

RSM Winter School – Section II Methodologies

Workshop on
**Assembling cities and projects:
Mixed empirical methodologies for planning research**

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The workshop engages planning's constitutive tension toward multiple disciplinary domains by looking in particular at actor-network theory and assemblage thinking. The main purpose is to outline a relational understanding of the socio-materiality of urban life and transforming places so as to provide new theoretical and practical insights for planners, designers and policy makers (rather than theorists and methodologists alone). From a methodological standpoint, the workshop approaches the city as more than a mere collection of humans, institutions and built forms. Rather, it focuses on the city as a collaboration – or assemblage – of humans, material objects, nature, and technologies. Crucial to the assemblage are both the norms and regulations that mediate the relationships among human and non-human actors, as well as the everyday city (a socio-technical entanglement where planning values and norms become practical matters). In this framework, urban projects are interpreted as situated practices of collective city-making rather than the enactment of predetermined rules and designs. The workshop draws on multiple examples and provides a set of mixed methods to help young researchers dealing with the empirical while critically investigating the city and its evolution.

Suggested Readings

- Beauregard R.A. (2015). We blame the building! The architecture of distributed responsibility. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39(3): 533-549.
- Latour B. (2004). Why has critique run out of steam? From matters of fact to matters of concern. *Critical Inquiry* 30.
- Lieto L. (2017). How material objects become urban things? *CITY* 21 (5): 568-579.
- Lieto L. and R.A. Beauregard (2016). *Planning for a Material World*. London-New York: Routledge (mainly chapters 1 and 2).
- Molotch H. and Ponzini D. (2019, Eds) *The New Arab Urban. Gulf Cities of Wealth, Ambition and Distress*. New York: New York University Press – in particular: Introduction: Learning from Gulf Cities.
- Yaneva A. (2017). *Five ways to make architecture political: An introduction to the politics of design practice*. Bloomsbury Publishing.