetary) urbanization**

Cities as the geographical imprints of processes that rendered humans an integral part of earth’s deep geo-time.

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<sup>2</sup> Minutes partly based on the text of the presentation slides.

Combined and uneven planetary urbanization is the historical-geographical process that produced the early-stage of anthropoScene. 80% of the energy is consumed by urbanization.

At the moment when climate scientists, policy makers, activists and philosopher alike gather around the idea that there is a symmetry between humans and nonhumans in the name of the Anthropocene, something is not (ac)counted, rendered off-scene, the original sense of obscene (Greek etymology). Agreement on climate: you now that it will not be respected, but you don't say it.

Nonetheless, **political possibilities emerge and vibrate in the supernumerary/excessive forms of acting that threaten and even occasionally do disrupt the metabolic flows that sustain planetary urbanization.** This political acting suggests a politics of equality.

**Planetary urbanization is the geographical form of the anthropoScene.** As Henri Lefebvre insisted already a long time ago, capitalism unfolded a global dynamics that produced a global space, both socially and ecologically through the accelerating and widening deterritorialization and reterritorialization of matter, organisms and human bodies within metabolic circuits of socio-material transformation. Example: the mobile phone (resources, production, use, recycling, from Africa to Dacca, through Europe). The geographical form through which these dynamics of de- and re-territorialization – the continuous metabolic transformation and relocation of matter and bodies – took an outspoken urban character.

Like the urbanization of capital, the anthropoScene is an urban scene. Urbanization is the socio-spatial form of the AnthropoScene (e.g. pumping out of greenhouses gases, transformations of land and water to feed cities, etc.).

AnthropoScenic urbanization seems to combine a posthuman cyber-technological landscape that rhymes with ecological dynamics while those that are denied access to the eco-survival pods are relegated to the margin of both urban and ecological life.

While the urban AnthropoScene is being further crafted as urban living labs, dystopian socio-ecological landscapes testify to the radical inequalities inscribed in its urban landscape.

In the meantime, urban political insurgencies leapfrog from place to place, often radically interrupting the flow of things or undermining the consensual neoliberalizing forms of urban governance.

## **2. The non-political event of the anthropoScene narratives as depoliticizing terrains**

Referring to 'humans' in general, the humanity as a whole, the concept of **anthropocene is neutral as regards gender, class, economic system**, etc. But the socio-ecological entanglements are produced by a few. Suggestions of prefixes like andro-; oligarcho-; capital-; polemo- (guerre), etc.

**Critique of the dominant narrative of the temporal/epistemological rupture of/in modernity** (a before and an after the awareness of our impact on earth) as a “revisionist geo-history”. It is:

- Silencing modernity’s controversies and its losers
- Retro-actively marking a point of inflexion
- The inauguration of a rupture: unreflexive before, reflexive after

“Instead of a division of modernity between a before and an after [the event of the Anthropocene], a modernity initially ignorant, but later educated, it is a division in modernity that we need to consider. In place of a chronological division, a political division.” (Neyrat, 2016: 117)

### **3. A radical new ontology to make sure nothing really has to change**

This reflexive understanding of our deep impact on earth and non-humans, and this new ontology of a radical symmetry between humans and non-humans, are supposed to lead us to manage this entanglement. In this view, nature as an external thing does not exist anymore. It exists as part of the human condition. This opens a new cosmology for a new (post-)modernity (e.g. the Breakthrough institute (US) which **promote an engineering of the climate change**: mission of building a new climate thanks to geo-engineering sciences).

Following this current of thought, to save the world and ourselves, we need not less capitalism, but a deeper, a more intense and radically reflexive form, one that revolves around reconstructing DNA and genetic material, mobilizes the power of the nuclear to drive the economy, forces gas out of shale formations so it can be ‘carbon-stored’ elsewhere, and works to geo-engineer the planet in a mutually benign co-constitution. The logics/strategies at the urban scale: **engineering of the urban life**.

### **4. Deepening the immunological biopolitics of neoliberal urban environmental governance (e.g. smart cities: “we can survive!”... at the cost of the other).**

Tension: on the one hand we recognize our entanglements with non-humans, nature, and on the other hand we say, “we can manage it”, “we have technological solutions”. What explains this? The hegemonic discourse that “our” civilization (i.e. neoliberal capitalism) can continue. In other words, the AnthroScene seemingly radical cosmology hides the “real death of nature” in which humans are “geo-engineering ‘planetary stewards’”. The depoliticized bio-politics of the anthro-obscene are a deepening immune bio-political fantasy (Neyrat). E.g. smart cities, eco-cities, resilience, adaptation, etc. -> cover up the “combined and uneven ecological catastrophe”.

Concept of “immunitary power” (Garcia, 2015), “immunological democracy” (Brossat): some live in a peaceful manner (the power takes control of the risks and fragilities), while obscuring any form of dissensus and making others die.

### **5. Politicizing planetary urbanization**

As academics, we must politicize the “immune-biopolitical urban governance apparatuses” put in place in many cities over the past decades and that utterly fail to tame the excesses and supernumerary acting of some of its component parts. Indeed, despite the feverish search of a global urban intellectual and professional technocracy for a prophylactic that has spurred a frantic search for a ‘smart’ socio-ecological urbanity, the Real of the combined and uneven socio-ecological catastrophe keeps haunting urbanization. From this point of view, **the urban appear as the pivotal terrain for the immanence of the political as act of egalitarian subjectivation, one that entails the interruption of the socio-ecological metabolisms** that choreography the catastrophe we are in and does some in the name of equality (the foundation of democracy).

### **Discussion with the moderators**

#### **Jonathan Rutherford (Ecole des Ponts ParisTech, LATTs, Moderator)**

The paper and the presentation allow to think about the politics of socio-environmental change, and possibilities of intervention, and this is the first question: develop this question of the possibilities for intervention.

By moving from the anthropocene trademarks, to the AnthroScene, and to the Anthro-ob/offscene, there is this aim to

- coming back to the people and things off-stage,
- there is a move beyond the flat, symmetrical ontology to the relational ontology enacted by big capital and big science, which now include rather than externalise humans and non-humans,
- and there a will to politicize of matter and matters (viewed not only in terms of engineering).

There is a production of knowledge about the flows of things across scales and spaces, but this paper is contributing to the question behind: what do we do with this knowledge (in order to create more democratic, more equal worlds)? How we repoliticize the production of environments?

4 points to open the discussion:

- disruption between the paper and the presentation: the paper does not speak about **urban issue**, and the presentation makes the “urban” as the “pivotal terrain for the immanence of the political as act of egalitarian subjectivation”. So to what extent the urban continue to be the key political arena for the socio-ecological struggles or is there a shift of the political battleground away from the urban? But, in the paper, it seems that the scene of the **anthropocene is not only urban** (nuclear test, chicken production, etc.). Moreover, the rationalities behind for example the smart cities, are not necessarily urban.
- How we can **locate local work in this big epistemological, ontological change** we are facing? How, why, for whom the urban anthropocene comes to matter? How can we abstract or adopt from situated local to these paradigms? Is it a political matter of matters or is it about structure

and systems or is it also about contested processes in situ? Where are the “glocal” moments in these changes? Is it still “the world in a grain of sand” or is the anthropocene and planetary urbanization changing where and at what scale it should be thought?

- Paradox: We need the techno race to support our objection to it. We need domestic chicken, fracking, nuclear test, etc. to see, to know where and when interrupt. We need the fantasy to foreground the real. How to not act just in response? **How move from a response mode to more pre-emptive, progressive politics?**
- Where the hell begin from here?! What is the next step of research to demonstrate that something has really to change?

### **Cyria Emelianoff (University of Maine, moderator)**

Uncompromising perspective. Parallels (same ingredients) between your criticism of sustainable development and anthropocene: Arms to extend neoliberal capitalism, techno-managerial solutions, immune-bio-political dispositive. However a **monolithic understanding of the logics behind these concepts appears to simple because there are heterogeneities**: Is it giving justice to numerous actors involved, the political battles, Can we deny the political dimension of these fights? The change comes from actors on the ground and improbable coalitions actors. So what perspectives of action if you disqualify ex ante all action by all environmentalist groups/activists?

Second set of question about the critique of the symmetrical ontology between human and non-humans. Agree with proximity of geo-engineering and human/post-human engineering. But do you really think that assessing the radical alterity of nature can allow a better politicization of the socio-ecological question. I am not sure, because the understanding of the interdependences can lead to the end of the violence toward nature.

Third question: **the scale of efficient political action?** Jeb Brugmann (*Welcome to the urban revolution*, 2009) is calling for an inclusive relocalisation of planning, economy based on local resources, community resources, migrant resources. Community organizers, associations, small business, etc lead this local urbanism. E.g. of territorial development in Toronto, Vancouver, etc. which can become global thanks to the diffusion of the initiatives (global networks of cities as "the city"). Concrete and pragmatic proposition to emancipate cities from big companies in an effective and non rhetorical manner. What do you think about these diffusions/relations between cities, and about the necessity to short-circuit the state? What do you think about Brugmann experiments, to start at the local level?

### **Erik Swyngedouw**

- **Urban**: for me, it is the pivotal place of global ecologies. It where the global came together. It is both a thing (a set of things) and a process. Particularly acute as regards ecological questions. Supervising a PhD about the Manchester city policy to become a climate neutral city (like any other

city in the North). They do this by measuring, quantifying carbon emissions in the city of Manchester which is of course non-sensical! Because it is very easy to decrease carbon emission (e.g. by increasing electrical vehicles), by moving the emissions in another place: it is a zero-sum game. So we need to combine metrics of the place with metrics of the flows. It is not controversial. Any planner can understand that. So the city as an entanglement and the city as a processes that sustain this entanglement must be understood together. and acting to reduce them! We need to combine the matrix of places/human and non human objects with the matrix of flows/processes. The urban is also the pivotal space for the enactment of the political.

- **Ecology:** We should not base our politics on ecology. My green friends who defend environmental politics in the name of "nature" should stop doing that, because nature doesn't care (it is a mistake). Who needs the Latours of this world, their symmetric and flat ontology? The CEO of Esso, Prince Charles, Al Gore, the WB, the IMF, etc. know the problem (that we cannot go on, that the capitalism cannot continue with the same human-nonhuman kind of interactions) but are not exposed. The urban poor in Africa die from these dysfunctions, they are not "concerned", they strive to survive. Who is concerned with the sustainable city? The local elites, who want to promote eco-bubbles (e.g. Heidelberg), to make sure that the power relations can continue for a while longer. But we know we can't go on growing like we do. It is necessary to have a political change (power relationships) in our relations with nature.
- **Political:** To my green friends (ecological activists): stop doing what you do and thinking what you think! Going to the Amazon and fight with the indigenes is counter-productive. The political is an active egalitarian interruption, **acts of interruption**. Interrupting what? Socio-ecological flows for the transformations of the regimes, nodes of socio-ecological metabolisms. The COP21, *Nuit debout*, Occupy, are, also, interruptions: they are **political moments**. How they interrupt, what they interrupt and in whose name? Political moments open up possibilities for real change and incapacitation to reorient our trajectory. I don't think there is any hope in urban social movements (Castells); but it's a different story with urban political movements. But we (as academics) can't make political movements, or create political moments, political subjectivations. They occur. But what I can do: contribute to elucidate what is the political (there is not theoretical research about this).

## **Discussion with the audience**

### **Olivier Coutard**

I have been impressed by a slogan of Nuit Debout: “another end of the world is possible”. At first reading, very depressive. An other reading is perhaps possible: **what the next world looks like?**

### **Erik Swyngedouw**

In academic fields, my talks sound very depressing, when I talk to activist, they “it is fantastic, this is precisely the kind of analysis that sustain what we do”. There is not desperation in these movements. The problem is we don't know how to analyse and share this enthusiasm.

### **Erik Swyngedouw**

Political movements, acts, are uncertain. In this period there is a closure of the political by techno-managerial governance. So the violence is the only conduit in front of this closure.

### **Martine Drozdz (CNRS, Latts)**

In the works of Latour, but also Callon, Lascoumes and Barthes, there is an utopian dimension: the equality/symmetry between human and non human is not already existing. **How do you define "equality"?** There are different way to reclaim equality (e.g. of knowledge, chances, acting, of conditions, etc.). And from there: how do we institutionalize the form of equality we want to promote?

### **Erik Swyngedouw**

What is equality? Who defines it? Not me! Political equality cannot be defined by (academic) elites, this just reproduce inequalities. It emerges in and through political moments. Think of Rosa Parks and the meaning of what she did: she demonstrated inequality, the perversion of democracy! **Equality is given a substantive content in the process of the political act** (e.g. gender inequality). A political act is performed in the name of equality; while a terrorist act is performed in the name of identity, of exclusion (and thus is unequal).