

Rethinking realities

Transverse lines of debates

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In this text we offer a reflection organized and constructed from the dialogue and interventions among different speakers and participants during the first European Trail Symposium held in CIDOB, Barcelona, 18th of June 2010. And, as a dialogue held by many participants, this reflection starts from a transversal condition that structures its form and its matter: plurality. There is a plurality of voices, of perspectives, of inter-related topics and discussions, but it is also very much about 'plurality', of thought, of meaning, of relating, of culture. And significantly so, 'time' also becomes plural within this dialogue/debate, for in trying to account for questions such as "what does it mean to be European?", "what does it take to build a European Identity?", "is it something we should desire?", "might Europe become an Intercultural project?", "what might be gained from such a project and what is there to be lost?", etc., different times and temporal perspectives were to be introduced within the debate. So, time also becomes plural and introduces shifts within the directions of this reflection(s). As a matter of organising plurality in some way legible and comprehensible then, time and its plurality, albeit seemingly hidden as objects of the debate, remain keys to understanding this multiplicity of voices. The articulation of the interventions' complex relations to the past, the present, and the future, give a kind of conflictual harmony to these voices.

In trying to account for the complex plurality of time, everyday categories such as the formerly mentioned are ultimately insufficient for interventions generally focused on the "in-betweenness", in the "inter", of past and present, present and future, and proximate and distant futures. So, if time is going to be the organising principle of the debate, we need to account for the complexity and plural understanding of time(s) that was deployed during the meeting. Both sections of this document, i. e., "Citizenship as a Relation" and "Community as a Project" are in fact, temporal metaphors. How so?

“Citizenship as a Relation” aims at bringing together interventions that focused on ‘conditions of possibility’, that is, on features sometimes already existing (past/present) and sometimes yet to be made (present/future), that allow us to think in new ways and to start critical and innovative projects. It is about what needs to change before ‘Change’ occurs. It is about past shifts, present transformations, and future necessary changes that gave, give, and may give way to more radical transformations at a societal level. As such, it is a priority to reflect upon them, or better said, a “prior-ity”, for it is only through these shifts in conditions that change will be possible. As the reader may realise, while still a point in time, its relation to everyday categories of time is anything but straightforward. Hence the necessity of the metaphor.

Accordingly, “Community as a Project” presents a collection of the ideas, general reflections and concrete proposals that channel thought to new ways of shaping communities that are constituted rather of differences than of similarities. By conceiving of this process as ‘a project’, attention is directed to the idea of civic creation and participation through mutuality. This, however, is not a straightforward task. It occurs along another important dimension, that of ‘unpredictability’. By studying the dynamics of how pluralities of peoples, through various processes, acquire a sense of commonness in both past and recent events, possibilities for identifying the underlying variables of this process, open up.

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COMMUNITY AS A PROJECT

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With comments:

Eric Corijn (Vrije Universiteit Brussels), **Cristina Farinha** (Universidade do Porto), **Amparo Gea** (*El ojo cojo*, Madrid), **Jody Jensen** (Hungarian Academy of Science), **Ferenc Mészlivetz** (Hungarian Academy of Science), **Mahir Namur** (European Culture Association -Avrupa Kültür Derneği, Estambul), **Yolanda Onghena** (CIDOB, Barcelona), **Rik Pinxten** (Universiteit Gent), **Fernando R. Contreras** (Universidad de Sevilla), **Kevin Robins** (London City University), **Arturo Rodríguez Morató** (Universidad de Barcelona), **John Urry** (Lancaster University).

Inputs of young researchers:

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CITIZENSHIP AS A RELATION

“It seems urgent to try and move to this political task, if you will, of thinking differently than in the past” (Rik Pinxten)

Thinking Politics Beyond Identity

What is cosmopolitanism? A new kind of identity? I don't think so. In my view, cosmopolitanism should be de-linked from identity issues. I relate it to a more expansive mental space, to the capacity and ability to think in an enlarging way. What is significant in my view is *mobility of mind and imagination* (which may potentially occur as a result of global migration, but which may arise out of less extensive movements – I think of Raymond Williams between his Welsh and English reference points). The shift from 'identity' to 'thought/mind' seems to me to open up better possibilities for thinking about public culture in the European space. For, ultimately, cosmopolitanism must be about the creation of a new transcultural public space. (*Kevin Robins*)

There is the nation-state paradigm, the one sort of reality that exists but it is not the whole picture. There are other realities and this is why we talked about living in different realities at the same time. There is another sort of reality of cross-border cooperation, newer network universities, intellectual freedom, movements, permanent movements. (*Ferenc Mislévitcz*)

We should consider citizenship not just as a characteristic but also as a relation in that a citizen only has a potential citizenship in as much as he/she invests in a type of relationship, coalition etc. so as a stakeholder and not as an individual. (*Eric Corijn*)

Conceiving of citizenship as a work in progress, as a relation, as a site of confrontation, means that citizenship can be understood as conversations and negotiations, not just about who is to be recognised but about what is recognition, about the terms of citizenship itself (*Martin Savransky*)

I think one of the problematic characteristics of the citizen is that he has to be an inhabitant: there is no theory on mobile citizenship; at least an experiment of thought to be made to de-localize citizenship and to give every human being a vote in the place he lives, and one or two other votes, maybe one other vote in one other country and one other vote in one other city and to be able to influence and to decide on places there are of interest, of any reason... where he is not necessarily an inhabitant (*Eric Corijn*)

The very idea of creating European citizenship without any reference of the nation-state, means empowerment without territorial binding. (*Ferenc Mislévitcz*)

A call for critical scrutiny of common-sense notions of identity and community

seems to be in order. We need to move towards an alternative way of approaching these. One that critically addresses the frames that underlie the very process of subjection to any normative community and thus, the precariousness of bonds that are always at stake in the very formation of subjectivity. (*Martin Savransky*)

As early as 1996, Appadurai explored how populations become more and more deterritorialized and incompletely nationalized, how nations become ever more fragmented, fractured, and mixed, and how trans-nations may become major social spaces in which the feeling of belonging expresses its crises. We thus face, on the one hand, a perhaps idyllic discourse, that imagines a super-Estate, a mega-city, or a global village that could be able to conjoin fragmented identifications through networks or circuits. And yet there also exists a different transnational claim. One that is less heroic or less romantic than the alleged globalized cosmopolitanism. One that displaces simplistic oppositions between majorities and minorities, and relocates minorities out of the national frame. It is the claim that arises out of lay people for whom culture, society, and place no longer coincide. (*Yolanda Onghena*)

Othering the Same

Whose Identity are we speaking of when we speak of a European Identity? At what cost are we to become European? (*Martin Savransky*)

Just as an intellectual laboratory of looking for new ways of thinking, why don't we explore the idea that we are not necessarily together about what we have in common but maybe for what we not have in common with the illusion of not yet in common. I think the whole sphere of desire, love and these kind of bonding, have to do with: We will reach to put it in common, but at our age we should know that, that is a total illusion to do, but that is an element of bonding (*Eric Corijn*)

What would it mean to be a person/citizen living together with other persons, not in this conceptual framework but also linked to a certain territory? So what sort of relations do we have, do we respect, do we build as an urban citizen which is not necessarily the case of the national state and state membership in the old condition of state-membership? (*Rik Pinxten*)

Lets inquire into the question of creation, emergence out of potential ties, not existing ties, but weak ties and that is also an element of the post-national... to have the same kind of idea about culture in a post-national identity, but it also a positioning of weakness and feeling at ease in a weak situation. (*Eric Corijn*)

From the perspective of social movements and participation "from the bottom", I think that when one engages with some sort of post-identitarian project, it is not so much about rejecting every category... but about understanding that categories and

fixations are temporary, conflictual and fluid, in permanent contestation though varying forms of conflict and struggle. (*Martin Savransky*)

And so what is central in such debates in fact is a politics of imagination and it is a management of productive and creative aspects in a certain way, and I think that produces weak identities. Cities has to be weak identities, unstable identities, moving identities, ephemeral identities and you have to look at that level. (*Eric Corijn*)

We need to defend a little bit the notion of European identity because it makes sense to a certain degree and it makes sense “for the kids” (as a guarantee of peace, for those nations that were permanently fighting against each other) and as guaranteed prosperity. We are under other conditions now and we need to find out what can a European identity deliver, and this is why we are here now. The same principles [as in 1989] cannot be applied and they were applied since '89. The community method doesn't work anymore and my suggestion is to use a new paradigm to understand how to construct further European Identity. (*Ferenc Mislévitcz*)

To the question of “what do we have in common?” which I think sometimes misleads us, the question of Identity, I mean, into asking what we have in common, Wittgenstein suggests this very interesting notion of ‘family resemblances’. He asks “what do games have in common?” We speak of games without problems. And it would seem like games, like all games had something in common that would allow them to belong to this category of “Game”. But he suggests “when you start to look game by game, what the commonality between them is, you find nothing”. And what he means by this is that there is no single feature that unites us all, and yet we can still speak of games and of a certain kind of a European Identity without having commonality as a condition. So, what if we started or increased our thinking, our work in European Identity and in Identities in general, under this notion of family resemblances? That is, to what extent are we as Europeans familiar? To what extent do we resemble each other in different ways? And I bring this about because I do believe that this overcomes these constant paradoxes between commonality and difference. (*Martin Savransky*)

Since Wittgenstein, the second Wittgenstein, when he was sort of beyond his first solipsistic views on language, we learned that language and meaning in language, by necessity, in order to allow for communication, should be vague: not fully defined. Now, speaking about culture and cultures, the way most of us did or all of us did for the past decades is like speaking about them as if this are a sort of , and thats a construction, a historical construction of the West; as if cultures, not “are” in reality, but we think they are, we speak about them as if they are some sort of proto-states; mini-states; not-yet-fully states. Meaning that a culture in this sense, or many cultures, they are groups of people who have fixed features, they always do. This is closed. This is not vague. This are closed borders. I think this is fundamentally wrong. Certainly when you speak about mixed-culture, a mixed-european space you're stuck there, you are absolutely stuck. And

I think that the importance of trying to work with complexity theory starting in a more structural way from the family resemblances of Wittgenstein. (*Rik Pinxten*)

Emergent Thinking

The focus is on mentality and change in mentality, and there we meet the citizen, the individual, groups, etc.. And how do they react, to– and I apologise for this expression– the simple absolutely-certain lack of petrol, which will change our lives. Yes, it will, but in what direction? It can either become a rogue society, everyone who has a gun will be the one who possesses petrol, for a while, for a couple of years, or you can have these new developments in another type of citizenship, of responsibility, etc. Because we need to yes, but this might open new and other ‘avenues’ [of relating, of acting, of thinking]. I know, this is not a wonderful new world, but there are new avenues. (*Rik Pinxten*)

And there is a new mentality shift, which at the European level is not only existing but looking promising. There is an urge, a tension – in the cities, not in rural areas – which sort of invite us to look for new ways. (*Rik Pinxten*)

In fact, 1989 is the symbol of the birth of a new paradigm. Basically eastern Europeans have learned the lesson of 1956. That you should not react with violence to dictatorships, and a new philosophy emerged, a new evolutionism, suggesting dialogue, peacefulness, and non-violence. And what lies in this kind of new thinking is that you have to be based on self-limitation, self-reflection, horizontality, networking and the ethics of disagreements and a pluralist understanding of sovereignty and civil autonomy. These are the elements of this new thinking. (*Ferenc Mislevitz*)

This strange and insane emphasis on structure and struggle with deeper structures and essential structures etc. continues through the ‘80ies and then we shift to, this is not the whole story there is something missing here we need we dynamic aspects to look after we need processual views, together with the shifting of power of nation-states, we see theoretically and philosophically this shifting towards a new way of looking at things also at human beings and groups etc. and the structural, in my sense, colonial view, that is a political statement. I think we should address that kind of statements here concerning European identity, not only grow out of this, probably we will, but look for new alternative views and that’s why there is this focus on complexity theory. (*Rik Pinxten*)

There are no simple, unchanging states, or to which there is simply movement that re-establishes equilibrium. So when we think about systems we shouldn’t think of them as being in or necessarily becoming or establishing equilibrium. Physical and social worlds can thus be characterized, I’d argue through, as the strange combination of

the rule-bound and the unpredictable. So their are patterned, regular and rule-bound systems, of which we probably discuss a number today. This rule-bound workings can come to generate unintended effects. And unpredictable effects can disrupt and abruptly transform what appear to be this rule- bound and enduring patterns. (*John Urry*)

Changing Cultures, Communications and Technologies

I think that 1989 is also very significant for other relevant reasons. One was the development of 24 hours news reporting which is a very interesting globalising of news in the sense of news. I think that is when CNN's first set up. But it was also in 1990 that HTML was invented by Tim Burns Leigh which is in a way the beginning of the internet. It is also more or less when mobile telephony is invented. So actually when you talk about the network democracy, I think you called it, which is a very interesting notion, actually the technology to facilitate and orchestrate that democracy was being kind of simultaneously invented. (*John Urry*)

We need to take into consideration the potential of unused technology form the point of view of democratization. Actually it was first in '68 when the media played an important role. And so the revolution of '68 turned into what some people call a world revolution. It lasted until '89 according to Wallerstein for example. Yes ok it is a provocative exaggeration but it makes sense, for it was happening in different parts of the world, that where completely separated before: Praque... Paris, London, Berkeley, etc. Later in Rome etc., And it was all televised so people immediately knew what happened. Prague students knew what was happening in Berlin and so on. They actually were inter-connected and they got in touch with each other. Supporting each other and there was a certain way of the revolution of the new technology (*Ferenc Mislevitz*)

There is a tendency, facilitated by new technologies, to the digitalization of [cultural] materials, thereby producing an universalised acces to these. Multilingualism and interactivity are ever more encouraged. All this changes the basic functions of memory institutions, which used to be about colection, interpretation and preservation, and now find themselves ever more altered. These institutions, now confronted by multicultural citizenries of blurring boundaries, are increasingly sensitized and forced to recognise the existence of multiple memories and perspectives. (*Arturo Rodriguez*)

Experience now finds itself affected by the effects of new information and communication technologies. These effects arise from two factors which I deem relevant: on the one hand, a change in the conception of space, brought by media in their providing unknown "localities", the local unknown, or by the interaction with new ideas that belong to different spaces, the global unknown. (*Fernando Contreras*)

In my view any initiative of change should take into account the role of mass-

media and the language that journalists use and give out as a tool for interpreting the other, for constructing identities, for understanding realities. We have to realise that we are talking of everyday life things, for instance, that at this precise moment, millions of people around the world are watching the same soccer match. That is what we are talking about, the way in which homogenization prevents us from understanding emergent realities and situations beyond mere proximity (*Fernando Navarro*)

The problem of communication and dialogue (a much misused word these days): To provoke - I believe that the academic world (from which I have detached myself) is now adrift. The concepts are too globally ambitious, and consequently too abstract. And who is the audience? I think that what we see for the most part are sociologists speaking to each other in their own local academic dialect. Policy makers – or at least some of them – are more ambitious, as too are cultural practitioners, in the field under discussion here. And there is little communication between academics and the latter constituencies. (*Kevin Robins*)

Naturally, the private media will continue to increase their on economic profit, but many others have already discovered that the exploration of social and cultural issues does not push the consumer away but exactly the opposite. That is, for instance, the case of Latin-American social soap-opera, that has increased audience levels while addressing non-vulgar and relevant issues related to the receiving societies. Would such be a valid instrument for Europe? (*Amparo Gea*)

The Citizen and The Urban

My position on this whole debate is that urbanity is the mentality of glocalisation. Urbanity is the condition of glocalisation and the question of democracy is the question of citizenship in literal term: How do you manage metropolitanism in a democratic way? Which of course implies another term of territoriality in fact because the city is also spreading today, it is a sprawl, a city is not a very confined territory. At the same time, in fact, you have to realize that culture is a totally constructed culture it is not a reproduced culture such as the national culture, and so the type of city and the type of citizenship has to be looked at from the creative city, the productive city but also in the mental sense of the world (*Eric Corijn*)

Maybe the definition of urbanity is very flexible and maybe it contains many kinds of citizenship but I was sort of thinking about the constitution of relatively newly constructed countries such as South-Africa which is obviously a centre of global attention at the moment. For example in the new constitution there is strong notions of an environmental citizenship and I don't think this has anything to do with cities or urbanity. I think it has to do with global and environmental crisis and it is a societal response to

that in fact the more recent the constitution the more significant is the kind of environmental citizenship so I think it is strange we haven't really discussed gender issues and the notion of citizenship there either and again I don't really see quite whether it is city or country it doesn't really seem to be the right way of posing the issue where women's citizenship is or should be located. (*John Urry*)

This new global rhythm and re-ordering compels us to talk about many urban contexts within a city. Urban contexts of which we have very little idea of where one place ends and the other begins, and where we are at. (*Yolanda Onghena*)

I tend to feel sympathy for the virtuous vision of the city and I honestly believe that, under contemporary conditions, the city holds promising dimensions of living together and of social life. But I do would like to problematise the strict opposition between, culture in urban context and culture in national contexts. Contrary to this opposition, I believe that totalising discourses and images may as well emerge from urban contexts. (*Arturo Rodríguez Morato*)

In my opinion, the idea of "urban-nationalism" seems very interesting. It certainly is a risk. As long as every identity is constructed in relation to an other, that other is the condition of possibility for the construction of a "me" or an "us". There will always be a risk when I say "I am from Ciudad de México", "I'm Barcelonés". I do not see an escape to this, perhaps because I consider myself an urbanite. After spending many years in Barcelona, I consider myself "Barcelonés"... I can walk through the "Barrio Chino" [Raval] without showing my passport... and yet I would never call myself "Catalan" nor "Spanish"... types of citizenship by which, every time I have to renew my Student Visa, I am reminded that I have no juridical-political frame.. The feeling of belonging is built out of the lived experience of Barcelona. (*Enrique Díaz*)

For me the city becomes a way forward in thinking about the nature of culture. The city is increasingly salient in contemporary cultural experience; and also we see the increasing development of urban networks and nexuses. And what it represents is a different kind of thinking machine or cognitive device for thinking about that experience (I again emphasise thinking – rather than meagre belonging, as the national frame would prefer). The city is a greater stimulus to thought – to embodied thought. We exist in a different way – a situated way – in the urban space (and only abstractly, abstractedly in the national frame). The city is a place of inherent complexity – of encounter, but also of opacity. The experience of the city compels us to think, and may encourage us to think along cosmopolitan lines. And the city is not just a matter for those living in the metropolis. It is also vital as a cognitive resource for those not living in the city. (*Kevin Robins*)

COMMUNITY AS A PROJECT

“One might say that the most important events in the world are the least predictable.” (John Urry)

The Nation-State Paradigm

We need dynamic aspects to look after, we need processual views, and I think together with the shifting of power of nation-states, we see theoretically and philosophically this shifting towards a new way of looking at things also at human beings and groups etc. and the structural, in my sense, colonial view, that is a political statement. I think we should address that kind of statements here concerning European identity, not only grow out of this, probably we will, but look for new alternative views and that's why there is this focus on complexity theory. (*Rik Pinxten*)

The core problem of the EU and of European integration, is that we can not get out of the iron cage of the nation-state paradigm or nation-state bureaucracy. But the very idea of creating European citizenship without any reference of the nation-state, that means geographic location, is still a possibility. It is empowerment without territorial binding. (*Ferenc Miszlivetz*)

The national frame of reference is particularly problematical with respect to thinking about the new global migrations. What breaks down as a consequence of transnational flows of people is the old national integrationist model (although, of course, national governments do not acknowledge this). The point now for those trying to think about the European cultural space is to reflect on the significance and the potential of transnational migrants. What is to learned by the more sedentary populations from their cultural mobility and competences. (*Kevin Robins*)

In the 19th century, religion was replaced by culture. We ended an era of state-religion and introduced an era of state-culture, the relationship between state and culture. Now I do think that a new century of enlightenment has to lead to putting that into question. Because the whole of the 20th century was really a conflict between cultures. I think nationalism was one of the great causes of the conflict and it was the most ‘killing century’ in humanity. So what is at stake is how do we think the separation between culture and the state? How do we think social bonds without involving culture and leaving culture like religion to the sphere of civil society, private organization so we have to think how to invent politics and citizenship without cultural borders and this leads then to this kind of agenda, urbanity as a post-national culture. (*Eric Corijn*)

History and Challenges

We had in the 1980's already a concept of a European civil society a global civil society, networks... I was one of the founding members of the network of east-west dialogue which opened up completely new perspectives. The idea was coming from the western peace-movements – ‘the greens’ – suggesting there should be more cooperation with the Eastern societies if we want to get rid of nuclear missiles we have to deal with those who fight against the Soviet totalitarianism in the east, and only if we are interconnected and work together we have a chance to create a better world, with less nuclear stuff. I'm not going into details with this, but it was just a tiny set of initiatives from some intellectuals, politicians and activists and it had a huge enormous impact because we lived in a time of huge uncertainty, of crisis in the 1980's. So that a very tiny input had a very big impact...

... it created a feeling, atmosphere of growing, strengthening and promising cross-border civil society. But we had a lot of other notions of European co-operations, networks, cultural togetherness, cultural proximity etc. and all of these beautiful notion gave us hope, and probably also illusions and all of a sudden they disappeared, in the moment of what we call ‘normalization’. (*Ferenc Miszlivetz*)

I think that within this context new ideas, or if you will, ideologies, don't actually develop, but what does happen is that they get trapped into a voracious, rapid, and insipid form of consumption. Something that, inspired by the notion of “Fast food”, we might call “Fast Idea”. The problem of the lack of development within human subjectivity is that it does not allow for changes to settle, as it were a beautiful cathedral constructed by architects of different times that have learned to fuse different styles with their own conception of art. (*Fernando Contreras*)

If it is part of your identity to spit in the street or if, on the other hand you're taught to feel unhappy with that, in my case my mother always told you shouldn't do that, and so when these things happen and they exclude each other in the public rule, then you have a real democratic problem that I cannot solve without a majority group and without oppressing one of the two. How to find a way out of those contradictions? If you think that I speak too loud, and that is my voice, and it is in the streets like that, how can you modulate these kind of differences, and they have nothing to do with the big debates about identity, they all have to do with irreducible differences that we have to manage. And I would urge cultural studies to concentrate on this matter more than the big stories about language and national history and religion. (*Eric Corijn*)

There is a new version of ‘university’ ... I call it future universities. That is exactly what we are doing here: students, lectures, professors, professionals are discussing things and are kind of concluding somewhere where we have not been before. This goes completely against the conventional university where you have textbooks you have

boxes, you have disciplines and the professor knows what you have to be able to learn and if you don't do it you fail. And this kind of knowledge production, creating new knowledge goes against the strict and rigid conception of universities, and universities belonging to nation-states so there is a restriction upon movement, upon intellectual activities, upon civil society networking in reality and on paper. There is the nation-state paradigm, the one sort of reality that exists but it is not the whole picture there are other realities. There is another sort of reality of cross-border cooperation, newer network universities, intellectual freedom, movements, permanent movements, I completely agree with these notions, we need new conceptions in science, that are able to describe these post-modern societies. (*Ferenc Miszlivetz*)

Building a Common Destiny

It is the continuity of the national history in a certain way, that frames the limits of representative democracy, thus representative democracy is determined by difference of opinion but within the framework of a continuity of represented identity in a certain way. You never have a democratic change of identity happening within a confined territory. Now I do think that on all these matters, if you look at the urban culture, an urbanity is opposed to that. I know it is an analytical scheme but I invite people to think in that sense. You do not unite a city on the basis of a common history. I live in the city of Brussels where the majority of the population is foreign so if we have to decide and produce a common history we fail, the only thing is a common destiny, we need to tell each other that it is a common destiny and so it is a project much more. A project doesn't have an identity. A project is mixed. It is a combination of differences. (*Eric Corijn*)

If you look at the history of sociology and all the history of social bonds, there is one pre-supposition that is not questioned. That is: Bonding has to do with putting things in common and there is an idea since the start. *Gemeinschaft und gesellschaft* that you have an original community that then in modernity has to be transferred into a societal organization but basically to make society a community and putting things into common is social base of bonding and the organization of society. (*Eric Corijn*)

What is needed is the forging of new narratives, through which people can think of themselves and their situations differently. The task is to work towards developing such narratives, and to find ways to make them food for thought in the wider culture. (*Kevin Robins*)

We brought the cultural diplomats of the European countries which are placed in Istanbul, together...

We brought them together in a platform in order to build projects together. This platform functioned. The building up of this platform took very long time – 1,5 years – until we had produced something all together. But this process of building up this platform was really a big experience for all of us. It was made of who we are, all from different countries, they are all doing the same work from different institutions, but they are all from different backgrounds and of course different cultures, and they all have different national cultural policies. So in the end we have achieved to organize a very big street festival in Istanbul which was a marching band festival...

These cultural institutions who were presenting arts and culture of their own countries, all of a sudden came together with the public on the streets and they could really touch the people on the streets with their music and so on. It was not any more something that was closed in their own institutions, which would only be accessible through securities and so on. They touched also the local politicians, I mean the mayor joined the event himself and you know the tram-way institution stopped the trams for the day and the municipality cleaned the streets afterwards, they organized the lightings and everything. So it was a real local cooperation but with the initiative of an international cooperation. And afterwards this has been successful. (*Mahir Namur*)

We use the fact that human beings do not want to be excluded so when you bring a number of people together to produce something, the other people doesn't want to be outside of it so you create in this way a community or a kind of production. So this is one thing that we use. There are always people that are opposing what you do but when you bring people together who are not opposing, then the ones that were opposing do not want to oppose any more and instead wants to join. Why? I think it is the nature of human beings. In nature animals don't want to be left alone otherwise they will be caught by dangerous animals. They tend to join a community. So they gain power by joining the others. The second thing is that when you bring those people together. You bring the ones that are not particularly interested in the product but in the process of learning. Because in this world of networks which is production-oriented - the product is the learning-process. This is very interesting because then you don't bring people together who want to show off, but you bring people together who really want to contribute to a process. If it is the development of a city, or personally they want to learn something...

... When you bring people together that are more in fond of learning, in learning-processes, to organize projects in the city, they invest a lot in themselves, they do something for that city, they do something for the people. (*Mahir Namur*)

As processes when they are collaborative become more important in fact than the final outcomes, and this practice of collaboration mould on the other hand the emergence of communities/ networks of interest. (*Cristina Farinha*)

Urbanity as a Space of Encounters

I think about the factual evolution about the world population now, where more than half of the world's population living in urbanised areas and living an urbanised life. Whatever we think about this, whatever we feel about this – it is a fact. But what are we going to do about it? It makes it urgent to try and move to this political task of thinking differently than in the past, of what is it being a human being, being a citizen living together with other human beings? What is it different from what we thought it was a couple of centuries ago? (*Rik Pinxten*)

The city is a greater stimulus to thought – to embodied thought. We exist in a different way – a situated way – in the urban space (and only abstractly, abstractedly in the national frame). The city is a place of inherent complexity – of encounter, but also of opacity. The experience of the city compels us to think, and may encourage us to think along cosmopolitan lines. And the city is not just a matter for those living in the metropolis. It is also vital as a cognitive resource for those not living in the city. (*Kevin Robins*)

When you look at what is happening in several areas of the world, not only here but let us stick to Europe, what is happening is that there are cities growing together, often across nation-state borders, which are producing not only wealth, but are producing new cultures, are producing the most interesting ways of acting socially. New kinds of agreements, also tensions of course, this is not heaven of course. But at least some form of a search – looking on for alternatives - is going on there. Regardless of, sometimes against, or sometimes disregarding the old structural agreements, which was attached to citizenships as of being members of a nation-state. You do this as a Spanish person, as a French person, in a lot of the creative processes that I am witnessing. This is not absent but diminishing in value. People are looking for other ways as a sort of connectedness, local or on a larger scale, which does not bother any more with the old structures, old values which were tied to nation-state thinking...

... There is an urge, a tension – in the cities, not in rural areas – which sort of invite us to look for new ways. (*Rik Pinxten*)

What would it mean to be a person/citizen living together with other persons, not in this framework/ conceptual framework but also linked to the territory etc.? What sort of relations do we have, do we respect, do we build as an urban citizen which is not necessarily the case of the national state and state membership in the old condition of state-membership. For example this anonymity is a very striking thing. 90 % of the New Yorkers were not born in New York, according to some statistics. And they are New Yorkers (nonetheless) what does this mean? It means they agree and maybe are productive and creative and produce new relationships. Meaning, I use the streets, this square and so on and I will keep it clean because after me someone else will use I,t and

he will do the same thing so that afterwards I can use it with pleasure, and I am not landing in a dump, because this is now my place, my territory. This sort of agreement which is practical rather than belonging to a state with the whole tradition of the blood ties and we don't need that – but we live together. How do we do that? What sort of steps do we see emerging already? And that is mostly an informal practice, but there is a lot of that, I'm not going into detail with that but there really are a lot of that happening, citizen gatherings, taking things in their own hands, organizing themselves etc. apart from the state. It is interesting because there really is a lot of that. Is this the line that is defining in sort of new political terms what is a citizen more in the urbanised type or is it something else? I think that reality is really pushing towards this question of should we redefine or not and what things do we have to offer. *(Rik Pinxten)*

Urbanity as Potential Ties

People from different backgrounds, different professions and different interests even, can work within one common production with different aims, different wishes, different outcomes. They work together and at the end they love the city they love each other. And this is building a belonging among all the participants. So what I mean is we should think of such notes. How can we make these notes productive? How can we make them multiply so that Europe of such relations is build? *(Mahir Namur)*

It is about weak ties and not strong ties that exist, that are organised before. And the question: When do weak ties become productive? What type of organisational structure do you need for becoming productive in a certain way? Of course the advantage of instituted productive relations is that that they are continuously productive but in fact they are continuously re-productive they adapt as such. One of the things we are exploring is, I am sorry again... but urbanity is made of potential ties, weak ties. And that feeling at ease in a city is that whenever you need bonding – it will occur. When you are in a tram you want to be left alone until the moment when you fall down and then you want other people to help you so that you can stand up again. *(Eric Corijn)*

What happens in a bus, in a tram or in a square might help us understanding some of these things. How is this meeting going to become productive? In a certain way there is a kind of gathering that is not very structured. It is network, it is that one who knows someone and then various circumstances decide that they are together at this specific time. And there is a certain flexibility in whether you tie or not tie up to the thing, whether you concentrate on what is happening or if you are dealing with other things. There are a lot of things happening you can remain in your private space, you can mainly concentrate on proverbial ties that already exist and the thing is that we don't know, because otherwise we would have organised it, when the tying up, the bond

is going to become productive, is going to deliver a product that is different from what is brought in in the beginning. And I think there is something that is radically different of the way of organising reproduction. School systems, arts, national reproduction. Well we know what social bonds are, and we have to integrate newcomers in to these social bonds. I think it is a question of gathering people without fully programming it. Allowing for things to happen, allowing for it to fail, not to be disappointed if we leave the evening saying: “Well we don’t know what the next step is going to be”... this is about potential ties. Everybody gain probably in the idea that something could happen. There is something that can help us – both from what is happening in a public space, a public square or in these mobile non-licus and what is happening in creative processes. *(Eric Corijn)*

Unity through Responsibility

How do we live together, how do we understand each other? Not according to the rules, not according to the old traditions, like religions for example. They are diminishing in power clearly, in forms of offering formats for good lives. People are networking in a different way than before not in terms of kin of family, not in terms of belonging to a nation state. Nevertheless we are citizens and we try to have a good life, and we are looking for new ways of filling in this notion of citizenship with a new sort of responsibility for a sort of larger area than just our own. *(Rik Pinxten)*

If you look at ‘green thinking’ whatever this notion may mean precisely, this is not a German or Belgian or whatever sort of thinking. This is across borders, Different citizens who, mostly in the cities – extremely striking – not in rural areas, who are looking together with another sort of networking, interconnectedness, how can we live in a more green way or responsible way than we used to? Because we need to! *(Rik Pinxten)*

I think if we were trying to imagine a kind of a role for Europe, it would be to be the absolute and unambiguous centre of developing a low carbon economy and society. There are all sorts of initiatives that it already does, but simply to set its back to this high carbon systems and say “what we are going to do is to be the world’s centre of innovation with regard to low carbon systems”. *(John Urry)*