



URBAN NARRATIVES

(Re)building cities through narratives

International Conference, 27th and 28th November 2018

Jean Monnet Network

Newcastle University (UK), University of Pittsburgh (USA),

University Jean Monnet Saint-Étienne (FR) and Sciences Po Lyon (FR)



Taking into account the complex history of (de)industrialisation and its spatial manifestations (scale, place, network, territory), the key-driving question of the conference will focus on **the (re)making of cities through narration**. Despite their discursive and partly unfathomable dimensions, urban narratives are omnipresent and accompany the (re)development of cities. These include, *inter alia*:

- Narratives about the ability of cities to offer their inhabitants a pleasant place to live in (notably after a period of decline with tales of cities underlining their Renaissance);
- Narratives about the importance of cities in economic development (for example in Europe with the motto presenting cities as the engines of Europe);
- Narratives focusing on the ability of cities to be collective actors (for example, by making a claim for the capacity of cities to play an important role in global governance, alongside states and international organizations);
- Narratives focused on size, notably the claim that “small is beautiful”;
- Narratives framing cities as central vectors of urban, national and international networks, or as a focal for public- private interactions;
- Narratives presenting cities as places of hospitality (with, notably recently, numerous cities claiming their willingness and ability to welcome migrants and refugees)

Tales of cities will be analysed in terms of their contents:

- In which contexts do they emerge?
- What are their salient features and aims?
- Is there a diversity of narratives behind strong common themes such as that of the Renaissance of cities?

Communications will also seek to identify the urban coalitions that underpin specific narratives.

- Who are the actors or coalitions of actors (re)inventing them?
- How do these narrative makers work?
- How are these discourses disseminated?
- How do cities organise their own urban narratives?

Attention will also be paid to the potential tensions that urban narratives may generate:

- Are there conflicts concerning the identity of the cities they are based upon?
- Who and where do potential contesting narratives arise?
- Can the impacts of these competing narratives be measured?

Urban narratives will thus be explored in four conference **sessions**.

The first one will focus on **narratives created to improve the image of cities that have experienced decline and/or expect to position themselves in an international urban competition**.

The second one will bring together students and scholars interested in **discourses about metropolises as places where various and numerous types of actors and institutions cooperate**. In other words, this session will offer analyses of narratives about cities as collective actors and metropolitan governance.

The third session will focus on **narratives presenting cities as actors defending human rights and improving the disadvantaged communities or on the “Just City”**.

In the fourth session, there will be a platform for alternative narratives to be voiced; these are defined as alternative either in terms of their contents, or because they are articulated by actors usually deemed as outside the pale (certain NGOs, associations of inhabitants, or direct action groups, for example).

Tuesday 27th of November

Saint-Etienne, Jean Monnet University, Department of Political and Territorial Studies,
77 rue Michelet, Auditorium 001)

10.30 am: Welcoming word

Stéphane Riou (Vice-President for Research, University of Jean Monnet Saint-Etienne)

11am: Keynote Speaker

Phillipe Zittoun (Political Science, LAET, ENTPE)

11.30 am: Introduction

Aisling Healy (Political Science, Triangle, University of Jean Monnet Saint-Etienne), **Marie-Clothilde Meillerand** (History, Triangle, VIGS - Villes Innovantes et Gestion des Savoirs) and **Christelle Morel Journal** (Geography, EVS, University of Jean Monnet Saint-Etienne)

1.30 pm: Session 1 - Tales of Urban Renaissance

Moderators: Christelle Morel Journal (Geography, EVS, University of Jean Monnet Saint-Etienne) and **Danny MacKinnon** (Geography, CURDS, Newcastle University)

This session will focus on the tale making processes and actors. The idea is even to observe the tale making from the inside or from the backstage in order to open the black box of its emergence. The aim is here to gather major witnesses (direct major actors or researchers) able to testimony or to provide us with an insight into these processes: their actors, their mottos, their rationales, their aims...

- **Xavier De La Selle** (Director of the Gadagne Museum, City of Lyon): Reinventing the Urban Narratives of Lyon: Can the City Museum be an Actor ?
- **Michael Glass** (Geography, Urban Studies Program, University of Pittsburgh): Narrating Pittsburgh's Transition from Steel To Silicon, Scalpels, and Sustainability
- **Louise Kempton** (Urban Studies, CURDS, Newcastle University): Newcastle City Future Project
- **Sabina Deitrick** (Urban Planner, GSPIA, University of Pittsburgh): "Most Livable" Pittsburgh (visio)
- **Aaron Foley** (Chief Storyteller, City of Detroit): When Detroit Hires a Chief Storyteller (visio)

4pm: Session 2 - We are all Metropolises! Narratives on good scales of cooperation and governance

Moderators: Alistair Cole (Political Science, Triangle, Sciences Po Lyon) and **Louise Kempton** (Urban Studies, CURDS, Newcastle University)

This session will look at the variety of scales chosen in order to improve political cooperation at the urban level (among public authorities, but also along with private actors...). These scales vary according to the national context (with Great Britain, France and the US offering very different institutional backgrounds) and to local contexts. Metropolisation processes are also accompanied by discourses underlying the importance of cooperation and the ability of cities to act as collective actors, even if this implies ignoring or minimizing the exclusion of important stakeholders, the important work public institutions play in drawing borders...

- **Cynthia Ghorra-Gobin** (Geography, CREDA, University of Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3): The Metropole of Lyon Through the Lenses of the Metropole of Minneapolis-St Paul: What Do their Narratives Have in Common?
- **Christophe Parnet** (Political Science, Triangle, Sciences Po Lyon): When Private Actors Discuss Lyon's and Marseille's Metropolitanisation
- **Aisling Healy** (Political Science, Triangle, University of Jean Monnet Saint-Etienne) and **Christelle Morel Journel** (Geography, EVS, University of Jean Monnet Saint-Etienne): Braddock, Building a Narrative on a Mayor's Charisma?
- **Danny MacKinnon** (Geography, CURDS, Newcastle University): The Northern Powerhouse as a Spatial Economic Narrative

6.30pm – Students Session: “Beyond the Urban Narrative, the Other Side of the Coin: Areas Which are not Benefitting from Pittsburgh’s Renaissance”

Presentation of the Master VEU Altevilles' study-trip in Pittsburgh (October 2017)



Wednesday 28th of November

Lyon, Sciences Po Lyon, Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 14 avenue Berthelot, salle Marc Bloch)

9.30 am: Welcoming Word

Renaud Payre (Director of Sciences Po Lyon)

10 am: Session 3 – Welcoming Cities

Moderators: Anouk Flamant (Political Science, INSHEA EA Graphes, University of Paris Lumière) and **Aisling Healy** (Political Science, Triangle, University of Jean Monnet Saint-Etienne)

For much of the twentieth century improvement in the situation of disadvantaged communities was a focus for urban public policies. The ideological triumph of neoliberalism has caused the allocation of spatial, political, economic, and financial resources to favor economic growth at the expense of wider social benefits. Some cities still present themselves as “just cities” (a phrase also used by some researches) inciting local decision makers to focus on equity and material well-being with considerations of diversity and participation so as to foster a better quality of urban life within the context of a global capitalist political economy. In a context of growing movements of populations, some cities have notably recently claimed their ability (along with or unlike their national governments) to welcome migrants. Some papers of this session will focus on this the narratives about the “just city”.

- **Younes Ahouga** (Political Science, Global Studies Institute, University of Geneva): When International Organizations Support Cities as Welcoming Actors
- **Rachel Humphris** (Sociology, School of Social Policy, University of Oxford and University of Birmingham): Questioning Sanctuary in Securitized States: Welcoming Narratives from San Francisco, Toronto and Sheffield
- **Stacy Harwood** (Urban Planning, City and Metropolitan Planning, University of Utah): Welcoming America
- **Christiane Heimann** (Sociology, Graduate School of Social Sciences, University of Bamberg): When Businessmen Create a Welcome Culture in German Cities

1.30 pm: Session 4 - Alternative Metropolitan Narratives

Moderators: Michael Glass (Geography, Urban Studies Program, University of Pittsburgh) and **Max Rousseau** (Political Science, CIRAD, INAU Rabat)

What is a metropolis and what is the core identity of each city? These two questions receive different answers depending on who they are asked to. This session will analyze alternative urban narratives and conflicts about how to define the borders of metropolises and their identities. It will aim at taking into account cases in which NGO's and inhabitants give their word about cities' identities. Beyond official narratives, it will underline gaps between competing

urban tales.

- **Frédéric Barbe** (www.alacriee.org): An Alternative Urban Tale: *le Guide indigène de détourisme de Nantes et Saint-Nazaire*
- **Dan Holland** (History, Department of History, University of Pittsburgh): Alternative Pittsburgh
- **Jérôme Cochet** (Collectif X, drama): #Villes : a Drama Protocol to Collect and Stage Inhabitants Narratives in Saint-Etienne and Lyon
- **Peter Morris** (Economy, CURDS, Newcastle University): How Devolution Split North East England