

WORKSHOP
WORDING URBAN DIFFUSION
Content & Schedule



21 NOVEMBER 2018

AT SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE PARIS-BELLEVILLE

With the collaboration of IPRAUS

Workshop
WORDING URBAN DIFFUSION

Date : 21 November 2018

Organized by: Diffuse cities and Urbanization Network (DCUN) &
Research group « Vocabularies of architectural and urban design across time » (CNRS / UMR-AUSSER)

Venue: Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Paris-Belleville (ENSA PB)
60, Boulevard de la Villette, 75019 Paris, FRANCE (Métro Belleville – Lignes 11 ou 2)

Scientific coordinators: Isabelle Chesneau (AUSser); Adele Esposito (AUSser);
Joël Idt (Lab'Urba); Clément Musil (AUSser)

Scientific committee: Eric Chauvier (AAU); Leslie Belton-Chevallier (IFSTTAR); Delphine Callen (Lab'Urba); Isabelle Chesneau (AUSser); Valérie Dufoix (AUSser); Adele Esposito (AUSser); Charles Goldblum (AUSser), Joël Idt (Lab'Urba), Nathalie Lancret (AUSser); Clément Musil (AUSser), Vincent Négri (ISP)



The diffusion of urbanization on greater scales is a global phenomenon that has called for revision of the analytical frames used to understand the relation between territories and urbanism. Since the 1960s, research on diffusing urbanization in diverse geographical and historic contexts has produced terminologies and concepts in different languages.

This workshop, organized by the “Diffuse Cities and Urbanization Network” (DCUN), questions the abundance of such production: is it crucial to grasp the local specificities of diffusing urbanization in diverse settings? Does it reflect the discomfort of scholars and planners face to urbanization phenomena that are not easy to define? Do we still need new words and concepts, or shall we « compose with » the words that are already available to us, in order to describe present-day evolutions in the urban field?



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Programme

MORNING SESSION

9:00 - 9:30 - Reception of participants & coffee

9:30 - 9:45 - Introduction by the workshop's coordinators

9:45 - 10:30 - Thomas Sieverts
"What are the problems with wording urban diffusion?"

10:30 - 11:00 - Susan Parham, Matthew Hardy & Stéphane Sadoux
"Repairing Suburbs - The socio-spatial dimension of the traditional urbanism discourse"

11:00 - 11:20 - *Coffee break*

11:20 - 11:50 - Marion Sabrié
"Yangon in the political, economic, and urban transition: an 'emerging Metropolis'"

11:50 - 12:20 - Chiara Barattucci
"The Italian urban planners lexical inventions describing the diffusion and dispersion of urbanization, since 1960"

12:30 - 14:00 Lunch Break - Buffet

AFTERNOON SESSION

14:00 - 14:45 - Charlotte Vorms
"Does the notion of urban periphery always make sense? Perspectives from collective works on the naming of urban periphery"

14:45 - 15:15 - Fériel Boustil
"Urban peculiarities in Algeria: words and specificities"

15:15 - 15:45 - Astrid Safina, Leonardo Ramondetti & Filippo Fiandanese
"Diffuse Urbanization 'With Chinese Characteristics'"

15:45 - 16:00 - *Coffee break*

16:00 - 16:30 - Anne Grillet-Aubert, Bernadette Laurencin & Arlex Gomez
"The texture of the city. Words and Maps of Urban Diffusion in China"

16:30 - 16:45 - Charles Goldblum
Concluding remarks



Workshop **WORDING URBAN DIFFUSION**

Participants & Abstracts

Thomas Sieverts - Emeritus Professor, Technical University Darmstadt

“What are the problems with wording urban diffusion?”

The talk discusses the importance of adequate terms for the phenomenon of urban diffusion and the necessity to use words, which are connectible to ordinary language.

This means, that an adequate word should evoke suitable, correct and not negative images, the latter we can observe in Germany and this makes constructive discussions difficult from the very beginning.

A good term might even have a poetic dimension. Completely artificial terms do not generally have these qualities. A special section discusses my own term *Zwischenstadt*.



Susan Parham - University of Hertfordshire; International Garden Cities Institute

Matthew Hardy - Oxford University, Prince's Foundation for Building Community

Stéphane Sadoux - Centre for Research in Construction Cultures; Grenoble School of Architecture; University Grenoble Alpes

“Repairing Suburbs - The socio-spatial dimension of the traditional urbanism discourse”

In Britain and the United-States, suburbs have over the past couple of decades generated an increasing amount of academic research. Initially, many of these works attempted at shedding light on the forces shaping these changing suburban areas and at describing their spatial characteristics. More recently however, a number of publications have focused on design and action, in particular those produced by academics and practitioners who can be referred to as traditional urbanists. These works suggest a number of principles and methods aiming at transforming, retrofitting and ‘repairing’ suburbs identified as sprawl based on transect principles and in the light of current social, economic and environmental issues.

This paper relies on critical discourse analysis as a method for highlighting the socio-spatial dimension of traditional urbanism. A corpus of nine texts (dated 1996 to 2014) is analysed. These texts are representative of various strands of traditional urbanism (New urbanism, proponents of Urban Villages, of Garden Cities etc.)

The paper does not aim at judging the validity of this discourse, rather, the intention is to show how it built upon a specific language, in particular on vocabulary that explicitly refers to the social dimensions of human settlements.

Fairclough, N., 2003, *Analysing Discourse. Textual Analysis for Social Research*, New York, Routledge

Fairclough, N., 1992, *Discourse and Social Change*, Cambridge, Polity Press





Marion Sabrié - University Rouen Normandie; UMR 6266 CNRS IDEES

“Yangon in the political, economic and urban transition: an ‘emerging Metropolis’?”

Elissalde writes about the metropolitan process as “relying on a network of major cities in which the phenomena of connectivity tend to outweigh the proximity relations” (2004). If such a process does not yet affect Yangon (a South-east Asian city which is secondary at the global and regional scales and the former political capital of Myanmar, which remains its economic capital), this city is experiencing an unprecedented urban sprawl, due to its renewed attractiveness since the economic liberalization of the country and the important immigration from its region and the other national regions.

Is it relevant to apply to it the exogenous term “emerging metropolis” (Mckelvey, 1961), used to describe the developed cities of the North for about 60 years? In recent years, other terms have been developed evoking “embryonic forms of registration of metropolisation” (Peyronnie et al., 2017) or a “minor-mode metropolisation” (Franck & Sanjuan, 2016, Franck et al., 2012) to describe the process at work in the important cities of neighboring countries. The term “minor”, unlike “emerging”, means a smaller and recent phenomenon. However, no indication is given about the process at work: if, in time, it remains limited or not.

How are the Myanmar people expressing this metropolitan process in progress, in connection with the opening of the country and the globalization of its territory and its economy since 2010? Thus, would speaking of Yangon as “a metropolis”, while the municipal authorities have not yet defined it administratively as such and that its limits are still vague, be adopting an erroneous representation of this urban territory, or even dumping an exogenous representation on it? While Yangon is experiencing accelerated urban catch-up, partly due to its significant urban sprawl, what about its integration into global flows and its metropolitan functions?

The purpose of my presentation will be to analyze to what extent the Western conceptual framework influences or determines the production of knowledge about the accelerated urbanization of Yangon and its corollaries. To carry out my analysis, it would be relevant to take into account the production of knowledge in Myanmar, but because of the four decades of military dictatorship, it has been much weakened. I will then base my analysis on criteria derived from interviews with the actors of the contemporary Myanmar urban fabric and from the categories in the regional urban analysis.

Franck, Manuelle et Sanjuan, Thierry (eds), 2016, Territoires de l’urbain en Asie. Une nouvelle modernité? Paris : CNRS, Alpha.

Franck, Manuelle, Goldblum Charles, Taillard, Christian (eds), 2012, Territoires de l’urbain en Asie du Sud-Est. Métropolisations en mode mineur, Paris : CNRS, Alpha.

Elissalde, Bernard, 2004, Article « Métropolisation », Hypergéométrie, En ligne : [<http://www.hypergeo.eu/spip.php?article75#>], consulté le 17/10/2018.

Mckelvey, Blake, 1961, Rochester: an emerging metropolis, 1925-1961. Rochester : Christopher Press.

Peyronnie, Karine, Taillard, Christian, Sisoulath, Bounleum (eds), 2017, Transitions urbaines en Asie du Sud-Est, Marseille : IRD Editions, Collection Suds.





Chiara Barattucci - University luav of Venice, Polytechnic University of Milan

"The italian urban planners lexical inventions describing the diffusion and dispersion of urbanization, since 1960"

This presentation aims at explaining the functioning of sector language of italian urban planners in relation to their rich neological creation about low density urbanization.

In this contribution the author identifies and observes, in particular, the use, the diffusion and the role of three neological expressions, widely used from the sixties by Italian planners in their texts: (i) *Campagna urbanizzata*, (ii) *Urbanizzazione diffusa* and (iii) *Città diffusa*.

Speaking of *Città diffusa*, this presentation will also stress the significance given to this expression by its inventor, Professor Francesco Indovina (thanks to a recent interview realized for the DCUN's workshop).



Charlotte Vorms - University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

"Does the notion of urban periphery always make sense? Perspectives from collective works on the naming of urban periphery"

Drawing on the experience of several collective works ("Les mots de la ville" research programme, the book What's in a name?

Talking about suburbs, and "La ville informelle au 20e siècle" research programme), the talk will discuss the relevance of the generic notion of urban periphery and the importance of other criteria to describe urban space, according to place, time and speakers.



Fériel Boustil - University Paris Nanterre, Lavue Mosaique Institute

"Urban peculiarities in Algeria: words and specificities"

The classic concepts of urbanization of the countryside (periurbanization, urban sprawl, etc.) are concepts that present the evolution of the urban world as a simple consequence of urbanization mechanisms in the morphological and functional sense of the term whether in America or in Europe.

The urban growth in the western Mitidja in Algeria implies an incorporation of several terms in the social system of the city of the "periurbanisation", "rurbanisation" and "between two", this intimate mixture between city and countryside is as much in space than in the heads of the inhabitants (Pagés, 1985). Peri-urban areas move and move away (Steinberg, 1991) but in Algeria - formerly colonized country - this state of affairs is rather characterized by the notion of order and disorder and a process of migration between town and country (Bendjedid, 1998).

We have approached this contribution, on the phenomenon of rurbanisation by the presentation of the various concepts, in relation with our research subject, and which can enable us to clarify our vision on the subject such as: the city, the countryside, the growth urbanization, urbanization, peri-urbanization ... The need to better understand our theme, led us to do a modest research on terminology in Algeria. Where we have seen that the origins of urban notions date back to the colonial period and have diluted after independence, especially in the period of the nation-





Thus, this contribution presents some outcomes of the ongoing empirical researches on the city of Zhaoqing, in the Pearl River Delta, the city of Zhengzhou, in the Central Plain Agglomeration, and Tongzhou District, in the JingJinJi Region. The materials provided by the authors (maps, photographs and data) will be discussed to question the relation between words and spaces.

Fang C., & Yu D. (2016), *China's New Urbanization: Developmental Paths, Blueprints and Patterns*, Springer.

McGee, T., Lin, G. C., Wang, M., Marton, A., & Wu, J. (2007), *China's urban space: development under market socialism*, Routledge.

Phelps, N. A., & Wu, F. (Eds.). (2011), *International perspectives on suburbanization*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Rowe, P. G. (1991), *Making a middle landscape*, Mit Press.

Rowe, P. G. (2005), *East Asia modern: shaping the contemporary city*, Reaktion books.

Ye, L. (2017), *Urbanization and Urban Governance in China*, Springer.

Yeung, Y. M. (2000), *Globalization and networked societies: urban-regional change in Pacific Asia*, University of Hawaii Press.



Anne Grillet Aubert - Paris-Belleville School of Architecture, IPRAUS Institute, UMR AUSser

Bernadette Laurencin - Paris-Belleville School of Architecture, IPRAUS Institute, UMR AUSser

Arlex Gomez - Paris-Belleville School of Architecture, IPRAUS Institute, UMR AUSser

"The texture of the city. Words and Maps of Urban Diffusion in China"

A rich vocabulary gives account of diffuse urbanization in Europe and in other continents. These words designate different processes and forms of urban sprawl. They invite us to examine the morphological specificities of urbanization in different contexts that also depend on preexisting urban forms. Does diffuse urbanization break with former substrata and processes? Is it a symptom of broader and deeper transformations?

This paper describes the patterns of urban diffusion in China in relation with Chinese lexicon on cities and urbanization. Also, it compares diffuse urban morphologies in China with other periurban territories in Europe and the United-States.

We draw on several documentary sources: 1/ A Chinese lexicon on cities and territories based on recent research on urbanization in China; 2/ A comprehensive SIG mapping of the urban region of Shanghai, developed in the framework of the postgraduate program « Architecture and Urban Project » (ENSA of Paris-Belleville) since 2007; 3/ Several PhD theses; 4/ A collection of maps of the urban regions of Washington, Milan, Brussels, and Paris, realized with the purpose of comparative research; 5/ Series of maps of five urban regions drawn in line with a consistent graphic charter and bar scale.

The objective of these maps is to show the « texture » of urban dispersion at different levels of analysis and representation - from the regional dimension to the building - in order to identify what are the most relevant scales of urban dispersion. They are the starting point for the interpretation of current processes of transformation.

The texture designates « the grain », the minimal unit of meaning, the words of urban dispersion in different languages; a category of visual variables for cartographic representation and the nucleus of urbanization from which further urban development will sprout in the future. On the one hand, we compare the words in the national languages to the urban forms that they designate. On the other hand, we compare diverse morphologies of urban dispersion. We show the facets of the « the texture of the city » - i.e., the genesis and the texture of urbanization, its materiality, its dimension, its hierarchies, and spacing. The use of local lexicon helps us identifying the gaps between the meanings of the words and geographical realities.





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