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# WALKING THE COMMONS: DRIFTING TOGETHER IN THE CITY



Open Walked Event-based Experimentations

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# ABSTRACT

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This second RGCS white paper is focused on a new research practice and method co-designed by members of our network: Open Walked Event-Based Experimentations (OWEE). The protocol consists in a free, several day long learning expedition in a city, which brings together different stakeholders (academics, entrepreneurs, activists, makers, journalists, artists, students, etc.) and relies on a partly improvised process (both the people met and places visited are part of the improvisation that emerges in the flow of discussions). Walk and embodiment are central, as both indoor and outdoor times are expected to involve participants and remote followers differently. Although close to the French "Dérive", OWEE also diverges from it on several key points. This white paper returns to the OWEE philosophy, the importance of improvisation and public spaces, and the search for commons in the way collaboration and knowledge are built and shared. It then discusses the issue of preparing and managing the event. Finally, we offer several case studies and ethnographies related to past events. These feedback and empirical analyses are opportunities to explore key questions for the city as well as the ways we live and work together. We conclude by stressing the importance of embodiment and 'felt solidarity' in the approach of commons and communalization in today's collaborative world.

**Keywords:** OWEE; method; walk; learning expeditions; commons; narration; sharing economy; future of work; future of academia; open science; citizen science; makers; DIY.



# SUMMARY



## **PART I: WHAT IS OWEE?**

The OWEE philosophy



## **PART II: LIVING OWEE EXPERIENCE**

Collaborating and Co-designing the narrative



## **PART III: BUILDING KNOWLEDGE FROM OWEE**

Exploring, reflecting, learning and teaching in the walk

“ Droit devant soi, on ne peut pas aller bien loin. ”

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry – Le petit prince

## INTRODUCTION: EXPLORING MAKERS, OR BECOMING MAKERS?

**AUTHORS:** FRANÇOIS-XAVIER DE VAUJANY (PSL, Paris-Dauphine University) & AMELIE BOHAS (Aix-Marseille University)

Since 2016, the **Research Group on Collaborative Spaces** (RGCS) has organized learning expeditions and field trips, which were, in a first time, opportunities to explore a territory and more simply, to launch new chapters of the network. In early 2017, with a second learning expedition in Berlin (#collday2017), came the idea that from this practice (which was quite common for innovators, entrepreneurs and some academics), we could co-produce an approach or a method that could become a **common**, both for the network and the communities we work with. This common would be a way to bridge the time and space of our learning expedition and their narratives as well as the different concerns, temporalities, actors (academics, entrepreneurs, managers, activists, artists) we encountered. This was also an opportunity to be closer to the culture of making that was at the heart of our objects of study (coworkers, makers, hackers). We could not simply be passive spectators of our world. We needed to be doers, makers and hackers ourselves in order to gain a deeper understanding of the collaborative communities that were at the heart of our research and entrepreneurial activities.

Following our learning expedition in Tokyo (July 2017), we labelled this approach we were formalizing or attempting to formalize OWEE (which stands for Open Walked Event-Based Experimentations). Close to

the spirit of the practice of the French *dérive* (drift), the idea is to introduce in the walk something managers, consultants and politicians organizing field trips and learning expeditions cannot afford: improvisation in the flow of the walk and fuzzy temporal and spatial boundaries for our events. An OWEE is primarily a 'temporal luxury'. We take our time and do our best to care in the flow of our walk. Beyond the walks, we take time to analyze and reflect upon what we saw, and how we felt. Everybody is welcome to join. The practice of walking is key and is amplified and made meaningful by seated, indoor moments of visits, stays and discussions. Beyond this local and punctual philosophy, we do our best to connect all our events (OWEE but also publications, political debates, past artistic performances, etc.) in order to make them alive in the flow of each event...

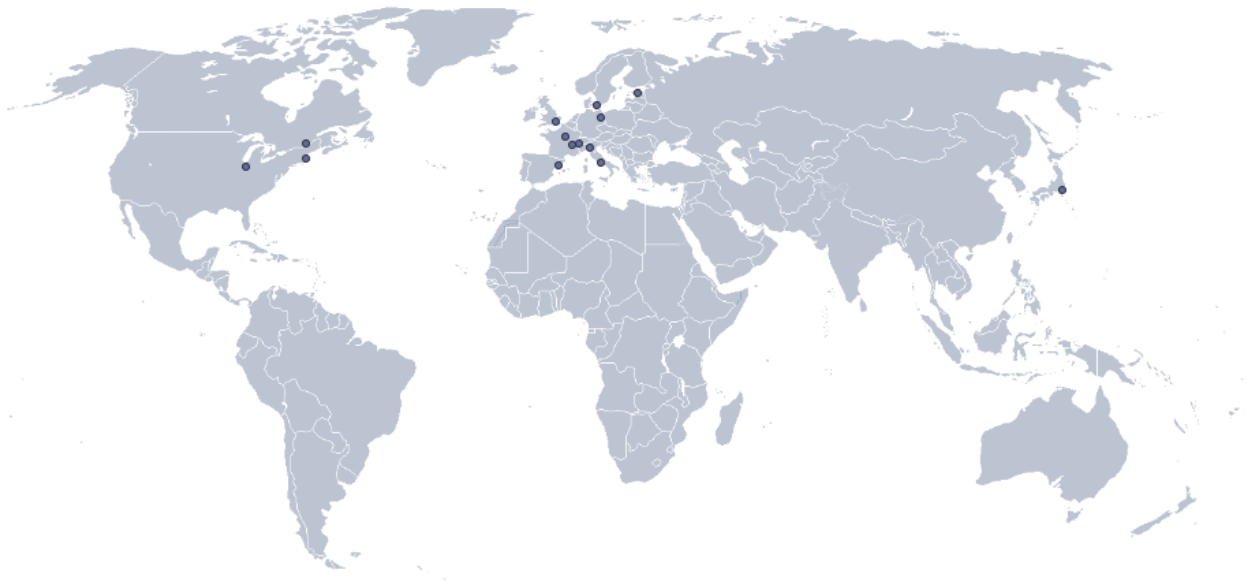
After two years of experimentations and 19 OWEEs (**see list in Table 1**), we believe that the time has come for a first feedback on this practice. This is exactly the objective we gave to this White Paper, namely formalizing a first feedback co-produced by all those who managed or participated to our learning expeditions.

The learning expeditions (19) we conducted between 2016 and 2018 are summarized in the table below (**see Table 1**) and represented on the map (**see Picture 1**):

NAME	PLACE	DATE	HASHTAG AND DESCRIPTION
#visualizinghacking2016	Berlin	July 2016	Pictures and sketches of hacking gestures in the flow of our exploration of makerspaces, hackerspaces and coworking spaces. Selection of pictures and sketches presented at Paris Town Hall at the end of our first symposium
Opening event of RGCS Barcelona #RGCSB	Barcelona	September 2016	Learning expedition organized day 2 after the opening seminar of RGCS Barcelona.
#RGCS2016	Paris	December 2016	First symposium, including a three-path learning expedition in the east of Paris.
#visualizinghacking2017	Tokyo	June 2017	Second session of visualizing hacking. Same principle: capturing gestures of hacking and improvising. Four-day long learning expedition in Tokyo.
#OOSE2017	Copenhagen	July 2017	Unconference and visit of a coworking space and makerspace (at the end of the conference).
#collday2017	Berlin	July 2017	Second event in Berlin. Three-day long learning expedition focused on collaborative spaces in the east and west of Berlin.
#sharingday2017	Roma and Milan	December 2017	Four-day long learning expedition in Roma and Milan. Opening event for both chapters. Visit of Italian coworking spaces and makerspaces. Discussions about the future of work in Italy.
#OWEEUN	Geneva	December 2017	Half-day learning expedition in Geneva at the end of an unconference at the United Nations.
#RGCS2018	London	January 2018	One-day long learning expedition in London at the end of the second RGCS symposium.
#HIMMSU 2018 #howImetmystartup #OWEE	Paris	March 2018	Collaboration. Half-day visits and walk focused on startups and collaborative spaces in Paris.
OWEE Printemps des Entrepreneurs	Lyon	April 2018	OWEE with EM Lyon students in the context of the "Printemps des entrepreneurs in Lyon".
#OWEEMTL "Entrepreneuriat et technologie"	Montreal	May 2018	One-day long learning expedition in Montreal. Focused on collaborative spaces.
OWEE innovation labs	Lyon	May 2018	Exploration of several innovation labs in the Lyon area with EM Lyon students.
#OWEESA	Paris	June 2018	Exploration of street art in Paris. Used to reflect upon academia and our practices.

#OOSE2018	Tallin	July 2018	Off the track event of EGOS 2018 conference. Seminar, fish-ball based panel, visit of a makerspace and alternative areas of Tallin (improvised walk).
<b>Innovation through History: an exploration of the CNAM museum</b>	Paris	July 2018	Visit of CNAM with the purpose of exploring history of innovation. Anna created a template to follow and fulfill.
#hackingday2018	Boston	July 2018	Four-day long learning expedition in Boston. Exploration in particular of MIT and Harvard ecosystem. Topic: "Opening and Hacking Knowledge: back to where it started?"
#RGCSAOM2018	Chicago	August 2018	Collective walk at the Millenium park (guided by a research of Santi Furnari). Discussion and co-production on the topic: "Revising revise and resubmit processes: towards alternative scientific media?".
#OWEEIDEA	Lyon	September 2018	Learning expeditions with students. Exploration of new entrepreneurial places in Lyon.

TABLE 1: THE OPEN WALKED EVENT-BASED EXPERIMENTATIONS WE ORGANIZED BETWEEN 2016 AND 2018



PICTURE 1: LOCALIZATION OF THE VARIOUS OPEN WALKED EVENT-BASED EXPERIMENTATIONS WE ORGANIZED BETWEEN 2016 AND 2018

The document is structured as follows. First, we return to the OWEE philosophy, what the acronym means, the key dimensions that have emerged in and through it. We try to put forward a taxonomy of OWEEs and compare the approach with the French *dérive*. Most of all, we explain why we believe this simple practice is or could be a common.

The second part is focused on the practice of OWEE, its lived design and experience. We return to practices we have identified in its online and offline management. We also reflect upon the possibility to collect data

and produce more transformative research from it.

The third and last part is focused on ethnographies and case studies based on OWEE we organized. We show how our learning expeditions have been opportunities to explore the paradoxes of a territory or a practice, to make beautiful encounters, to question key research and academic practices and to elaborate different forms of collaborations, ways of working modes of knowledge co-production.





## **PART I:** WHAT IS OWEE?

The OWEE philosophy

“Voyez-vous dans la vie, il n'y a pas de solutions.  
Il y a des forces en marche :  
il faut les créer, et les solutions les suivent.”

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry – Vol de nuit

## PART I: WHAT IS OWEE? THE OWEE PHILOSOPHY

### Chapter 1.1: Towards more integrative research practices? Introducing Open Walked Event-Based Experimentations (OWEE)

**AUTHORS** : FRANÇOIS-XAVIER DE VAUJANY (PSL, Paris-Dauphine University) & LAETITIA VITAUD.

Chapter adapted from an article published in LSE Impact blog article which can be accessed here: [“Towards more integrative research practices: introducing Open Walked Event-based Experimentations”](#)

Between 2015 and 2019, the **Research Group on Collaborative Spaces** (RGCS), an independent network of academics, organised more than 120 events worldwide, including 19 learning expeditions. RGCS aims to explore places and contexts of work transformations, in particular collaborative communities such as coworkers, makers, fabbers and hackers where new work and life practices are experimented. Collaborative communities are seen as windows to understand new work practices (mobile, remote, digital, collaborative, entrepreneurial) and levers or muses that might transform our own academic practices.

All events organised by the network (in particular those based on learning expeditions) have converged into a new research practice presented here: Open

Walked Event-based Experimentations (OWEE).

This new set of practices aims to overcome various dichotomies (such as knowledge-building / knowledge-diffusing; teacher / researcher; academic / practitioner; academic / politician), make a bigger impact, and offer deeper connectivity in time and space for research and the events organised by researchers.

#### What is the OWEE method: an emotion?

Over the last three years, throughout various events and experimentations, we have been shocked to discover how many academics were bored with their work and disillusioned with academia. Some grew sick and tired of the “publish or perish” game. Others were dissatisfied even while academically successful.



PICTURE 2: CREDIT: **FINAL HIGHLINE EXPANSION** BY JOHN GILLESPIE.  
THIS WORK IS LICENSED UNDER A **CC BY-SA 2.0** LICENSE.

They came to our events simply to “have fun”! They longed for the use of new media to write, produce, and assemble academic production – something different to the more traditional academic journals. They embarked on a journey without knowing the destination and thoroughly enjoyed themselves in the process. Many of us began to wonder whether scientific writing could not also leave room for new rhetorics, different writing styles, and the expression of emotions (de Vaujany, Walsh and Mitev, 2011; Shanahan, 2015). Of course, traditional modes of writing continue to be favoured by numerous academics and still have a valuable role to play in the academic world. But more of us now seek to explore new ways of writing that allow for emotional tones and styles. Some journals have started to publish pieces that reflect this trend.

Furthermore, bodies and emotions are critical to our open experimentations. For example, the conversations people have while walking are fundamentally different from those they have sitting indoors. We have walked together so much; spending lots of time in third-places in Berlin,

Barcelona, London, Tokyo, etc., continuing on our conversations while doing something with our hands, dropping all formality, feeding on the richness of the context, and analysing it together.

Walking and talking is a powerful combination. It effectively mixes people. You can avoid someone in a “safe” seminar room or event convention centre, but in a crowded metro, bus or tramway, you may end up speaking to whoever just happens to be near you. When there is a large diversity of stakeholders – academics, entrepreneurs, representatives of public institutions, journalists – walking works as a powerful engine to break down barriers and create new synergies.

All this has resulted in the OWEE method we are continually refining. It combines ethnography with more transformative, action-oriented research designs. Deeply grounded in phenomenology, this research protocol gives a central role to our embodied perceptions. The OWEE approach can be described by means of the four dimensions included in the following table:

DIMENSIONS	DESCRIPTIONS
<b>Open</b>	It is open to all kinds of stakeholders (academics, entrepreneurs, managers, community managers, journalists, activists, students, politicians...). It is hard to say when it truly starts and when it truly ends
<b>Walked</b>	Walked practices are very important in the OWEE approach. Participants alternate stable (even seated) practices inside third-places with long walks between third-places included into the learning expedition
<b>Event-Based</b>	The learning expedition is an event in the sense that it builds in order to give a sense of ‘happening’. Something truly happens and is a possible source of learning, scanning, surprising...
<b>Experimentations</b>	The design and re-design of the experimentations is full of improvisations and bricolages. Around one third of the event is not planned and expected to be co-produced by participants.

TABLE 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE OWEE APPROACH AROUND ITS FOUR KEY DIMENSIONS

### First empirical results based on the implementation of the OWEE method

We want to outline four key results based on the first two implementations of the OWEE method in Berlin in March 2017 (more about which in a forthcoming article), and in Tokyo in June 2017.

### The use of Twitter for a new scientific “meta-writing”

During our events, particularly our learning expeditions, we tried to be reflexive and experimental. We found that live tweets or sequences of tweets can be useful “meta-texts”, combining situations, people, organisations, and publications. When published in the flow of an event, tweets create a live narrative that can extend the event in time and space ([see our live tweets in Tokyo](#)), and connect it to other, past,

ongoing or future events (e.g. by mentioning them in a tweet).

Unlike traditional article publishing, Twitter provides an emotional, temporal network that integrates source material (research articles, books, pictures, etc.), makes it more meaningful, and gives it a new life through live tweets. It demands creative new ways of writing that are reminiscent of visual arts techniques such as assemblage and collage, whereby found objects are used to create something new that transcends them.

### **Other social media involved in sharing live scientific knowledge**

Other social media, such as Facebook, YouTube, or Instagram, can contribute to making events more indelible and unforgettable as they generate emotions. Numerous studies have shown that the longest-lasting memories are linked to emotions (Rapaport, 1942); they are recalled with more clarity and detail, which is likely to increase the quality of future publications.

In the context of our learning expeditions, Whatsapp, Facebook, emails, and even text messages play a big role in the process; they constitute modern-day rituals that cement all participants together. They make the group more horizontal and involved in sharing whatever knowledge has been acquired. Increased engagement and horizontal communication can turn participants into active “ambassadors”, keen to spread the word.

### **Beyond scientific writing: learning expeditions as community-builders**

Increasingly RGCS events tend to be mainly about team/community building. Our

learning expeditions have provided plenty of opportunities to demonstrate this. There is no exaggerating the impact the community had on the RGCS network and its production. The numerous emails, messages, and posts using the [#visualizinghacking2017](#) hashtag are an excellent case in point.

Storytelling and community-managing are increasingly necessary to give life to scientific writing and extend its reach and impact. Topics and research do still matter, of course, but style and delivery tend to become equally important. Incidentally, some of the best storytelling is often quite succinct, not a common trait of scientific writing.

### **For a necessary pivot in space and time for learning expeditions... a major annual “unconference”**

“Unconferences” are participant-driven events quite different to conventional conferences with their fees, sponsored presentations, and top-down organization. That is what our first RGCS international symposium in Paris last year was all about. We strived to return the word “symposium” to its original meaning (in ancient Greece it was a part of a banquet conducive to debate and creativity).

“Work and Workplace Transformations: Between Communities, Doing, and Entrepreneurship”, the [2016 RGCS symposium](#), was a big unconference designed to provide the whole group and its undertakings with a tone, spirit, and dynamic. It aimed to enhance, order, and lever all of our events and various experimentations. Naturally we hope our next symposium will achieve all that, and more<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Many thanks to Tadashi Uda, Tomazaku Abe, David Vallat, Anouck Adrot, and Charles-Baptiste Gérard for joining this crazy adventure. And to Aurore Dandoy for blogging on our website! Many thanks to all those who supported it from afar: Amadou Lo, Julie Fabbri, Stéphanie Fargeot, Serge Bolidum, Aurore Dandoy,

Marie Hasbi, Constance Garnier, Albane Grandazzi, Stefan Haefliger, Viviane Sergi, Anna Glaser, and many others. There are so many things I will never forget (e.g. the exoskeleton experience)!

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## Chapter 1.2: Walking the talk, talking the place: three research protocols for learning expeditions

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This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section.

Managers, customers, citizens, entrepreneurs and researchers are being transformed into knowledge tourists but more rarely into 'knowledge voyageurs'. Field trips, learning trips and learning expeditions epitomize a new trend in embodied explorations of places likely to bring learning and new knowledge with them. These transformative experiences mainly consist in a set of visits to places and territories, between one day and one week, integrated into a program and narrative, giving an orientation to this partly walked experience. Being 'outside' traditional frames and contexts of life and work is expected to produce something particular.

Most of the time, the visit starts at a meeting point where organizers introduce the agenda of the day. Participants are then guided to the first place where they meet the owner of the place (i.e. happiness officer, CEO or HR manager, depending on the theme of the learning expedition). Then, they move together to the next point of interest. Meanwhile, they walk, take a bus, use public transportations or follow a guide. They can get to know each other (identity, values, status, goals...) by engaging in conversations and sharing similar topics. The tour typically ends with a social event. When participants engage in an expedition through unfamiliar spaces, they expect to learn new insights about themselves, about other people they could meet or about the area itself. Over the last decade, a number of expeditions have been organized by consulting corporations, professional organizations, associations, universities and companies. They targeted stakeholders as diverse as customers, neighbours, entrepreneurs, scientists or students. Multiple promises are made, such as networking, strategic scanning, performing

a protest, acquiring new skills, etc. But what can we really expect from learning expeditions as researchers? A new fieldwork or a new method? Can scholars integrate learning expeditions into a proper research design?

In organization studies, expeditions and trips have rarely been used in research designs, except in the context of some ethnographical or auto-ethnographical approaches (Khosravi, 2010). Almost two years ago (in July 2016 with a first event in Berlin), we started to explore **how learning expeditions could lead to the joint understanding and transformation of new practices related to knowledge production and knowledge diffusion in academia**. Having experimented this approach in Berlin Paris, Tokyo, Copenhagen, London, we are more and more convinced that trips and learning expeditions can form a proper research method combining various research protocols. We are stressing the potential of learning trips or expeditions to contribute to the creation of new corpora of data based on narratives and particularly self-narratives. In the following post, we would like to discuss how we collect stories and impressions of participants, including us, in the flow of the journey. Before, let us clarify our objective behind the new method. Our aim is threefold: collecting data; exploring open learning processes; producing and combining powerful narratives likely to transform research practices.

First, we aim to collect participants' reflexive and narrative materials directly related to the event. Being part of the group could facilitate the understanding of emotions. For instance, during the visit or/and right after the visit, we want to

explore what people felt and how they reflect upon what they lived. Materializing these reflections is a way to deeply contextualize the experience. Researchers are more likely to phenomenologically and interpretatively describe the learning process itself from the inside, especially if they also join learning expeditions.

Second, meeting participants outside traditional boundaries allows us to catch direct feedback about individual's learning process and expected transformation at work. If completed away from the event, the protocol is likely to reveal how emotions, affects and discussions have settled into different levels of emotions and been (or not) re-explored by participants. It is a way to analyse the lived duration of the trip and visits as well as what they 'express' for participants (Merleau-Ponty, 1945). The idea is thus to collect longitudinal data for all the learning trips we have organized.

Finally, repeating the protocol in different territories, within the same entity (our research network RGCS) allows us to develop common but different materials... the identification of a "net of actions" (Czarniawska, 2004) or "field of events" (Hernes, 2014). What are the regular meta-narratives coming into the story (Ricoeur, 1983)? How? What kind of temporal structures do they enact? What are the embodied practices traveling from one experience to another?

Today, we are still experimenting different protocols to complete our goals. We are working mainly on three data collection methods, which are presented in the next section. We will explain then how it is related to our broader research method (OWEE) likely to strengthen our last research objective, which consists in being transformative of research practices by means of an accumulation and meta-narrations of all OWEEs. We will conclude by exploring key stakes of the process so far.

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## 1. COLLECTING NARRATIVES AND REFLEXIVITY IN THE FLOW OF LEARNING EXPEDITIONS: THREE PROTOCOLS

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Recording live and past perceptions has been a traditional way to collect data in certain fields. In ergonomics and Human Computers Interactions studies, sense-making and reflexivity processes have already been subjected to numerous methodological explorations (Cairns and Cox, 2008; McCarthy and Wright, 2005). Some methods are based on recording actors' comments (and their coding) in the flow of their action. Others are based on ex-post comments of a video showing the actor implementing a set of gestures and actions that are ex post commented by the actor himself/herself. Philosophy has explored the issue of thought and body, and how thought and reflexivity are interrelated with action and agency (see e.g. Merleau-Ponty, 1945; Vygotsky, 1978). In social sciences, narrating reflexivity (e.g. with logbooks) is also at the heart of numerous protocols ranging from auto-

ethnography to life stories (White, 2001; Bertaux, 2005; Dyson, 2007; Hayano, 1979; Malaurent and Avison, 2017).

In the context of learning expeditions, we offer to explore three different research protocols: (i) one based on the process of telling loudly (and recording) a thought; (ii) another on writing up a story individually and collectively (iii) a last one based on visualization and artistic expression. We expect the three methods to be related and to materialize different kinds of embodied practices and narration. In fact, telling can be more immediate than writing which can be modified. We would like to explore this distinctiveness before combining both telling and writing into a single research protocol. Some techniques have already implemented, others should be implemented and tested very soon.

## 1.1. TELLING LOUDLY AND SELF-RECORDING THE TRIP

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The first protocol is based on commenting on pictures taken by participants (including researchers) during the expedition. A selection of pictures is displayed chronologically to summarize the trip and to ask participants to react individually. Pictures are collected through the social network Twitter or/and Instagram, as everyone is encouraged to use a single #discussion topic.

Ideally it takes place at the end of the visit, in a quiet place. We expect all participants to share feedback as a 'counter-gift', i.e. in exchange of being able to attend the tour for free (whereas others could charge<sup>2</sup>). For around 40 minutes, participants are dispatched in the room. With their smartphone, they record their thought and send the file to the lead researcher. They have been asked to look at the pictures and texts and tell what they did and felt.

Discourses are transcribed word-by-word, and then coded at the level of the expedition in a first instance and then consolidated with all other expeditions organized. The idea is to explore and compare vocabularies, topics and narratives from one learning expedition to another.

The spoken nature of the record (tone of voice, rhythm, and emotion in the background, etc.) is also be part of the coding. Organizers and community managers are asked to participate. Their feedback is considered as well.

The next part of the protocol involves more reflexivity from participants. They are invited to write up some lines about the learning expedition. It could rely on the design described above (pictures of the expedition and line of personal tweets) or via a structured questionnaire.

In both cases, all tweets or Instagram posts produced during the learning expedition are extracted (from the hashtag of each learning expedition) and analysed. They are also expected to be part of the duration, expression and narrative interrelated with the event.

The first experiments of the protocol in Milan and Paris have shown that involving participants in the process is not easy. The best thing to do may be to explain very clearly at the beginning that a small data collection will be included into the learning expedition. As all events are free to attend, it may also be useful to remind that participating to the data collection will be part of a 'counter-gift'.

## 1.2. VISUALIZING WHAT WAS SEEN AND FELT THROUGH ART

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Beyond words and spoken language, the idea is here to rely on more visual and metaphorical modes of narration and reflexivity. Pictures, drawing, sketches, can be produced by participants during the expedition or at the end of it. All materials are then collected by organizers.

This last protocol has already been implemented twice by the RGCS: once in Berlin (July, 2016) and another time in Tokyo

(June, 2017). The topic was 'visualizing hacking'. Participants were asked to take pictures of gestures, movements, routines, artifacts that embody hacking, bricolage and improvisation related to new work practices. For each event, an exhibition of all pictures, sketches and drawings was organized, one at Paris Town Hall in December 2016 (first RGCS Symposium), another one in London in a makerspace in January 2018 (second RGCS symposium).

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<sup>2</sup> Participants are normally charged to attend a learning expedition if it is organised by a private organization.  
[https://collaborativespacesstudy.wordpress.com/2018/04/29/walking-the-talk-talking-the-place-three-research-protocols-for-learning-expeditions/#\\_ftn1](https://collaborativespacesstudy.wordpress.com/2018/04/29/walking-the-talk-talking-the-place-three-research-protocols-for-learning-expeditions/#_ftn1)

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## 2. POSSIBLE INTEGRATION INTO A BROADER RESEARCH METHOD: OWEE

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What would strengthen and extend the potential for such protocol is its capacity to be replicated simultaneously within more global self-reflexivity exercises under a broader research design. We started to work on such a research design one year ago. We called it Open Walked Event-Based Experimentations (OWEE).

OWEE is a particular type of field trip or learning expedition focusing on the exploration of new work practices and managerial innovations in the context of third places and collaborative spaces visited over one or three days. We organized learning expeditions around topics such as the collaborative economy, new places for entrepreneurship and innovation, future of work, artistic innovations. All were an opportunity to explore and make visible new work practices in the context of a specific city and territory.

All OWEEs follow four criteria (de Vaujany and Vitaud, 2017).

First, they are opened to various sets of stakeholders: academics, entrepreneurs, managers, artists, activists, students and politicians. The event is expected to foster collaborations between and beyond the group. There is no selection process. It is a 'first-come-first-served' event. People can register for free via Eventbrite where they can download their ticket. The community manager is in charge of collecting

subscriptions. The event is shared in various networks; this increases our likelihood to attract diverse communities.

Second, the expedition is walked. Participants do not use a car or a bus, but mainly walk between each site (or sometimes use public transportations together). Walking through public or semi-public spaces is expected to create more ties between walkers and to be more performative for those following this iconography through social media (e.g. the tweets and the pictures they contain).

Third, OWEE is event-based in the sense that it is designed in such a way that it creates a curiosity, the sensation that things will be partly unpredictable. Anything, planned or not, is likely to happen. Fragility is felt off site and on line, and reinforced by the openness of the event.

Fourth, OWEE is a work in progress method. Bricolage and improvisations are authorized during events, both about the method itself and the content of the expedition. One third of the program is empty and will be filled and co-produced by participants themselves in the flow of the walk. Through emails, phone calls to friends, etc., participants generate new ideas, suggest new places to visit at the last minute ... which is also a great way to produce collaborations.

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## 3. KEY STAKES OF THE OWEE EXPERIMENTATION

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Beyond self-reflexive protocols presented in the first section and then the OWEE design, what is our scientific contribution?

We would like to produce both new temporalities and new temporal structures for research practices, i.e. the co-production of knowledge by academics, entrepreneurs, managers, activists, students and artists over one to three days. We believe it is likely to be the repetition and connection of events that may lead to a transformation of the research field itself.

From the perspective of participants (mainly), OWEE, its reflexivity and narrative phases could become a broad meta-narrative. The co-designed method itself could be strengthened by becoming a 'common' (Ostrom and Hess, 2007).

Citizen science and open science are major social movements today. All citizens can become researchers or can contribute to scientific explorations. Science, whatever the field (economics, management, organization studies,

anthropology, chemistry, history, computer science...), is all the more likely to be at the heart of the city and to serve truly the city as it becomes physically open to it. Science is more likely to be part of all social, economic, technological and political movements as it also becomes a movement (in all senses we can give to this idea) itself.

We believe that OWEE, among many other initiatives, is likely to become one of these movements. But moving for the sake of it is not enough. It needs to be part of a broader, powerful narration and set of narrations. Let's work together on it...

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## Chapter 1.3: A détour towards situationism: what can OWEE learn from the French “dérive”?

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This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section.

The “dérive” can be translated in English as “drift”. It has been originally put forward by Guy Debord, who was a member of the Letterist International, in the context of his “Théorie de la dérive” that was formalized in the late 50s. Debord defined dérive as “a mode of experimental behavior linked to the conditions of urban society: a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances.” Dérive is fully improvised; it is an unplanned, walked journey through an urban landscape. Still according to Debord, the maximum number of participants is three, which makes it possible to keep the integrity of the group in the process of improvisation. Through “dérive”, participants are expected to suspend their everyday relations and “let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there”. Dérive aims at studying the “psychogeography” of the city (the lived experience of the city) and emotional disorientation. Debord believed that the process could lead to the potential creation of Situations.

Open Walked Event Based Experimentations (OWEE) share with the notion of dérive a sense of improvisation, drift, bricolage. Going adrift in the urban landscape is also expected to produce a different experience of the city and of some of its visible and invisible dimensions (in particular about new work practices). During our last learning expedition in Boston (#hackingday2018), two thirds of our visits and encounters were improvised in the flow of our questions and discussions. Following new questions, new aspects we wanted to explore further, we sent emails, tweets, gave phone calls in the flow of our walk.

As for “dérive”, crossed discussions in small groups are also an important part of the process that often results in co-produced traces (articles, posts, Framapads, exhibitions of pictures, seminars...). Clearly, “dérive” techniques related to this issue could be explored further (in particular artistic techniques) to get lost differently in the space of the city.

Nonetheless, OWEE departs from dérive on several key dimensions. It is not fully improvised. Part of the program is pre-defined, which gives some matter and direction (in all sense of the term) to our event. Only one part of the program is fully improvised. Then, our events have, so far, included between 3 and 67 participants. Even if we often divided big groups into smaller ones, we are far from Debord's philosophy. The idea is also to produce collaborations and common worlds between participants and the world they bring with them in the flow of the walk. Social media are also another key aspect that adds another dimension in the dérive. Dérive is often extended on line. Virtual participants can walk and go adrift with us. Walkers can go adrift both in the flow of the walk and on line with their smartphone.

But at the end, both OWEE and dérive share a strong belief. Encounters, true encounters, alterity, felt solidarity and Ricoeurian instants are at the heart of the protocol. And they will be all the more relevant as they stress the invisible entry points, boundaries, gate-keepers, hidden practices and fragilities at the heart of the space of the city and our walked narrative.

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## Chapter 1.4: OWEE: From walking in common to walking as a commons

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This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section.

The **OWEE research method**, always under construction (having Levi-Strauss's spirit of 'bricolage' at its core), is directly inspired by the values and practices of the places we study (makerspaces, hackerspaces, FabLabs, coworking spaces, etc.). What we observe as researchers (collaborative practices, spaces, communities and movements) tends to influence how we conduct research.

As stated on our **website**, "RGCS is inspired by makers and open science movements. The culture of DIY, open knowledge and doocracy are at the heart of its values". So it's not a surprise that the OWEE research method puts an emphasis on 'Openness' and 'Experimentation'. What could be a better way to create knowledge than to experiment (a concept, a method, a tool, or whatever artefact a human mind can figure out – the trial and error process may be used indifferently in a mind or in a lab)? Doing it in a collaborative way implies openness.

Openness is a practical way of creating valid knowledge according to **Popper's empirical falsification principle** (Popper, 2002). Besides, knowledge increases by being shared. This idea underlies the diffusion of scientific knowledge since the publication (both in 1665) of the first scientific journals in France (Journal des savants) and in England (Philosophical transactions of the royal society).

The openness in science is mirrored in collaborative spaces, which have inherited the collaborative DNA of the Web. « To manage the complexity of the technological landscape, hackers [programmers] turn to fellow hackers [programmers] (along with manuals, books, mailing lists, documentation, and search engines) for constant information, guidance, and help. » (Coleman, 2012, p.

107). In the mid-1980s, Richard Stallman, a programmer at MIT, initiated the free/libre movement, arguing that the digital properties of software (easy copying and distribution) make it possible to treat it as a public good.

What we have observed in our learning expeditions is people's willingness to understand knowledge (scientific knowledge of course but also practical – 'bricolage – or **artistic one**) as a public good meant to be shared in order to benefit to the community.

The famous **Budapest Open Access Initiative** explains (in 2002) precisely what is at stakes: "An old tradition and a new technology have converged to make possible an unprecedented public good. The old tradition is the willingness of scientists and scholars to publish the fruits of their research in scholarly journals without payment, for the sake of inquiry and knowledge. The new technology is the internet. The public good they make possible is the world-wide electronic distribution of the peer-reviewed journal literature and completely free and unrestricted access to it by all scientists, scholars, teachers, students, and other curious minds. Removing access barriers to this literature will accelerate research, enrich education, share the learning of the rich with the poor and the poor with the rich, make this literature as useful as it can be, and lay the foundation for uniting humanity in a common intellectual conversation and quest for knowledge."

On the one hand, knowledge is a public good easily shared thanks to the Web. On the other hand, a **'second enclosure movement'** is threatening this public good (hence changing the nature of this 'good' to become a 'common-pool-resource' following Elinor Ostrom's concept).

## 1. KNOWLEDGE AS A COMMON-POOL-RESOURCE

What is a common-pool-resource (CPR) according to Elinor Ostrom, the 2009 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences? A common-pool-resource is (originally) a natural resource that requires collective management (Ostrom, 1990) or else risks facing “the tragedy of the commons” (Hardin, 1968) – that is to say, excessive exploitation of a common good (e.g., fish stock) for private purposes according to the well-known logic of the **free rider** (Olson, 1965).

Understanding properly the CPR idea requires a classification of economic goods, undertaken by Samuelson (1954), according to two criteria:

Exclusion, which gauges the alternately public or private character of a good by asking: can one easily exclude certain individuals from the use of this good or not?

Rivalry (or subtractability), which indicates the degree of a good's availability in relation to its use by asking: does the personal use of a good deprive others of its use?

The intersection of these two criteria results in the following table (**see table 3**).

Useful knowledge, which is at first a public good, is threatened of subtractability. To be more precise useful knowledge is threatened in three ways:

- Information overload (too much information to deal with);
- Knowledge enclosure (intellectual property: patent, copyrights);
- **Orwell's Doublethink** (fake news or alternative facts).

So knowledge is, now, much more a common-pool-resource than a public good.

		SUBTRACTABILITY	
		Low	High
EXCLUSION	Difficult	<b>Public goods</b> Useful knowledge Sunsets	<b>Common-pool resources</b> Libraries Irrigation systems
	Easy	<b>Toll or club goods</b> Journal subscriptions Day-care centers	<b>Private goods</b> Personal computers Doughnuts

TABLE 3 : TYPE OF GOODS (SOURCE: HESS & OSTROM, 2011, P.9)

## 2. OWEE: A COMMUNITY MEANT TO PRODUCE KNOWLEDGE

The OWEE research method is aimed at producing open access knowledge (Suber, 2012). To do so we rely upon collaboration (of researchers, makers, citizens, students, etc.). Walking in common according to the OWEE research method is a good way to create a community: **“[We] are opened to various sets of stakeholders: academics, entrepreneurs, managers, artists, activists, students and politicians. The event is**

**expected to foster collaborations between and beyond the group**”. The community is both **physical** (people engaged in the walk) and **digital** (people following our live tweet, people taking notes on Framapad, etc.).

We understand the word “community” according to its Indo-European roots (see Benveniste, 1969), COMMUNIS: who has

reciprocal obligations. An OWEE seeks reciprocity (in the knowledge creation process of course but more basically in the open mindedness, respect, benevolence, that underlie our research and **teaching practices**). Reciprocity is an organized process. So while creating a community, we build rules (formal and informal), we build an institutional arrangement that achieves coordination. That arrangement is not as familiar as the Market or the State. It's a COMMONS. With this institutional arrangement, we move from walking in common to walking as a commons. How so?

A central point in the works of Elinor Ostrom is to demonstrate that the common-pool-

resources are resources subject to social dilemmas, in other words the risk of the disappearance of the resource (by overexploitation). In order to address this risk, one must organize oneself. It is important to underscore that a common-pool resource only becomes a commons once a communal management of the resource has been put into place. A commons, thus, must be governed. Conversely, a common-pool-resource can exist without implying communal governance (the climate is a common-pool-resource but not a commons). By extension, a public good governed communally becomes a commons, as is the case of Wikipedia or Linux, both of which are knowledge commons.

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### 3. WHERE IS THE OWEE COMMONS?

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It is not easy to see the OWEE commons at first glance because commons are deeply contextual. According to **David Bollier**: "Each commons has its own distinctive character because each is shaped by its particular location, history, culture and social practices. So, it can be hard for the newcomer to see the patterns of "commoning" (Bollier, D., & Helfrich, S., 2014) The term commoning suggests that the commons is really more of a verb than a noun. It is a set of ongoing practices and not an inert physical resource. "There is no commons without communing".

So, the OWEE commons can be seen through a set of practices. Empirical studies on the governance of common-pool-resources (CPR) have allowed for the establishment of design principles that facilitate the perpetuation of communal governance (and thus enable the protection of common-pool-resources). These principles do not automatically imply the success of communal governance but they have been found to be present in all instances of success. The principles are as follows (Ostrom, 1990, pp.90-102):

#	OSTROM'S PRINCIPLES (1990, PP.90-102)	IMPLEMENTATION IN OWEE
1	The limits of the common good are clearly defined; the access rights to the common good are clear	For each OWEE we specify (usually on Eventbrite): ○ how people can join us and what we intend to do (boundary rules); ○ who is acting as a guide, who is taking notes, etc. (position rules)
2	The rules governing the use of the common good are adapted to local needs and conditions	The purpose of the OWEE is to produce open access knowledge, hence the distribution of this knowledge through social media, a website (RGCS blog and live area) and open access publications (RGCS White Papers)
3	A system allowing individuals to participate in the definition and modification of these rules on a regular basis has been established	The OWEE method is discussed after each event (with participants and online); modifications of the method are published on the RGCS website. A group on slack is devoted to OWEE.
4	A system for community members to self-check their behaviors has been established	The rules in use during each OWEE are defined when needed (for example being silent while visiting a place where people are working). A basic rule is reciprocity, or the <b>Golden Rule</b> (tweet others as you would wish to be tweeted): contribute to Framapad, to the live tweet, retweet, etc.
5	A graduated system of sanctions for those who violate the community's rules is provided for	The case has not been encountered yet; let's say that a call to order would suffice (exclusion should be the ultimate sanction).
6	An inexpensive conflict resolution system is available to community members	Our first choice for the moment: DISCUSSION.
7	The community's right to define its own rules of operation is recognized by external authorities	This right has not been questioned yet.
8	When applicable (such as for a common good that exists across borders or a common good assigned to a range of territorial levels), the organization of decision-making can be established at several levels while respecting the rules set out above	RGCS is a very decentralized network and OWEE events are organized all over the world.

TABLE 4 : OSTROM'S DESIGN PRINCIPLES IMPLEMENTED IN THE OWEE METHOD

So, walking as a commons is for us to produce collaborative knowledge (mainly scientific but not only), with an experimental and experiential method and to share broadly (following the open access philosophy) both the outcomes of

the research and the method used. It's a way to organize ourselves relying upon reciprocity, trust and individual responsibility, following the example of many collaborative spaces. Commons is a very **performative concept**: using it

(intellectually) leads to practicing it. And with the practice comes a new world of organizational experiments, social

interactions, political institutions and research fields.

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## Chapter 1.5: The city: Re-introducing streets and public spaces in research practices

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Research has transformed the street and public spaces into **research objects** (see e.g. Bundy, 1987; Voyce, 2006; Weisburd et al, 2004), but what about making them (again?) **a research practice?**

Researchers and intellectuals are part of a seated, closed, indoor and covered world. Most academic events, in particular in social sciences and humanities, take place in hotels, conference centers or university seminar rooms. For academic gatherings such as conferences or workshops, public spaces are just week-end stories (after a Thursday and Friday focused on the event itself), part of a short walk for a social event or a touristic exploration of the city before coming back at home.

Research practices of social scientists, e.g. management and organization studies scholars, remain focused on well-defined organizational phenomena, and are communicated in well-defined contexts (conferences) and in established media (scientific journals) after the research, once it is stabilized. Indoor environments thus pervade research practices in social sciences and humanities. Numerous reasons can be invoked for this: protection against capricious weather, search for serenity, conference fees (we then pay to 'access' or even 'possess' something), concern for participants' security, logic of insurance, need for facilities (e.g. using a video projector, a microphone, being seated...)... And presenting research in public spaces is not at all an obvious thing. What could be meant by that? What would it change or add to traditional ways of producing, sharing and communicating research?

Since the beginning of the learning expeditions and collective walks organized by the **Research Group on Collaborative Spaces** (RGCS), we have had the opportunity numerous times to walk our

research, to chat 'outside' and 'on' our research objects. Walking in new work places such as coworking spaces, makerspaces, biohackerspaces, fablabs... generate different kinds of discussions. Walking between the places of each visit also generates numerous opportunities to feel the context, districts, areas and connectivity of the place. It is a way to feel the narrative around it and to comment on it together. Sometimes, we have also improvised breaks in gardens, public squares, public spaces... This created a particular atmosphere far from traditional academics or practitioners' meetings. We could be interrupted, entertained, disrupted by many things around us. This fragility changed the narrative we produced for ourselves and those following us, from a distance, on social media. Obviously, we were 'in' the world we were commenting, connected to it. The performativity of such an experience was different from the context of the traditional, controlled, seated world of the meeting room, the convention center, the seminar room.

Gestures, walk, movements and speeches take another dimension in public spaces. They can be seen and heard by people beyond the interaction. They can be interrupted by people and things beyond the immediate stage of the presentation or discussion. People can move from one place to another, which means the explicit emergence of a new context in the flow of the discussion. As they are 'out', they can be located in places other people know, could join, have been... Diffused on social media, such places are thus likely to involve other people. These virtual participants have been, will be or could be there. Public spaces can thus be powerful contexts for different practices of sharing and communication of knowledge. If the experience of the public space combines a variety of people (academics,



entrepreneurs, journalists, activists, students...), it can then foster fluid mixed conversations and collaborations. These possibilities can be leveraged and activated by specific community management techniques (see Open Walked Event-Based Experimentations, [OWEE](#)).

**Nonetheless, public spaces are also and obviously the context of class struggles, economic inequalities and property fights.**

The history of [jaywalking](#) in the US and in many other countries clearly epitomizes this. If till the early 20th century, streets have often been common places, everybody's places, the car manufacturing lobby has made it partly ways for cars and car drivers. Likewise, public spaces (e.g. streets but also squares, beaches, public gardens...) can be controlled and dominated by various groups: men, gangs, marketing corporations, bourgeois... But public spaces open the possibility for shared experiences of these dominations and

violence. The performativity of the place can be shown obviously, visibly, and in an embodied way. Walking in the Haussmannian parts of Paris can make obvious the bourgeois stage they are. Walking close to the façade, on the large pavements, in the second empire decorum, can be shared and pushed forward by a collective experience. The "[Dérive](#)" described by Guy Debord (1956) is a way among others to feel and comments the different areas and atmospheres of a city.

What about including more the street and the experience of the street in researchers' experience and collaborations? Likewise, what about including urban walks in managers, entrepreneurs, activists, artists, students' experience of the city? Maybe it is time to open science literally, physically, to the atmosphere and movements of the city. Maybe it is time to transform the city, its actors, flows, spaces, places, times, into partners of our research.

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## **PART I: WHAT IS OWEE?**

The OWEE philosophy



## **PART II: LIVING OWEE EXPERIENCE**

Collaborating and Co-designing the narrative

“ Sache-le donc, toute création vraie n'est point préjugé sur l'avenir, poursuite de chimère et utopie, mais visage nouveau lu dans le présent, lequel est réserve de matériaux en vrac reçus en héritage, et dont il ne s'agit pour toi ni de te réjouir ni de te plaindre, car simplement comme toi, ils sont, ayant pris naissance. ”

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Citadelle

## PART II: LIVING OWEE EXPERIENCE. COLLABORATING AND CO-DESIGNING THE NARRATIVE

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### Chapter 2.1: Designing serendipity: walk in progress

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In the context of one **Open Walked Event Based Experimentations** (OWEE), Nicolas and I were in charge of organizing a learning expedition in Paris about **Street Art**. Most OWEE and past learning expeditions organized by RGCS so far have been organized as a set of visits. We thus walked between places and indoor times. Our idea here was to spend all of our time in public spaces, and to discover, collectively with participants, streets, public walls, gardens and places open to the public. Nicolas and I were neither street art nor art history experts. Although we realized very quickly that organizing a tour about something that is short-lived is complicated and risky, we tried to figure out what could be our role during the tour. We had two strong assets to organize this walk: our institution is based in one of the most important scenes for Street Art in France, the XIII<sup>th</sup> arrondissement of Paris, and we had an initial network that could help. Thus, we named ourselves 'facilitators', helping the group to learn more about street art through different points of view. We decided to divide our OWEE into three stages.

The first stage involved identification of actors. Nicolas got in touch with a good friend elected at the XIII arrondissement city council. Very quickly, the mayor himself answered positively to our call and invited us for breakfast. A visit of the city council would give to participants the elective representatives' point of view. In

partnership with a gallerist, they ordered several pieces to promote a positive image to citizens. On my side, I got in touch with several artists I knew. Despite their interest for the walk, most of them were traveling abroad at that time. So I visited **Urbacolors**, and interactive maps, picked up names of artist working in the XIII and contacted them via Facebook Messenger. Two days later, Lor-K called me. She makes sculptures with rubbish and was really interested in bringing up her critical vision of street art, so did I! She would explain to the participants how she meanders in the city to find the correct place.

The second stage involved "spotting". Once we had our contacts for guiding participants in the street art world, we had to design the walk. To make sure participants could enjoy some street arts between the city council and Lor-K projects, we decided to go and have a look ourselves. We did a first spotting together in bicycle. It helped us to familiarize ourselves with the area, and to look at practical things such as quiet places to discuss and where to have lunch. Nicolas went for a walk and spotting of the places alone one day before as he guides the group. This walk was an opportunity both to consider all possible trajectories of route and to think about the street art works that can be presented, the spaces and times of sharing. It was also a step to enrich the network. Indeed, Nicolas took the initiative



to go meet Mehdi Ben Sheikh, the head of the itinérance gallery, which is a key actor of street art in the 13th arrondissement. He was immediately excited by the project and opened to help us. He proposed to welcome us in the gallery and to present

himself the philosophy of his approach of production and accompaniment of artists. It was also a stage to discuss on issues of the institutionalization of street art and the role of the gallery owner in this process.



PICTURE 3: MAP AND SHORT WALK TO SPOT THE PLACES THAT WOULD BE AT THE HEART OF OUR LEARNING EXPEDITION (SOURCE: AUTHORS' OWN)

The last stage involved the management of serendipity. Like most plans, nothing happened as planned and this is truly what is expected from OWEE process!

On D-day, we had many good or (rarely) bad surprises. We had planned milestones but we left a lot of room for improvisation. From the City hall to the gallery we let ourselves be carried away by unexpected discoveries of art works on the street or places like the Frigos, by the people we met (Lor-K, Bamba, Emmanuel, the Frigos member, people in the street), by the anecdotes that have generated questions and reactions. This serendipitous process was particularly enjoyable. We had to adapt to the climatic conditions (by looking for a covered space) to the physical conditions (by looking for a café where to settle and debrief) to the opportunities related to the meetings in particular in the Frigos.

We also rethought the trajectories of our travels both to meet the constraints of timing but also to maintain an openness to the opportunity of a discovery such as taking the tube to discover the frescoes in height and find more quickly one of the artists with whom we had an appointment.

The group set up on Whatsapp and occasional phone calls to participants allowed to manage flexibly the constraints of time and place that appeared on the way. The adaptation of the role of the guide was also important to accompany the different phases of the OWEE: first a leadership role to move the group in motion towards the first landmarks (physical and intellectual); then, a role of facilitator to create link with the various stakeholders; lastly, a more elusive role to keep a space for improvisation and autonomy of the participants.

## Chapter 2.2: Managing Indoor and Outdoor Times in Learning Expeditions

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This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section.

This summer, walking has been a trendy topic in French bookstores. Presented either as a healthy practice, an opportunity for true, reflexive loneliness, a possibility to explore a territory, a new managerial approach or as a political engagement, walk is an embodied practice at the heart of numerous trends and fashions today. Indeed, it is a very old practice. **Aristotle** taught philosophy while walking in the Lyceum of ancient Athens. Beyond the peripatetic school, **situationists** (with the practice of '**drifting**') or revolutionaries (through walk as a protest) have all settled practice as a movement with possible political connotations.

Walk is also an experience. Moving from one place to another (see vignette below) without thinking about it, there is something lived in-between. Walking as a group of researchers outside the university walls is an intriguing, liminal experience. For academics (and probably entrepreneurs...), experimenting the indoor

world is much more common than the outdoor one. We cross, move, see public spaces, but we rarely do something for and in them.

When we began the Open Walked Event-Based Experimentations (OWEE) adventure, we were not aware of the novelty (in particular for many researchers) of such a practice of walked conversations and events taking place in inner courts, streets, gardens or public squares. What is more striking is that we did not plan to walk in-between two places for academic purposes. It was the easiest way to reach the next destination for an association with no resources. Now, walked conversations including citizens, entrepreneurs, artists, students, academics and activists have become our flagship, as a 'do' tank (RGCS). More and more, we believe that the practice of walking has implications both for research, teaching and the political relevance of any knowledge co-produced by a community.

### Walk as a shared and diverse experience

Walking does not boil down to *putting one foot after the other*. As reminded by the French poet Baudelaire with his vision of *flânerie* or by Leroi-Gourhan in his anthropological account of hominids who became human when stood on their feet, walk is a central experience in our lives. However, it would be a mistake to believe that there is a normality or normal state or process of walking epitomized by so-called 'healthy people'. Walking in our perspective is not incompatible with wheelchairs, disabilities and drifts. It is both the most shared and the most diverse experience.

## 1. OWEE (OPEN WALKED EVENT-BASED EXPERIMENTATIONS) IN PRACTICE: A COUPLE OF ASTONISHMENTS

Since our first event in Berlin in July 2016, our network has organized numerous learning expeditions and field trips all over the world. We want to come back here to the live, hot,

'in the event' community management of our walk and discussions.

First of all, what we find striking is a size effect. We have had the opportunity to manage very small (2) and very big (67)



groups of people in the context of our learning expeditions. Managing a group of three or five people makes improvisation and drifting (derive) much easier. Community managers and participants can improvise visits and people encountered in the flow of their questions and their discussions. The bigger the group, the more likely it is to stick to the program (e.g. to make coordination more effective). It appears more manageable to co-produce the program within small groups, even if when we are big groups, the group can split spontaneously and re-assemble at some point.

Then, the process of walking has been full of interesting micro-observations and micro-experimentations. Stopping something and doing a break has often been a way to re-constitute the group and the collective conversation. Walking the conversation, in particular after something likely to be commented (a visit), made it also often more fluid. But again, a good community management requires to pay attention to the sub-groups likely to emerge and re-emerge and to arrange stops, games, open conversations... likely to break them.

In line with this concern, the use of (crowded) public transportations has also often been particularly useful. First, one can avoid all day long someone, but once in a crowded tramway or metro, you are pushed and can be close (or closer) to someone you wanted to avoid. Then, a social convention is activated. You cannot spend 20 minutes in silence with someone you know and will spend other hours or days with. You feel you have to say something. Second, walking is a tiring activity and people needs to rest regularly to avoid tiredness which increases negative emotions and risks of conflicts. Moment of meals are also an important part of the schedule in order to not lose people or split the group at wrong times.

Interestingly we also noticed that outdoor parts of our events were **performative** precisely because of an in and out set of movements. Just walking continuously outdoor does not necessary create something for those in the group or those

following us from far. This is the movement and tempo and narrative of this movement that can bring a particular performativity and narrativity. In the case of the social movement called **Nuits Debouts** in France, public gatherings at the place de la République in Paris were performative because people kept 'coming back'. Because we felt that these people had an 'house', were 'in' a couple of hours or days before. Because they could or should be somewhere. Because the length of their stay here, the duration of the narrative, was a way to show their determination.

But it is also important to specify that OWEEs walks and conversations are always extended by means of online social networks. Some people follow us. They walk symbolically with us. They interact with the group and the people encountered and wrapped (e.g. through mentions of Twitter) in the online narrative. After our events, the use of posts, articles and videos is also a way to extend in time and space a narration which will be put in the loop of future events and their live tweets and onsite narration.

With more or less success, our learning expeditions try to include a high variety of people: academics, entrepreneurs, artists, activists, public policy managers, journalists, slashers, students, workers, etc. This unusual situation (some people do not understand that they will join such a heterogeneous group) sets up great opportunities for fluid conversations and collaborations. It is interesting to see that behind job status, we are all made of flesh, something a long walk makes obvious.

As an ongoing protocol, all OWEEs are different from the others and give new insights for enhancing the protocol. A year ago, we were trying to write a guide for a walked community management (an "OWEE box"). We listed numerous mandatory requirements, such as duration of the OWEE or tools to use to collect data. Now, on the contrary, we encourage micro-experimentations, such as enhancing the **improvisation part** of the learning expedition or the use of camera to **interview participants** and passersby.

## 2. EIGHT PRACTICES IN OUR WALKED COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

Beyond the diversity of our events, we identified in our notes a set of particular practices community managers are likely to enact in the context of an OWEE-based learning expedition (**see Table 5 below**). This analysis is based in particular on our

learning expeditions in Berlin (July, 2016), Tokyo (July, 2017), Paris (March, June, 2018) and Boston (July, 2018), which we had the opportunity to animate together or separately.

PRACTICE OF WALKED COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT	DESCRIPTION	LIMITATIONS
<b>Practice 1: Assembling and re-assembling the group</b>	Bringing a visible dressing and/or artifact. Keeping a visibility on the street. Identifying representatives of sub-groups.	Guiding and re-assembling can also break the fluidity and openness of the conversation. It can also be at the opposite of a spirit of improvisation.
<b>Practice 2: Dissolving or connecting sub-groups</b>	Arranging stops, breaks, jokes, provocations, to make the conversation as open and fluid as possible.	Some people just want to be alone. The presence of sub-groups can also be important for the creative activity that will take place on site or indoor.
<b>Practice 3: Maintaining a sense of openness and improvisation</b>	Not coming with a paper-based version of the program. Showing that things can be changed from the beginning, as quickly as possible.	Some people left the group because they interpreted this as a lack of direction or leadership.
<b>Practice 4: Directing to next stops and public transportations</b>	Using entry processes in metro, buses, and tramways, the process of buying tickets, as a 'shaker' and key time for the discussions about what could be done next.	Some people have their own bike or have a precise idea of the way we should follow.
<b>Practice 5: Extending the walk online</b>	Using Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Blogs, Framapads and other tools to comment, reflect and share the dynamic of the walk. Including the live experience into a broader narrative (doing a temporal work, see Kaplan and Orlikowski, 2013).	Some people do not want to appear online, on pictures tweeted. This practice can also foster a very artificial way of behaving. Good not to tweet all the time.
<b>Practice 6: Coordinating the walk among participants</b>	Finding a way to coordinate the walk. Include two key issues: people can get lost, some people may need to come in and out during the event and may need to find the group again. Some people just want to share things between the group... and not on Twitter.	At some point, a WhatsApp group can be so successful that people will not share anymore things on social media.

<p><b>Practice 7: Encouraging initiatives and spontaneous experimentations</b></p>	<p>Listening to suggestions or negative impressions. Looking closely at every participant and wondering when one stays alone if it is a need of loneliness or someone who is waiting for something else and who could lead his/her idea as another micro-experimentation.</p>	<p>Guiding a group with a partially organized program is a challenge but allowing people to change everything in it, even the organized part can cripple the guide.</p>
<p><b>Practice 8: Being a catalyst (Brafman &amp; Beckstrom, 2006)</b></p>	<p>Putting one's ego aside to enhance participants' initiative. Listening to one's life story. Mapping skills and needs among the group. Trying to help everyone with answers, new questions or connections with someone who could help. Being trustful and honest when previous engagements cannot be kept. Accelerating and catalyzing interesting trends ongoing trends in the group more than trying to impulse things all the time.</p>	<p>It can be frustrating for the organizer not to act as a leader but as a catalyst (the one who closes the walk, not the one leading it). Questions like "what will we do next?" or "where do we go?" must not be answered as a tourist guide but merely as a fellow walker: "I don't know, what do you think?".</p>

TABLE 5 : EIGHT PRACTICES IN OUR WALKED COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

Embodiment is at the heart of a walked community management. Gestures, postures, rhythms of the walk by the community manager, all contribute to make the learning expedition expressive for

all those walking or joining far in time and space the conversation. And the eight practices we have stressed engage bodies, corporeity and intercorporeity (Merleau-Ponty, 1945) in the process of walking.

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## Chapter 2.3: Academia in the Mirror of Street Art: Back to a Recent Walk in Paris

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This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section and also by The Conversation (<https://theconversation.com/academia-in-the-mirror-of-street-art-back-to-a-recent-walk-in-paris-100232>).

This was a rainy day in Paris. On June 14<sup>th</sup>, an alternative academic network (**RGCS**) organised a great learning expedition about street art in the 13<sup>th</sup> district ("arrondissement") of Paris. This **Open Walked Event-Based Experimentation** (OWEE) was an opportunity to mix academics with entrepreneurs and street artists. A group of 20 people thus walked in the grey and cold streets of Paris this day.

The context helped us to realize how colourful and warm street art can be!

We started with a meeting point and a first discussion at the town hall of the 13<sup>th</sup> arrondissement. The deputy mayor explained us the history and context of street art here. We then walked around from one point to another (see the hashtag #oweesa and our **album**) before the final destination at **les Frigos**.

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### 1. THE STREET AS ART

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In this article, I want to focus on an encounter which took place during this expedition, one of this moment where something happens, where and when we are obviously here, in the situation. It was the planned encounter of the street artist **Lor-K** in an inner court. We were all seated here, in the cold. Actually, it was raining. Lor-K, a young woman Parisian street artist, stood in front of us, with a cardboard next to her. I will never know what it was for. Suddenly, all the meaning of an OWEE became obvious to me. The possible "mirror effect" for researchers was there.

We are animals of the inside! We are mainly seated, covered, protected, involved in ritualistic environments such as meetings, seminars, courses, PhD defenses, data collection... Here, I felt clearly outside, with someone looking at my "inside". My all world is an "inside", made of activities defining the inside from the outside, and

staying in the inside. Lor-K recycles waste and rubbish on site. Her whole world is made of what the inside does not need anymore. She stays courageously on the street, works on the street, includes art in and on street, not from the street or the horizon. She creates beauty in an unexpected way and makes rubbishes nice in an ephemeral way.

Here comes another key temporal difference: I spend the bulk of my time trying to build things made to last, or rather, that I expect will last a little bit. She told us that she never sells her art. She wants to keep the integrity of it. She sells narratives about her work: pictures in exhibitions, books, articles, activities on social media. She creates continuity and durability with the narrative itself. On my side, I realise I keep settling ephemerality and discontinuity with my individual and collective narratives...



PICTURE 4: PARIS STREET; RAINY DAY, BY GUSTAVE CALLEBOTTE (1877). FLICKR

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## 2. ALONE TOGETHER

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Lastly, Lor-K told us about her loneliness. Her purposeful, chosen loneliness. She preferred to work alone, it's more effective. At least for the concrete part (maybe not for the narrative part...). She was alone in the middle of us. She is alone in the middle of the city. Street artists are "alone together", like entrepreneurs, and maybe also like many academics. This is not my case with RGCS and all these great people interested in alternative things. I think precisely that the whole OWEE narrative is about breaking the numerous waves that fragment academia, and to produce (with numerous other initiatives) more synchronicity and duration for our work. This is about re-creating powerful collective narratives for academia, shared collective narratives

likely to be more transformative and relevant for the City.

But at some point, the place was so cold. I was happy to come back to my indoor, bounding world. At least for a moment.

Just a last thought before coming back to my safe, protected world. **OWEE** is about alternating, encountering, walking, narrating and reflecting. Third-places and collaborative spaces are beautiful levers and contexts to create discontinuities. But I realize more and more that street art, art at large, and all the aesthetic, cultural and historical places of the city I'm not used to cross, can play the same role.

To be continued...



## Chapter 2.4: What a Difference a Walk Makes? The Impact of Walk and Embodiment in Reflexive Collaboration and Creativity

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This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section.

In the few months we have been experimenting the type of learning expedition we call **OWEE**, there has been a set of features we observed when a group

of people is moving – and walking – together in order to observe, analyze, ponder and reflect upon a set of places or human activities.

### 1. DIFFERENT CONFIGURATIONS OF THE REFLEXIVE WALKERS IN OWEE

#### 1.1. THE SWARM

The group gives power and a sense of purpose in any human activity. In OWEE events, there is a certain sense of elation seeing a mass of people engaged into the same analytical activity, all mobilized around a trajectory, and aggregating into a swarm behavior. Like in a swarm, local simple rules allow the aggregation and combined movement of participants: follow someone, listen to someone if you can, keep reasonable proximity, take

pictures, talk to your neighbours, look around and walk. OWEE groups differ from guided tours (only one person talks and the group follows the leader) or delegation visits (selected group, controlled access to specific places), though it might look like it from time to time. What differs is the swarming behaviour: there is no central authority, no one is the leader, trajectory might evolve, participants are not quite controllable but still self-coordinated.

#### 1.2. THE PACK (AS IN A WOLF PACK)

The OWEE group can also display the behaviour of a pack, where the group will benefit from the specific behaviours of a few members who might dare doing things others might not feel allowed to. A "leader", "deviant", "alpha" or just "diplomat" researcher will give access to a specific setting or to new informants and the whole group can immediately benefit from it. These boundary crossing roles are often distributed in a group and different participants will become the "alpha" in different situations and at different times. The OWEE protocol gives instant access to a sort of behavioral capital spread across the participants and it helps accessing unpredicted and unpredictable resources and people. In other words, "curiosity feeds the cats".

In London (January 2018), we visited **Containerville**, and could walk around the

area but only from the outside of the offices. We could see that in one of the containers a business meeting was occurring. Two participants dared interrupting them and asked them about their experience of the area. The rest of the group rushed to listen to their testimony.

During the Paris StreetArt OWEE (June 2018), a sub group wandered through the labyrinthic corridors of **the Frigo**. It was a purely improvised visit, we were expected by no one and knew no one. On two occasions we literally intruded into the working spaces of two tenants, led by a researcher with a video camera. We were not necessarily welcome but we could engage with them nevertheless, and though we were scolded for intruding in such a way, we spent an extra hour there and discovered a whole new dimension of the history of the space.



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## 2. ACCESS, SOCIALIZATION AND PARALLEL PROCESSING

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### 2.1. POWER AND SOCIALITY

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Walking in a group/swarm/pack has a few consequences. First, it gives participants legitimacy to access places they might not have entered as individuals, and sometimes even in a slightly forceful way. When 20 or 30 people arrive unannounced in a site, doors often open even for a few minutes. When the group is announced in advance, we often meet well informed and networked actors who bring higher quality insights. Second, the group/swarm/pack re-socializes the research activity. Talking together for a long time, to different people, in different places reconnects participants to the social dimension of the inquiry. They connect across organizational and occupational boundaries, compare feelings and experiences, and engage in

on-the-spot dialectic analysis. In other words, OWEE becomes a mobile third place (close to the original meaning of the term by Ray Oldenburg) for research on collaborative and creative spaces, hanging out for the pleasure of good company and lively conversation.

Finally, the group also generates external attention and curiosity, from time to time. In a few instances, complete strangers joined the group or engaged into the same activities. The open philosophy of the expedition allows and also welcomes such improbable meetings that are the heart of the idea of reconnecting to the environment and social fabric of places and spaces.

### 2.2. PARALLEL AND REDUNDANT PROCESSING

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In the OWEE protocols, we observe parallel processing of information. We see quite many people taking pictures of the same areas and talking about the same places. The sheer mass of people engaged in the activity is increasing quite a lot the diversity of experiences and therefore extends the quality of reflections about the places. In London we visited a locally celebrated site of "Brutalist" architecture and many conversations pointed out how much this was similar to buildings around the world, from Helsinki to downtown Montreal and how the representation and images of such landscapes differed. The group brings a diversity of experiences that can be shared instantly.

Parallel processing means also the production of a lot of redundant information. It struck me that people do mostly take the same pictures from mainly the same point of view. In the London expedition when we went to visit the rooftop of the Village Underground <http://www.villageunderground.co.uk/about/&gt;> most of us took and published on the social media the same pictures with the same perspectives. As such it is interesting to see that we do share a common visual culture of space, but we might think about how to interpret it and leverage these redundant observations for further analysis.

### 2.3. PONDERING AND REFLECTING

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Walkers stop from time to time. Physical limitations of the human body make seating together a de facto compulsory activity, considering the expedition might last the whole day. These pauses are a good opportunity to reflect and ponder about what has been seen and experienced. With a bit of facilitation, the pauses become intense moments of debates and reflection. They can also be used for data production,

from sharing photos on a repository or posting them on social media, to writing collaboratively. The pauses are mostly improvised and the group stops wherever it can, often in a café or a public space. This activity of pondering and reflecting collectively brings a moment of deceleration to the expedition, a rhythmic pattern to a day of exploration.



## Chapter 2.5: Notes as gestures: The use of log books in ethnographical work

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This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section.

Our learning expeditions in collaborative spaces and our ethnographies of new work practices have been the opportunity to use numerous diaries, reports and note books to keep a trace of what we saw, what people said or how we felt.

Such a practice is not new in ethnography and auto-ethnography. Ethnographers have always collected and self-produced the narrative traces of their experience. They have always done it asynchronously (e.g. at the end of the day...) or synchronously (in the flow of what they were observing). We would like to stress here an embodied, material, visible aspect of ethnography as a practice: the gesturing of notes, sketches, traces of our shared experience with the people and societies explored.

More than ever, in a digital, largely disembodied, world, gestures and physical movements of the ethnographer are key micro-practices on the field. Our ethnographies and learning expeditions (in particular the long ones with two, three or four days of field trips with a group) have made this issue particularly visible.

First, using expressively, obviously, visibly logbooks is a way to create boundaries with people encountered. As shown by **Camille Bosqué** in her ethnography of makerspaces and FabLabs, it is a way to create a tie and a bubble with the people we met. In the context of our ethnographies and walks, we noticed the importance of using our logbook, putting it on a table while talking, putting a pen close to it, drawing a figure, a map, a story... and letting implicitly the people interviewed taking the diary and writing, drawing on it (**see Picture 5 below**). Taking at some point a second pen, and doing it together. Some very shy, distant people became much more confident at this point. Most of all, this co-produced and shared trace has been often important to express subtle things about the place. To help us remember months after our ethnographies, we sometimes attached a picture of the sketch co-produced. In her doctoral work, one of us (**Albane Grandazzi**) uses the notion of “boundary gesture” to label this kind of bounding, spacing, spanning embodied practice.



PICTURE 5 : THE USE OF LOG BOOKS AS BOUNDARY GESTURES (SOURCE: AUTHORS' OWN)

Then, in particular in the context of makers, hackers, coworkers, i.e. DIY and DIT

oriented doocracies, this visible doing has been a way to find our place in. We are also

doers, we write, sketch (at least we try...), share, make things concrete and visual! In a place where one of us (**François-Xavier de Vaujany**) conducted another ethnography (an artistic makerspace in Paris), we even felt that it was a way to share a collective dance, to be harmoniously in the shared movement that made the place.

In the context of Open Walked Event Based Experimentations (OWEE), the visible and

shared use of log books is important, but also different. We explore societies, but we also share an experience with a group of people who is also part of the observation. Taking notes, in a shared or selfish way is not easy (we move and we walk a lot) and probably counter-productive. But we have also started to experiment the practice while seated, in more transitory situations...

To be continued...

## Chapter 2.6: Co-producing traces from our walked discussions: the use of digital tools

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**AUTHORS:** VIVIANE SERGI (ESG UQAM) & FRANÇOIS-XAVIER DE VAUJANY (PSL, Paris-Dauphine University)

Our learning expeditions and field trips following the OWEE protocol have often resulted in co-produced traces by means of various tools: posts on blogs (e.g. RGCS WordPress, the Conversation, LSE Business Review, LSE impact blog...) written by coordinators during and after the event, social networks (in particular Twitter, Facebook and Instagram), geolocalization systems (e.g. Samsung health systems) but also more specific collaborative technologies such as Stample or

Framapads. The use of these tools aimed at narrating our events as they were happening, learning and reflecting from them, searching for political impact through better integrative and connective narratives.

We would like here to give a short feedback about two technologies we used: Framapads and Twitter and how they help us to co-produce reflexive traces of our events.

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### 1. FRAMAPAD: GREAT OPEN TECHNOLOGY, BUT ATMOSPHERE AND ANIMATION ARE KEY

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**Framapad** is a great open source technology developed by **Framasoft**<sup>3</sup> (a fantastic project which was highly inspiring for our first White Paper). This associative network offers various open technology which are seen as a way to 'degoogle' our societies and bring control and power back to citizens themselves. Framasoft offer thus numerous alternatives to Google Technology such as You Tube, Google doc or the Google search engine.

Since one year, we have had the opportunity to use a technology called Framapad to a dozen of reflexive processes before, during and after our learning expeditions. Framapad is an on-line word processor that makes it possible to write and record what is written. All the participants just need to know and access the Framapad set up for the event. Then,

everybody can write directly in the document including our not a pre-defined structure. Interestingly, each participant has a specific color once s/he starts writing, and can link this color to his name. A history of the document s continuously kept, and the process of writing is extremely horizontal (no particular privileges linked to the person setting the link or an administrator).

After numerous frustrations expressed after our events (and the traces we kept from them), Framapad seems to be a very interesting way to co-produce a trace. Based on the events during which we used it, we see three main practices which can be enacted from Framapad (**see Table 6**). Each of this practice is likely to make more collaborations in the event, and to produce more narrations in it likely to extend, to connect it to other events.

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<sup>3</sup> Please donate to Framasoft, a generous, open, responsible project!

PRACTICES BASED ON FRAMAPAD	DESCRIPTION	LIMITATIONS
<b>Practice 1: Onsite emulation with projection on a wall</b>	Projecting the Framapad during its use onsite (e.g. a seated discussion, the concluding discussion in a seminar room or a collaborative space). It incites people to write something and see their colour appearing on the wall. It is emulating. If two or three people start playing the game (and this can be agreed), the dynamic can come very quickly.	The size of the projected screen makes that quickly it is not possible to see all the dynamic. This can be a good thing (then people look at their smartphone or laptop) but also very quickly... this can become distracting.
<b>Practice 2: Writing of a collective summary and report of the event</b>	People can write collectively a summary of the event, during and after it. This is a way to create a common memory and a common at large.	Very quickly, 10, 20... 50 (we have experimented different sizes) of people writing together creates a messy result. Creating (even after a collective loop) a first structure can be manipulative. Creating a set of different Framapad (i.e. introducing a revise and re-submit process with different versions) can be facilitated by the tool itself. But this requires a form of community management through one or two leaders... likely to push their own view of the topic. And conversely, not trying to look for community managers can make the process... unfinished. The document is never cleaned and remains very messy and unreadable (which has been the case in several of our experimentations).
<b>Practice 3: Coordinating the walk and the all process</b>	People comment, criticize, guide, deconstruct loudly the process of walking, visiting, discussing of the visit. It turns to be something between a reportage and a 'command car'.	The Framapad is then just a way to have a trace of some live decisions and reflexivities.

TABLE 6: FRAMAPAD BASED PRACTICES OF CO-PRODUCING TRACES

All three practices have their advantages and their drawbacks. We did not find a stable path to gather collective narrations

for our OWEE based learning expeditions. But one key lesson keeps coming back from our experimentation: the general mood of

the experimentation (goodwill...) and the community management (and his/her kindness) are key in the process...

## 2. THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA: COMBINING WALKED WITH DIGITAL NAVIGATION

Social media (in particular Twitter) have been at the heart of our experimentations since the beginning. We have always tweeted our events since the beginning (e.g. our two first event in Berlin and Barcelona). Creating a specific hashtag, diffusing it to the participants ahead of the event and to all people likely to be interested has always been part of our processes (with a couple of exceptions at the beginning).

Interestingly, we quickly noticed that the use of Twitter was not limited to communication, and included a few other practices. It was also a narration we could play with, a set of narrations we could combine and re-introduce later in the flow of later events. Based on our experiences, we identified a number of key practices, as summarized in table 2. This list is not exhaustive, and other practices could emerge in other events.

TWITTER PRACTICES	DESCRIPTION	LIMITATIONS
<b>Practice 1: Commenting and sharing the walk and process of the learning expedition</b>	Participants can share on-the-fly observations, take pictures and videos of what they see, hear, feel... and comment on the visual elements they have captured. They can also share their general experience, and include more global reflections about what they are hearing, seeing and discovering.	The use of the Twitter account can be a way to re-tweet, combine, comment on the comments and put (or not) some directions to it. However, the sum of the tweets rarely creates a coherent narration per se. Unless some kind of analysis is made after the event, the traces left on social media remain slightly disjointed.  Also, the challenge of tweeting while listening to a presentation and even more while walking should not be underestimated. Users that have already learned the codes of Twitter will be more comfortable in developing their comment in the format of a tweet and also in playing with hashtags.
<b>Practice 2: Putting publications in the live tweet</b>	Books, articles, scientific interviews and podcasts, research posts... have often been put in the line of tweets by participants and community managers. We often noticed that it attracted a new readership. Tweeting research in	Choosing one research instead of another is not neutral. And tweeting too much research can be counter-productive. A balance must be found between references and on-site observations.

	context... makes it more contextual.	
<b>Practice 3: Connecting the event in time and space</b>	We re-tweeted videos, posts, articles about past events in context which made us remind them. We also diffused information about future events (RGCS events or non RGCS events) in the live tweets. We used as much as we can this flow of attention.	Talking too much about the past or the future can cut us from ongoing experience and maybe favour disembodiment.
<b>Practice 4: Building the RGCS network itself, cultivating a sense of belonging and happening</b>	We mention as much as we could RGCS coordinators and RGCS friendly people... This was a way to connect with them and indirectly, a powerful maintenance or developmental practice for our network. Sometimes, we wonder if Twitter is not also great for 'internal' communication.	This practice can also result in a 'club' atmosphere and can become be non-inclusive.

TABLE 7: TWITTER BASED PRACTICES IN OUR LEARNING EXPEDITIONS

All practices described in table 2 have been largely present in our last OWEE events. In the context of events like learning expeditions, social media like Twitter offer an easy and very flexible way to integrate comments, photos and short clips while the learning expedition is happening – and also to ‘naturally’ create a timeline of the event, from multiple viewpoints. With the exceptions of its technical limitations (e.g. the number of characters), Twitter allows for a wide variety in style, when it comes to the content that is shared. Hence, one of the most interesting effects from using this platform is the accumulation of tweets that have spontaneously been produced by different participants without any form of coordination, each with their personal voice and their own specific message. Using these public platforms also makes visible the OWEE approach, making it known in the community, and generates inputs that might become data for

researchers who may or may not have participated to the event. Having a main account, like that of @collspaces is a useful complement to the accounts of individual participants, as it can be used to curate the content that has been produced. It can be used to amplify some tweets (like, for example, the ones that have captured a key feature of the event), to disseminate the main observations and reflections and also to summarize what might have been expressed in several tweets. In this, the importance of hashtags should not be downplayed. On Twitter (it would also be the case on Instagram), hashtags are crucial – especially having a devoted hashtag for the event, which will allow to trace back all the content produced during the event. The main hashtag for the event should hence be carefully chosen, and communicated in time and clearly to the participants.

## Chapter 2.7: Collaborative Ethnography in the Walk: The use of Camcorders

**AUTHORS:** ANNA GLASER (ESCP Europe) & FRANÇOIS-XAVIER DE VAUJANY (PSL, Paris-Dauphine University)

This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section.

Ethnography is increasingly a collective thing, involving teams of researchers, members of the society explored, and people co-exploring from a distance with digital tools.

In the context of the **Research Group on Collaborative Spaces** (RGCS), we organized numerous learning expeditions, field trips and stays which are opportunities to discover, deconstruct, share, new work practices. These expeditions are more and more part of a research and political new research practice we co-produce at the level of the network itself: OWEE (which stands for **Open Walked Event Based Experimentations**). OWEE implies both an openness to any stakeholder in the exploration and co-construction, an

intense use of social media to share and extend the experience, and a strong sense of improvisation (a major part of the places and people we visit are improvised in the flow of our questions and discussions). The protocol shares some similarities with the French **“Dérive”** (e.g. drifting) conceptualized by Guy Debord.

Walk, embodiment and gestures are a key part of our emergent protocol. We would like to focus here on a key embodied practice which is playing an increasing role in our expedition: the role of camcorders in the social dynamic of our events (see their use below in the context of our learning expedition about street art in Paris #OWEESA).



PICTURE 6: THE USE OF A CAMCORDER AT OUR STREET ART LEARNING EXPEDITION IN PARIS (SOURCE: AUTHORS' OWN)

The network has two camcorders at its disposal. We have started to use them in the context of two learning expedition: one in Paris about street art (June, 14<sup>th</sup>) and another one in Boston about the opening and hacking of knowledge in elite institutions (July, 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>). Anna used the first camera in the former, and François in the latter. We would like to give here a first feedback about the use of this practice in the context of collaborative ethnography.

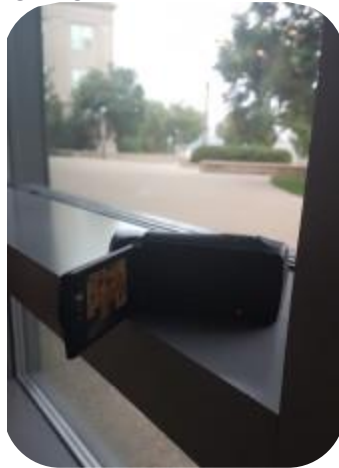
Our use of camcorder was twofold: keeping a memory of our events (to store them and diffuse them on line), doing crossed interviews of participants and people encountered (individual and collective, seated or walked). Smartphone could be a way to do both things, but we quickly realized the technical limitations of these tools.

Interestingly, beyond their precious use to collect ethnographical material. Paris and Boston's experience have been a way to

realize another key aspect of camcorders. They (re)introduce gestures in the narration and in data collection. Holding the camcorder is also holding obviously and visibly the line of narration. For those interviewed, the cam and the gesture introduced a small tension, a solemnity in the process of interviewing. The cam creates a bubble for those interviewed and those seeing the scene from the outside. It makes obvious that an interview is going on

(in contrast, today's tool of data collection are so miniaturized that they become almost invisible, and part of everyday objects, i.e. smartphone).

In some context (*see the Picture 7 of this interview below*), the cam can be put somewhere and everybody can feel part of the scene and interview; nobody holds the line.



PICTURE 7: PUTTING THE CAMERA FOR A COLLECTIVE DISCUSSION AT MIT SLOAN BUSINESS SCHOOL (SOURCE: AUTHORS' OWN)

Gesturing the cam is thus a powerful way to invite narrative and reflective perspectives into the walk and discussion.

We are only at the beginning of our experimentation with this tool and other ones (e.g. Framapads, blogs and social networks). Cams have obviously a great potential to introduce new embodiments, new spatialities, new narratives and new temporalities into our events. Among the

other experiments we have on mind, the sharing of the cam is one of them. In the context of our next learning expedition, we would like to invite each participant to hold at some point the camcorder and to do films and interviews with it. Let's see what this mediation will create for the group and for the network.

To be continued...

## Chapter 2.8: Assembling the old and the new worlds: plugging an unconference into a conference

**AUTHOR:** MARIE HASBI (Panthéon-Assas Paris 2 University)

This chapter has been published on RGCS website in the blog section.

Summer is filled with notable academic conferences. For organization researchers, July is particularly notable for holding the annual and big conference of the European Group for Organizational Studies (**EGOS**), an interdisciplinary event about organizations, organizing and collective activity. As most academic conferences, EGOS colloquia provide a venue for researchers to present and discuss their

research papers through sessions and sub-themes.

In 2017, The **Research Group on Collaborative Spaces** (RGCS) added an event off the track, an unconference called: “**Organization & Organizing of the Sharing Economy**” (**OOSE**). I have been part of the organizing committee of the two first sessions in 2017 and 2018.

### 1. BEHIND THE UNCONFERENCE SCENE

Each season, through a series of Skype planning meetings, our small group of conveners shared visions about a gathering that might both enhance and criticize the current thinking on the sharing and the peer-to-peer economy. Each time, the implicit guideline question for our group was: Since our topics are related to the **New Ways of Working** (NWW) (Kingma, 2016), how can we gather a new way of conferencing? Unlike traditional conference format that involves passive learning presentations, it was pretty clear to us that a disruptive participant-driven format is more convenient for our unconferences. Once the body of the unconference was organized, settling a location began. In choosing a venue for our unconference, we were keen to situate one part – the workshop- inside the walls of

the main conference to facilitate the gathering, and we choose to situate the second part outside the walls of the traditional conference to legitimize our act of rebellion. This was a joint venture between the old and the new world of conferencing.

We wanted our unconference to be more inclusive in different ways. We invited keynote speakers passionate about their topics regardless of their seniority. Finally, following RGCS' spirit to expand invitations beyond academia, we created un Eventbrite, we used RGCS diverse media channel, local meetup forums, etc. Our purpose was to reach out a large and diverse audience including practitioners, activists and Egosians about our untraditional unconference (un)doings.

### 2. THE UNCONFERENCE EXPERIENCES

After nearly two months of organization, our unconference finally opened. My main concern was about participation: how many people will join us? The main conference can involve feelings of physical discomfort caused by travel, dense conference programs, new country and so on. Hence, why people and more

particularly Egosians will spend three to four more hours attending an unconference?

Fortunately, I was pleasantly surprised each season to see that nearly 60 participants, including entrepreneurs, activists and Egosians, came together to join our unconference. I recognized familiar faces from EGOS and I could finally put faces on

names I have been emailing for weeks about the organization.

In the first unconference, the theme was entitled "Between Autonomy and Control: Contradictions and Paradoxes of the Sharing Economy". We opened up space for visual co-creation projects and critical conversations and we invited participants to visit a coworking space in Copenhagen. For further details, you can read on RGCS website [this post](#).

In the second unconference, the topic was entitled: « Do it yourself! Exploit yourself? » We challenged traditional spatial arrangements by providing a welcoming

Fishbowl platform and we offered attendees a tour visit to a hacker space in Tallinn. [Here](#) is a summary of our second unconference.

During the two seasons, I was astonished in the most positive sense by the genuine, organic and disruptive participation of attendees. I can remember one of my partners in the organization and animation of these unconferences telling me: "look, they are hacking our unconference!". both attendees' and keynote speakers' engagement were wonderful. They were carving out time to argue, debate and network.



PICTURE 8: FIRST OOSE: A VISUAL CO-CREATION WORKSHOP (SOURCE: AUTHOR'S OWN)



PICTURE 9: SECOND OOSE: A PARTICIPANT DRIVEN FISHBOWL DEBATE (SOURCE: AUTHOR'S OWN)

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### 3. WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THESE EXPERIENCES?

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After the closing of our unconference, we came together to share a dinner. As **the dinner** could be an opportunity to share more reflexive conversations, I approached an entrepreneur asking him his feedback on our unconference (de Vaujany, 2016).

*"I really enjoyed the tour visits. Though, I didn't feel comfortable to share my point of view during the workshop. It is too academic for me..."*

What can we do to address this issue? To push the boundaries between academia and practice? Including practitioners in keynotes may work well...Holding our unconference completely outdoor as other RGCS unconferences by experiencing the **OWEE protocol** (For instance **RGCS unconference inside the Academy of Management AOM** was held as a walk in the Chicago Millenium Park, **RGCS unconference inside AIMS** was held in a collaborative space) and therefore get rid off the old world may work too... (de Vaujany and Vitaud, 2017)

Another challenge comes from the comparison between my unconference experience and other events held by RGCS chapters I experienced. How can we

create and maintain a sense of community after these unconferences? How can we go beyond the brief and temporary nature of our unconferences?

Looking ahead, we helped to create spaces inside a traditional conference for authentic conversations. Unlike **traditional conferences** where status matters (Konzett, 2012), I saw an eclectic mix of researchers practitioners, entrepreneurs and activists walking together in our unconferences, gathering outdoor, sharing laughs and challenging theories and practices.

Overall, the unconference experience and feedback were so positive that we are planning on gathering for more unconferences. Why don't you join us to push the boundaries of traditional conferences? See you next summer at EGOS, AoM, AIMS and other conferences in social sciences and humanities where we intend to extend our experimentations!

*I want to thank Albane and Aurore for being my partners for two years in this adventure. A big thanks to François-Xavier for launching and convening with us these unconferences.*

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## Chapter 2.9: An exploration of surrealism as an esthetic activity in collective ethnographic work unconference into a conference

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**AUTHOR:** HÉLOÏSE BERKOWITZ (CNRS TSM Research)

This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section.

How to jointly develop scientific knowledge from data collected through group, event-based research methodologies like OWEE (Open Walked Event-based Experiments)? In OWEE, 'field work' moves beyond both observations or action-research approaches by integrating several new elements of data collection: being in a group, walking, and exploring a spatially

and temporally bounded event or happening (de Vaujany & Vitaud, 2017). But we still struggle to find ways to produce innovative collective knowledge that may leverage on such group ethnographic work. Surrealism, a 20th century art movement, could offer fruitful solutions to collectively create knowledge from these group event-based data collections.

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### 1. SURREALISM: BACK TO THE FUTURE

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Surrealism is an activity, rather than a doctrine (Clifford, 1981). In 1924 Breton's manifesto, the word surrealism describes a "psychic automatism" aiming to explore the deep, true functioning of thoughts, whether this may be through writing, speaking, painting, etc. The objective is not so much to produce anything but to achieve a more profound understanding of the world through experimenting with our sub consciousness, dreams, etc. Surrealist techniques indeed seek to let the flow of thoughts wash unobstructed, without any control of rationality, logic, and without any moral or esthetic concern. Breton's first version of his manifesto will impact production processes of most art forms (literary, plastic) at that time.

Clifford (1981) argues that ethnography and surrealism fit well together. Ethnography indeed constitutes an attempt to disrupt the way we see, understand and represent conventional objects, identities, practices and socio-

materiality. Surrealism offers rich venues for that. Three surrealist writing techniques – exquisite corpse, automatic writing and "meta-textual" collage – may favour collective creativity and reconstruct the reel through pure psychic automatism, associations of ideas and absurd. These tasks have in common to seek to decouple realities, by fragmenting objects, bringing together weird items or ideas into a surprising juxtaposition that provokes reflection. It is the embodiment of surrealist – extraordinary – realities that these esthetic activities perform.

Using surrealist techniques in contemporary ethnographies could involve constituting a surrealist writing group after a collective ethnographic experiment like OWEE. But this may require specific protocols to ensure that actors can fruitfully interact and produce a deep understanding of reality, although that understanding may seem absurd.

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### 2. RULES OF THE ACTIVITY

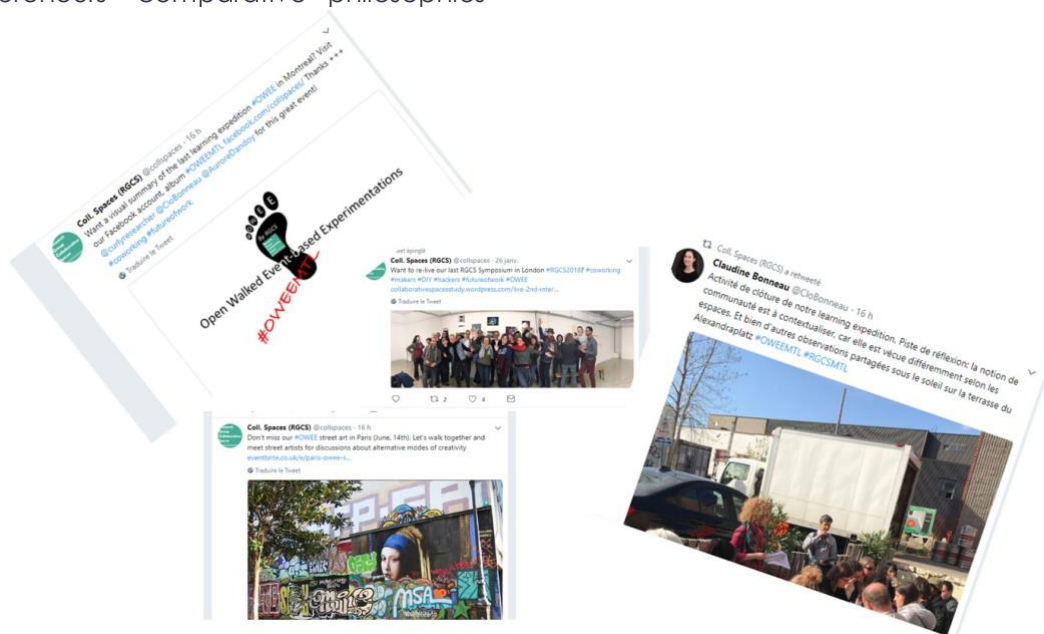
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It is important to clarify and make explicit common objectives and rules. What is the concrete output? What are we working on? What rules are we using for the exquisite corpse? It could be an addition of one word or of a full sentence for instance. This may vary depending on the group's

characteristics or the activity's duration. An exquisite corpse usually functions like this: each person adds a word following a given structure Noun>adjective>verb>direct complement>adjective. Repeat. This allows a more curious collection of ideas. For automatic writing, the rule is to write down

whatever comes to mind, without editing, and without repressing ideas or trying to organize them. The idea would be to focus on a topic of the OWEE (for instance, entrepreneurs' comparative philosophies

on a given day). Meta-textual collage could be thought of as a shuffling of print screens of tweets or Facebook posts (see **Picture 10**).



PICTURE 10: META-TEXTUAL COLLAGE

### 3. CHALLENGES OF USING SURREALIST TECHNIQUES IN OWEE

Using surrealist techniques has the potential to enrich contemporary ethnographies like OWEE by helping researchers build a collective understanding of the world they have physically explored as a group. This collective, deep understanding of an expanded reality takes the form of an assemblage that may constitute, in a certain manner, the end product of the collective research. Yet many questions arise regarding the organization or the use of the end-product. For instance, regarding the facilitator, how many of them are needed, one per group, fewer? How to deliver to the group? Through a presentation? Through a collective

reading? Then, analyzing these textual and visual products constitute another kind of challenge. This step could and maybe should be carried out afterwards in a smaller set of people. In addition, there is an issue of storage and property rights, all the more relevant nowadays with the RGD legislation. But finally, the most challenging barrier to the use of surrealism is probably the reluctance to accept and embrace absurdity, the unexpected but also the contradiction and the unmapped territory of giving control of rationality, in scientific production processes in management sciences.

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## **PART I: WHAT IS OWEE?**

The OWEE philosophy



## **PART II: LIVING OWEE EXPERIENCE**

Collaborating and Co-designing the narrative



## **PART III: BUILDING KNOWLEDGE FROM OWEE**

Exploring, reflecting, learning and teaching in the walk

“ Nul ne peut se sentir, à la fois, responsable et désespéré. ”

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Pilote de guerre

## PART III: BUILDING KNOWLEDGE FROM OWEE. EXPLORING, REFLECTING, LEARNING AND TEACHING IN THE WALK

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### Chapter 3.1: MIT and Harvard: When Elite Institutions Hack and Open Knowledge

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This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section and also by The Conversation.

As researchers and/or entrepreneurs, we have been absorbing cultural knowledge of collaboration, entrepreneurship, co-worker and maker movements for a number of years. We often face and hear about how to become disruptive by two keywords: OPENING and HACKING. Between July 25 and 28, 2018, we co-created a rich learning expedition organized by the [Research Group on Collaborative Spaces](#) (RGCS), at MIT and Harvard University, in Cambridge (Massachusetts). This alternative academic network focuses on topics about new work practices inspired by [open science](#) and [citizen science](#) cultures.

The starting point of our learning expedition was our astonishment: How can elite institutions (in particular, MIT and Harvard University) and an elite territory originate

key collaborative practices and ideology such as hacking, open knowledge and open innovation? How to combine a search for excellence, global leadership and selectivity with horizontal, transgressive, underground cultures of hacking and opening knowledge? Our objective was to understand this paradox with a set of planned and improvised visits and meetings (see the [OWEE protocol](#)) focused on MIT and Harvard University. Is it possible to be both conformist and transgressive?

We want first to share some astonishing discoveries before focusing on key moments and encounters we see as provisional answers to our initial question. We will thus not detail the whole trip and everything that happened but we want to share here some selected afterthoughts.

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#### 1. THREE STRIKING PRACTICES AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY AND MIT

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We found three practices particularly striking both at MIT and Harvard University and their relationship with opening and hacking knowledge.

The first was observing how much students (undergraduate, graduate, master and PhD students) and their theses and projects were made visible and valued by the institutions. Through this, we do not only

mean rewarding them and evaluating them (e.g. with awards), but truly putting them at forefront of what the university is and does. At the [MIT Museum](#), we participated in the Idea Hub workshop named Hypercube, which was part of a master's thesis from by the Media Lab. In many parts of MIT, students' work is exhibited, part of the storytelling or simply visible on or from the street.





PICTURE 11: HYPERCUBE WORKSHOP. AUTHOR PROVIDED

Second, we were surprised that at a time of global tensions and an obsession with security, there was also a great openness in the semi-public and public spaces. It was easy to simply enter, meet people, ask questions, walk around, and have chance encounters. Even if a lot of doors inside were (hopefully) closed and secured, most places were truly open to the city, its movements, its events, its ideas. Literally, those two campuses are open to citizens.

In continuation to this, the third element we found surprising was serendipity. It felt to be a reality here we could almost touch. It was very easy to connect, move from one

meeting to another, and collaborate. But here there was a surprise in the surprise: this has nothing to do with fashionable collaborative spaces nor with a particular urbanism. The [Wyss Institute](#) we visited or the [Broad Institute](#) do not appear at all as de-compartmentalized, co-working-like or makerspace-like places. Their offices, meeting rooms and labs are extremely traditional (*see Pictures 12 below*). Nonetheless, collaborative practices occur. We were really surprised by how easy it was to meet and have chance encounters (e.g., with a person who collaborated to the vaccine against cancer).



PICTURE 12: LEFT: LOBBY OF THE WYSS INSTITUTE AT HARVARD. RIGHT: ENTRANCE OF THE BROAD INSTITUTE AT MIT. AUTHOR PROVIDED

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## 2. FIVE KEY MOMENTS IN OUR EXPLORATION OF OPENING AND HACKING KNOWLEDGE

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To introduce and shed light on the identified paradox, we would like here to

share five relevant moments of the learning expedition.

### 2.1. A TRANSGRESSIVE INTERDISCIPLINARY PLACE: THE WYSS INSTITUTE AT HARVARD

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The first encounter we would like to communicate happened at the Wyss Institute “for Biologically Inspired Engineering at Harvard University”. This interdisciplinary place is inspired by nature. It uses biological principles or metaphors to innovate in the health sector. Our meeting took place in the morning of day two of our learning expedition. Two researchers, among whom the founding director of the Institute **Donald Ingber**, presented us the institute, its activities and organisation. The institute adventure started right after the 2008 financial crisis with a \$125 million

donation. Being both inside and outside of Harvard is obviously an interstitiality that fosters innovative collaborations. Can a university accept and host such transgressive projects? Would it be possible to host all those research activities inside a traditional department? Specificities of the organization seem to be based on autonomy, trust and close work with practitioners. Elsewhere, this would probably mean being on one personal academic territory or another. The Wyss Institute appears to be a more neutral zone.

### 2.2. MIT TOUR STORYTELLING: ALL ABOUT HACKING CULTURE

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The second moment we would like to point out is the official campus tour of MIT (we also did Harvard official campus tour). **Tours are key practices in the life of American universities.** The meeting point of MIT campus tour was at the entrance of the main building with the famous dome. Our guide was a young undergraduate interested in Science and Technology Studies (STS). Extremely mature, with an already assured sense of public speaking, she produced the story-telling of the tour with a lot of practical, scientific and historical details. We learned everything about the facilities, accommodation, recruitment, history, teaching and research activities of MIT. But most of all, we learned

about MIT culture. Two enlightened moments of the tour were focused on hack culture of MIT and they happened to be the two key parts of tour: a stop in front of the most emblematic place and the last stop in front of the iconic hacked police car. In both cases, she put the stress on the importance of small transgressions inside MIT community, impertinence and sense of humour embodied by hacks and hacking culture (**see Pictures 13 below**). We were particularly surprised to see and hear all these official narratives precisely about the topic of our learning expedition. This was beyond our expectations.



PICTURE 13: LEFT: THE DEFINITION OF HACKING. RIGHT: DISPLAY AT THE MIT MUSEUM OF A FULL-SIZE POLICE CAR ONCE LEFT PARKED AT THE TOP OF A DOME ON CAMPUS AS A STUNT BY STUDENTS. AUTHOR PROVIDED (NO REUSE)

### 2.3. AN INTRIGUING ICONIC HACKER SPACE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

The third moment we would like to share is our chance to visit a hackerspace. At the end of day 2, we were looking for Tech Model Railroad Club ([TMRC](#)), an iconic, mythological place in hackers' history, and incidentally, makers' history. After three wrong places, we finally found the door and building in late evening. But it was closed. We did not see any way to come or call inside and we were waiting seated outside, waiting for someone entering or leaving the place. One of us went on the other side of the street and noticed something that looked like a makerspace with bikes and strange objects suspended in a big room. We went on the other side and knocked at a grimy window through

which we guessed the presence of people inside. This was a lovely moment (**see Pictures 14 below**). Six makers (four men and two women) were working on a prototype of a small electric bike for an event the next day. We had a spontaneous conversation with one of them about the place, what it does, how membership was granted, how it was related to MIT teaching. The atmosphere was nice, warm and open. We came from nowhere, it was the evening and the street was already dark, but we felt really welcome. Indeed, TMRC was in the room next to the makerspace, so we also took time looking at it.



PICTURE 14: LEFT: THE BUILDING WE SAW FROM ACROSS THE STREET. RIGHT: WHAT WE SAW WHEN WE PEEKED INSIDE. AUTHOR PROVIDED (NO REUSE)

## 2.4. GAFAM UNCONVENTIONAL OPEN-OFFICE SPACES

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PICTURE 15: GAFAM OFFICE IN CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS. AUTHOR PROVIDED (NO REUSE)

The fourth moment happened on the third day. We wanted to look also at more entrepreneurial and independent places. After visiting [Cambridge Innovation Centre \(CIC\)](#) and before [WeWork](#) office spaces, we went to a GAFAM (fantasy name) office we spotted the day before, walking down the street. After an extended discussion at the reception desk, we didn't manage to get in touch with anyone and were close to simply leaving when an employee left the

building by the other entrance. He probably heard us speaking French and stopped. We asked him if he was part of the company, one thing led to another, and he soon invited us to visit their offices the next day. As agreed during the registration process, we cannot explain here what we saw, but again, we were surprised by the fluidity of everything here. Moving from a dream to a concrete possibility.

## 2.5. A MAKERSPACE FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION AND INNOVATION: D-LAB

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The last and fifth moment was the visit of [D-Lab](#). This unit is about social inclusion and social innovation. The main idea of the projects they work on is to co-produce with worldwide communities tools they need. Numerous accomplishments of the place were exhibited in the corridor: corn seller, mechanical washing machine, water treatment system... All largely based on material and handed-gestures. Our guide, who accepted to lead the visit just for us, deepened the story-telling of the projects

and gave us opportunity to touch and to watch their experimentations in action. We were again surprised by the place's openness. Everything was done to perform and materialise local activities for visitors. The inside was turned towards visitors. Because of another appointment, he trusted us to finish the tour alone and take a few pictures. Even the makerspace room was open to public, with simply a yellow line on the ground that needed to not be crossed for security reasons.





PICTURE 16: D-LAB DISPLAY. AUTHOR PROVIDED (NO REUSE)

### 3. FROM ENCOUNTERS TO LEARNING: WHAT DID WE BRING BACK FROM CAMBRIDGE?

What about the initial paradox? Far from a barrier, the tension we stressed appears as a driver, an energy for the place. MIT and Harvard launch standards they both maintain and transgress in a polite, transparent, community-grounded way. Hacking alone in the dark, just for oneself is not enough. Community and society feedback are always expected. All campus and territory is a powerful storytelling machine. All world of worldwide science, technique and entrepreneurship is expected to be at MIT and Harvard. And in this summer we can testify that we experienced it crossing MIT campus and walking on Harvard campus. We saw big groups of children and teenagers coming to dream about MIT and Harvard. We

ourselves dreamt of duplicating this tremendous spirit in our own institutions.

So, what will be our memory of this learning expedition in which two-thirds of the people and places we visited were improvised (see the [OWEE protocol](#))? A big machine made to make one's eyes shine. A funny, energetic, largely outdoor, and beyond any walls place likely to make dream any brilliant teenager and researcher who do want to participate to create a brave new world.

We thank all of our guides who opened their doors to us and answered our questions with passion and kindness. And we hope that this might lead to cross-Atlantic open collaborations.

## Chapter 3.2: Street art: who holds the walls?

**AUTHOR:** RENEE ZACHARIOU (Art & Tech Project Manager)

This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section.

The promise was enticing, and the menu quite mysterious: OWEE (Open Walked Event-based Experimentations) is a research protocol conducted by international researchers. After several experiments all over the world (in Tokyo and London), a tour in the 13th district of Paris was concocted, open to all. It is difficult to give a precise definition of OWEE without giving in to tautology: it is an experiment, while walking, while seeking. You're welcome.

For this day dedicated to Street Art, we meet at 9 am on a gray Thursday in front of the square Luis Say (founder of Beghin-Say and, fun fact, brother of the liberal economist Jean-Baptiste Say), at the exit of the metro Glacière. Facing us, three facades completely covered with murals. On the left, a delicately rendered cat from the French artist C215, in front, a "freedom-equality-fraternity" muse in the iconic Obey style, on the right, a pop-art-style portrait of London's D \* Face. These details will be commented an hour later, during the guided tour led by Baimba Kamara of the Itinerrance Gallery, which oversees the project.

But the journey begins at the town hall of the 13<sup>th</sup> arrondissement of Paris, an unexpected place for such a rebellious topic ... had we remained stuck in the last century. Emmanuel Koblence, adjunct to the Mayor of the district, presents the ambitious program of murals, aimed at "giving an identity and pride to this borough that has long been associated with a dormitory." The protocol of a fresco production is simple: the mayor, Jérôme Coumet and Mehdi Ben Cheikh, founder of Itinerrance gallery, agree on a project, and... they do it. No time to consult the neighbors: it's do first, ask later. I can sense a small democratic shudder in the group: what if the locals are not happy? The elected official admits that "it can be controversial, especially if we install a mural in front of your window and that you do not like it!". What is being implied is that at least this way the projects are sure to go ahead. "The inhabitants know that it is in our interest to suggest something that makes sense, otherwise the project would stop" concludes Baimba Kamara.



PICTURE 17: DFACE, 'TURNCOAT', STREET ART 13 PROJECT, PARIS 2018, CREDIT LOUIS JENSEN

Considering the number of frescoes realized since 2009 as part of the project Street Art 13, the project isn't stopping yet. The walk along the boulevard Vincent Auriol is full of anecdotes, from the street artist who changes colors on the first day ("I have 500 orange bombs in stock!"), to the one who is so dizzy that Medhi remains on the nacelle to reassure him. We also discover different working techniques: the Chilean Inti painted alone, for thirteen days ("an eternity for us!"). While the American

duo Faile lets its efficient assistants take over. Baimba's conclusion: "we have an exceptional collection, yet Parisians do not even bother to come have a look". Oops.

We then head for the square René Le Gal to meet the artist Lor-K. Her work is as ephemeral and discreet as the frescoes are monumental. She scours the city by scooter to find rubbish and turn it into sculptures: mattresses becomes donut, fridges are "murdered".



PICTURE 18: EAT ME, LOR-K, 2016, ON THE ARTIST WEBSITE

The process is documented, photographed, and then presented in galleries. Not the simplest way to build a business plan (it would be much easier to sell the sculptures), but a necessary choice until "people understand what I'm trying to do". Of course, Lor-K does not have much sympathy for the frescoes of the 13th, too removed from the local reality, too controlled.

We're starting to feel numb after all this cold and fine rain, a coffee break calls. This is an opportunity to make a mid-day point, and gather participants' opinions. The format is obviously discussed: how to exchange more between participants without the verticality of the guide, should we set up roles, what is the "result" expected, what surprised us ... No single answer emerges, but everybody agrees: it feels good to be out of the office!



PICTURE 19: LES FRIGOS, PHOTO KALA BARBA-COURT

The “official” program is finished, but not the exploration: off to the Frigos, a legendary artists’ studios at the feet of the BNF. We roam the corridors in search of graffiti, and we end up meeting Jean-Paul Réti, sculptor and founding president of the association “Les Frigos APLD 91”. After a quick scolding, since “everything is written at the entrance,” he gives us a long talk about the history of the place (a former warehouse cold storage of the SNCF) and its challenges (rising rents). Another faux-pas from us: mentioning street art, which invades the Frigo walls without taking into account the safety instructions, and which

“is recuperated by the galleries”, “without political message”.

The four speakers “interviewed” will not meet (at least not today), and it is in our head that the debate unfolds. An imaginary verbal ping-pong, where the definitions of the city, aesthetics and political action are not the same. To the participants of OWEE, does not fall the role of referee, but that of passer, connector, even secret-whisperer.

Maybe that’s what being a researcher is all about?

## Chapter 3.3: Learning differently our teaching: walking with students

**AUTHOR:** JULIE FABBRI (EMLYON Business School), AMÉLIE BOHAS (Aix-Marseille University) & DAVID VALLAT (Lyon 1 University)

This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section.

“Entrepreneurship is an incredible odyssey whose leaders are the heroes”. These were the first words of the organizer of the **7th Printemps des Entrepreneurs** in Lyon (France), where we spent a whole day with students from emlyon business school. Why? To experience real-life working conditions. How? We led an **Open Walked Event-Based Experimentation** (OWEE) in this context to help them to get the most out of the event. In a nutshell, we lived a spatio-temporal odyssey in and around the fair to grasp, all together, what is at stake in entrepreneurial journeys and what could be the future world of organizations.

On April 24, 2018, at 8am, about thirty red dressed students gathered in front of the Double Mixte, a well-known business event hall. They are double-degree students in innovation management who proudly wear the same red t-shirt, the official colour of the school. They are far from being the only students present in the alleys of this annual trade fair organized by the main French employers syndicate. But the students in red are not here by chance. They were not looking for business contacts – even if they got some! They were not running the school booth – even if their visible presence during the fair greatly advertised the school. They came – because we asked them to, of course, but then – to collectively answer the broad question underlying the event: “For you, ‘companies of tomorrow’, what does it mean?”.

Seeing and being seen in this kind of business gathering is undoubtedly one part of their future work practices as managers, leaders, or entrepreneurs – whatever one thinks of the usefulness of these events. As students, they already attend a number of large events such as careers days to find

internships and first jobs. But they usually don't really know how to behave and underestimate what they can get from such gatherings. On this particular day, we did not teach them how to dress or to pitch in this kind of context. In line with an experiential learning lens, we let them make their own experiences in the field, after having created the conditions to make it happen. We adapted the OWEE protocol to this new context – a learning expedition mainly with students in a closed event space – to turn them into active and reflexive visitors of the fair.

First, students split into four groups to tackle the issue of what tomorrow's company would look like from four different perspectives – new work and organisational forms, internal and external stakeholders for tomorrow, time & space relationships of tomorrow's company, alternative managerial tools and methods. Then they assigned roles to the group members to gather information about their odysseys. Some were in charge of taking notes – on paper and on the collaborative open platform **framapad**, others of taking pictures and films, and last but not least, of drawing or innovating in the manner of gathering information. Everybody was allowed and encouraged to be also visible on social networks – **twitter**, **facebook**, **instagram**... One person per group was in charge of collecting everything in the name of his/her group and to send it to the community manager of the class who retweeted and posted in real time in the blog and the **official twitter account of the program**. Each group had a dedicated coach (a professor or a PhD student members of RGCS). This organisation was implemented the afternoon before the event.

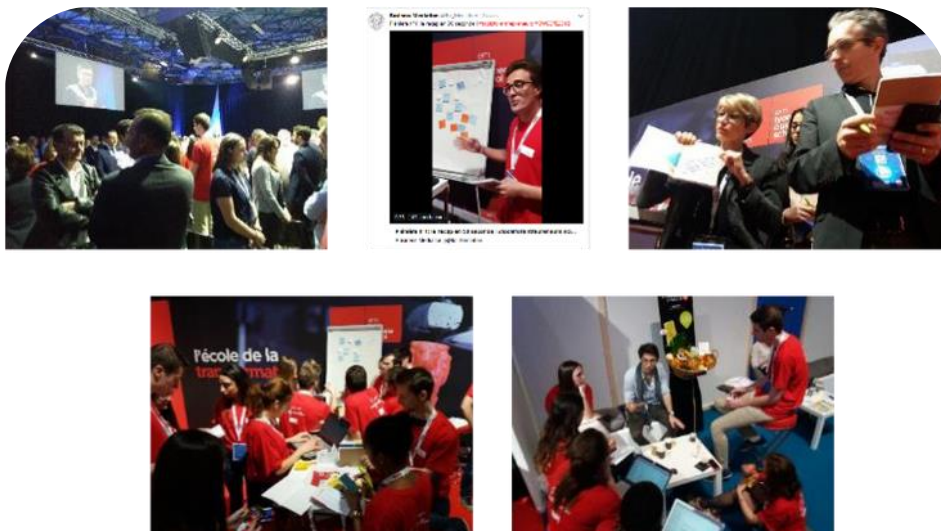


PICTURE 20: PRINTEMPS DES ENTREPRENEURS 2018 AT DUPLEX, LYON

D-day was separated into three moments:

1/ In the morning, groups freely occupied the fair space and time by attending plenary sessions and small workshops,

moving from booth to booth, interviewing exhibitors and visitors... One intermediary meeting point with the four groups at the school booth was organised mid-morning. It was the inspiration phase.



PICTURE 21: SNAPSHOTS OF THE LEARNING EXPEDITION (SOURCE: AUTHORS' OWN)

2/ After lunch, we all met in front of the Double Mixte. It was a very sunny and hot day in Lyon whereas the fair was in a large room with neither daylight nor air-conditioning... We could not stand to say any longer in this room. Thus we walked together along the tramline in order that the four groups – students and coaches –

formulate and iterate their views on tomorrow's company. At each tram stop, we took a break and repeated the pitches of each group in front of the entire cohort. Two additional coaches helped us to give rhythm to these two hours around the fair and keep the time.



PICTURE 22: NEXT STEPS (SOURCE: AUTHORS' OWN)

3/ Mid-afternoon we went back to the event room – and were nicely surprised by the reparation of the air-conditioning system! One student per group was chosen to pitch in one minute in the final plenary session of the event. The four selected students stand at each corner of the central scene (see the middle Picture 23

below). One coach was also in charge of pitching RGCS and OWEE to introduce the students' pitches! To close the day, the organizers invited the Philosopher and Theologian Samuel Rouvillois in his traditional monk's habit to preach a humanistic view of tomorrow's company.



PICTURE 23: END OF THE LEARNING EXPEDITION (SOURCE: AUTHORS' OWN)

Our pedagogical aim was to raise awareness among students of how easy but inefficient it is to attend this kind of events as tourists. Especially in the field of innovation and entrepreneurship, where such fairs are legion and so shiny. Experiential learning experiments do not aim to make them dream of futuristic digital technologies or being the next Zuckerberg, but to expose them to the true reality of work practices – even the unpleasant and unfair ones. For example, students were very surprised to see the gap between their

vision of entrepreneurship and the fairly classical and formal worldview offered by this fair – despite its name “springtime of entrepreneurs”!

The OWEE was a great pedagogical tool to demonstrate that attending such events without any plans, goals, and methods, means losing time, money, and missing opportunities. To put it in another way, experimenting, whatever you experiment is, leads to nowhere if you don't take the time to think about what you are experimenting. But we still have to imagine new types of

assessment and feedback to students (Warhuus, Blenker, & Elmholdt, 2018) to generalise and legitimise this kind of practice-based approaches. OWEE is an easy and cheap – but time and energy-consuming – innovative experiential learning approach that comes back to basics: walk together, like Aristotle and his

disciples. Following the tradition of Peripapeticians' practice, OWEE builds knowledge from the facts given by experience. OWEE gave the occasion to turn an individual practice – attending a fair – into a collective value creation of meaning – creating a common vision of future of work.

## Chapter 3.4: Exploring a territory with OWEE: the case of a learning expedition in Montreal

**AUTHORS:** AURORE DANDOY (PSL, Paris-Dauphine University), CLAUDINE BONNEAU (ESG UQAM) & VIVIANE SERGI (ESG UQAM)

This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section.

On May 15th, 2018, the Montreal's RGCS (*Research Group on Collaborative Spaces*) chapter organized a learning expedition through coworking spaces and start-up incubators chosen for their diversity (technological and social entrepreneurship) and their location in the city, in order to propose a 1-day walkable

**itinerary** through 3 different neighborhoods of Montreal: downtown, Mile-End and Mile-Ex. We experimented some of the **OWEE method**'s principles, by walking together in the city, collecting visual and written data, **sharing it on social media** and having informal and semi-directed discussions.

### 1. WELCOMING THE PARTICIPANTS IN MTLAB

On the same week, ESG UQAM was holding an international conference on entrepreneurship, the **Journées Georges Doriot 2018**, providing the opportunity to

form a group of 20 participants interested in new forms and spaces of entrepreneurship (scholars, students and practitioners).



PICTURE 24: BEGINNING OF OUR LEARNING EXPEDITION (SOURCE: AUHTORS' OWN)

Paul Arsenault and Martin Lessard, co-directors of MTLab, welcomed our group at the beginning of the day in their co-working space located in one of UQAM's building. **MTLab** is a 'vertical' innovation hub which

currently hosts 12 selected startups developing products or services in the tourism, transport, festivals, culture, hotel, restaurant and entertainment sectors.



PICTURE 25: WELCOME ADDRESS... (SOURCE: AUTHORS' OWN)

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## 2. AN "IMPROMPTU VISIT" TO NOTMAN HOUSE

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After this first rich encounter, we walked to **Notman House**, a technology hub also located in the city center, on Sherbrooke street. We had planned on visiting this place, but were not able to get a confirmation from their coordinators prior to our visit. We still decided to visit them, given

that at least one part of Notman House is open to the public. When we were about to leave MTLab, one of the community managers phoned them and left a message on the answering machine to inform them that we were on our way.



PICTURE 26: WALKING TOGETHER (SOURCE: AUTHORS' OWN)

Even though we didn't receive a formal confirmation, Jacinthe and Anna, from the events team, kindly welcomed our group and provided a guided tour of their various spaces (offices, shared spaces), while answering our questions about work practices at Notman House.

During the visit of the room dedicated to special events (Clark room, **see Picture 27**

**below**), one of the participants noticed: "What I like in this room, it is the atmosphere... I would have transformed it into offices (*Ce que j'aime dans cette pièce, c'est l'atmosphère... moi j'aurais fait les bureaux ici*)", while other participants around her nodded.



PICTURE 27: NEXT STEPS OF OUR WALK... (SOURCE: AUTHORS' OWN)

The importance of events (and spaces dedicated to events) can be noted not only at Notman House, but also at Espace L (see point 4) and from our various investigations of the collaboration ecosystem in the last years. This raises

questions regarding the profitability of collaborative spaces. Do coworking spaces' business models absolutely need the "events" component to be viable long-term, in addition to flexible and ephemeral activities (e.g. offices rented by the hour)?

### 3. WALKING UP "THE MAIN": ST-LAURENT'S STREET AS OUR BRIDGE FROM THE CITY CENTER TO THE MILE-END NEIGHBORHOOD

We then walked through St-Laurent's street (nicknamed "The Main"), which runs south-north from the city center. We made a quick stop at Parc du Portugal, from where we can observe interesting street art and

see the former house where singer and poet Leonard Cohen lived and the restaurants he frequented (Bagel Etc, Main Deli and Les Anges Gourmets).



PICTURE 28: STREET ART IN MONTREAL (SOURCE: AUTHORS' OWN)

Both **street art** and cultural knowledge are important to our OWEE method for several reasons that can be understood through Merleau-Ponty (Sens et Non-sens, 1948) “*In the presence of a novel, a poem, a painting, a valid film, we know that there was contact with something. Something is acquired by the men, the work starts to emit an uninterrupted message... But neither for the artist nor for the public can the meaning of the work be formulated otherwise than by the work itself; neither the thought that*

*made it, nor the thought that receives it, is entirely mistress of itself.*” (authors’ translation)

Thus, street art has long been considered as a political thought about the world, society or any topic street artists found relevant (like famous street artist Banksy). If street art is not directly linked to “new ways of working”, it is still embedded in a public space that hosts these collaborative spaces.

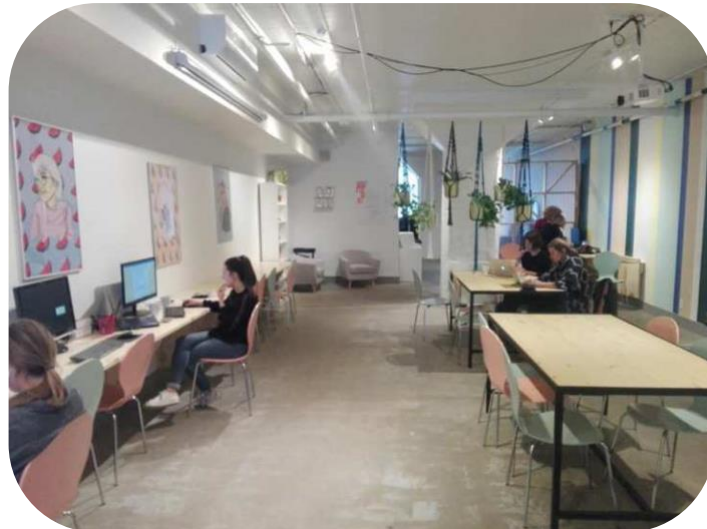
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#### 4. ENTERING A CO-WORKING SPACE DEDICATED TO WOMEN: VISIT OF ESPACE L

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We then reached the Mile-End district to visit a small co-working place located a little further north on St-Laurent’s street. **Espace L** has an original strategic focus, which has led to interesting debate related to broader societal issues than only new ways of working. Indeed, this co-working space is dedicated to women and was designed with their specific needs in mind. However, what these ‘specific needs’ are

sparked an interesting – and critical in terms of tone – discussion. Some women of our group expressed their surprise to find that stereotyped design elements were specifically chosen: pastel colors, posters of women, pink objects everywhere, etc. This impression was shared with a larger public by a participant who posted a picture of the walls on **Twitter**, asking “Do women really prefer pastel?”



PICTURE 29: ATMOSPHERE OF A COWORKING SPACE WE ENCOUNTERED (SOURCE: AUTHORS’ OWN)

Some men in our group admitted to feeling unwelcomed, even though the space manager and the occupants do not actually ban men in their spaces. This raises questions regarding the ways in which

social and political polarization can be embedded and even accentuated in the social and material choices characterizing how a workspace is conceived and lived.

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## 5. OUTDOOR COLLECTIVE BRAINSTORMING: WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH THE DATA COLLECTED TODAY?

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PICTURE 30: TIME FOR A COLLECTIVE DISCUSSION, IMPORTANT PHASE OF OUR OWEE (SOURCE: AUTHORS' OWN)

The picture above captures quite completely the essence of the OWEE method:

- it is open: happening outside, welcoming diverse participants (women/men, younger/older, academics/practitioners/both/other). Note the seating configuration, which is also open (half of a square).
- it is walked: even though it is not visible in this picture, we had to walk to seat in the park and we then had to walk again to leave the park.
- it is event-based: the temporality of the learning-expedition is shaped

by the context of the Montreal chapter (it was the first OWEE conducted by this chapter), and by the context of the whole RGCS network, for which i was the 7th OWEE.

- it is an experimentation: we explored new ways of doing research, with many experimental tools (spy glasses, tweets, a whatsapp group, etc.).

This moment was very productive, opening several lines of thought!

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## 6. MEET THE COWORKERS: AN INCURSION IN L'ESPLANADE

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The final space visited is located in the heart of the Mile-Ex neighborhood. **L'Esplanade** is a collaborative space dedicated to social entrepreneurship. The participants immediately noted that the atmosphere of L'Esplanade was very different from the

others spaces we visited on that day and retrospectively, we can see this journey as a gradual process of escaping from institutions: from an academic coworking space to an independent space focusing on the social economy.



PICTURE 31: NEW STOP AT L'ESPLANADE (SOURCE: AUTHORS' OWN)

Jonathan, our guide, organized an interesting presentation of l'Esplanade by inviting three of their current 65 members to

share with us their experience of the space and their respective participation in this community involved in the local ecosystem.

We particularly enjoyed being seated, welcomed an educated through those "return on experience" feedback sessions. It offered us the opportunity to ask many questions to both the community manager

and the members. In sum, this last visit was not only about the spaces, but mostly about the people, their practices and their values

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## 7. WRAP-UP DISCUSSIONS ON ALEXANDRAPLATZ TERRASSE

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PICTURE 32: CONCLUDING DISCUSSION OF OUR OWEE IN MONTREAL (SOURCE: AUTHORS' OWN)

Beyond the importance of conviviality for this kind of experiment, the need for both a concluding discussion and a bit of rest after such a walk (!), this wrap-up discussion was also the occasion for other participants of the Doriot conference to join us at the end

of the day. We were also able to have a last discussion about the OWEE protocol and on how to improve it for later experimentations. These aspects on the method will be further discussed in forthcoming blog posts. Stay tuned!

## Chapter 3.5: University Beyond the Walls: Experiencing new innovative spaces on Grenoble campus

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**AUTHOR:** SABINE CARTON (Grenoble Alpes University)

This chapter has been published on RGCS website in the blog section.

How to promote innovative educational spaces inside and outside Grenoble campus and get people involved in their uses? In June 2018, Promising<sup>4</sup> and several faculties used **Open Walked Event-Based Experimentations** (OWEE) approach at Université Grenoble Alpes. The event had two main objectives. The first one was external. We wanted to introduce campus innovative educational spaces to the local ecosystem of companies, collectivities, associations from Grenoble. The second was more internal. The idea was to share innovative educational initiatives between teachers, educational assistants and educational engineers in order to help people develop new practices.

Grenoble campus is an open space where companies, associations, are welcome to come and discuss with students and faculties. So an OWEE was a way to introduce innovative educational spaces for companies, collectivities and the local ecosystem. We wanted to show innovative educational initiatives and their diversities, to external actors of Grenoble campus. As a matter of fact, Grenoble campus is not located in the city center. But it can be reached easily by tramway or bike. It is not a place people just cross to go elsewhere. So OWEE was a mean to attract people who were not used to come to the campus and to make them discover innovative educational spaces. Some of these spaces are indeed open to people who are not working in the campus. But few people know it...

The second idea was to share innovative educational initiatives between teachers, educational assistants and educational engineers. OWEE can be a way of helping the transformation of organizational and educational practices. We used OWEE at Grenoble campus to make teachers, educational assistants, administrative staff aware of new practices. In the different spaces we visited, people had the opportunities to touch, ask, use and experiment. Between two spaces, the walk enabled us to discuss, share critical analyses and even co-imagine the design of future courses. Embodied practices in space (walk, sitting in specific chairs, or laying on mattress) participated to the reflection process of each participant, questioned existing practices and eventually led to new ideas for the organization of student classes and lessons.

OWEE's philosophy was also taken into account: the walk was held at the beginning of June and let time people to think of new ways of teaching during summer time, to possibly prepare a new course organization before the beginning of the academic year in September.

So OWEE was considered as a relevant and interesting tool to leverage local innovative initiatives to the benefits of interested university members. It was not only a tool for promoting, mixing different kind of audiences and meeting between people but also a way of contributing to reflexivity of faculties' practices and initiating concrete actions to transform practices.

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<sup>4</sup> Promising is a Grenoble university project dedicated both to a research program on innovation teaching skills and to the designing of innovating and original modules to inspire creative and innovative students,

faculties, companies and more generally society. For more details, you can visit this website: <https://www.promising.fr/promising/>

## Chapter 3.6: Fab Lab and D-Lab: Two Different Philosophies of Innovation?

**AUTHOR:** FRANÇOIS-XAVIER DE VAUJANY (PSL, Paris-Dauphine University)

This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section and also in LSE Business Review.

Between 25 and 28 July 2018, I had the opportunity to participate in a rich learning expedition called #hackingday2018. It consisted of a set of visits and reflexive discussions about Boston's academic, entrepreneurial and innovative eco-system. We followed a protocol combining planned and improvised visits going along with the flow of discussions and questions of the event itself (see the open walked event-based experimentations protocol [[OWEE](#)] for details). The expedition was organized by the Research Group on Collaborative Spaces ([RGCS](#)), an alternative academic network about new work practices (in particular collaborative work practices) inspired by [open science](#) and [citizen science](#) cultures.

More than two thirds of the visits were thus improvised. The protocol also relies on openness (anybody can register for free via an Eventbrite link) and long walked-times alternating visits and other seated times. Social media, blogs and videos are used to extend the event in time and space, and link it to other events and published research. Thus, serendipity, by chance encounters, reflexivity and narration were strong parts of this journey which led us to Media Lab, Harvard's Wyss Institute, CIC, WeWork, MIT makerspace, TMRC and different MIT labs.

Two of these visits allow me to make more systematic comparisons between two different philosophies of innovation and their political consequences for society.

We first visited the Center for Bits and Atoms ([CBA](#)), part of the [MIT Media Lab](#), in which fab labs were co-invented. CBA is presented in its website as an "an interdisciplinary initiative exploring the boundary between computer science and physical science. It studies how to turn data into things, and things into data." In its main

building projects, CBA includes start-ups, facilities such as 3D printers, genomics oriented-tools, laser cutters, CAT scanners, etc. It was launched by a National Science Foundation award in 2001. The idea was to "create a unique digital fabrication facility that gathers tools across disciplines and length scales for making and measuring things."

Visiting this place was very interesting for me, as part of my research is focused on collaborative spaces such as makerspaces, hackerspaces and fab labs. CBA is for me an iconic, mythical space, as it is the place where part of the story of open knowledge-oriented spaces began. The fabrication laboratory (fab labs) program started here with CBA. As explained in its [Wikipedia page](#), the fab lab program was "initiated to broadly explore how the content of information relates to its physical representation and how an under-served community can be powered by technology at the grassroots level". The first fab lab was launched in India in 2002, just one year after the beginning of the project.

What is a fab lab? It is a fabrication-oriented place whose community documents and shares the processes it co-produces. It has to respect the key principles of [the fab lab charter](#). The charter stresses also the importance of the fab lab network, and the possibility for patents and private sponsorship but with an important condition: "Designs and processes developed in fab labs can be protected and sold however an inventor chooses, but should remain available for individuals to use and learn from."

Interestingly, another MIT centre was part of the elaboration of this innovative concept: the Grassroots Invention Group ([GIG](#)), which is no longer part of the MIT Media Lab. GIG is "[developing](#) a suite of low-cost,

powerful personal computation and fabrication technologies along with innovative idea dissemination methodologies to give individuals and communities greater independence over their own learning and development". GIG is rarely mentioned in the articles we read about the history and philosophy of fab labs, but its joint imprint is obvious, in particular in its objectives: "We are **actively working** with our international partners to ensure that the tools we build and disseminate can be locally reproduced, extended and appropriated in a variety of social, cultural and economic context." The idea is to document procedures, ideas and concepts that can travel it time and space. They appear locally, work as co-production, and need to be shared and appropriated by other people (in particular with the help of digital tools such as wikis).

To return to our CBA visit, I was impressed by the tools and facilities accessible to MIT students and outside projects. I also saw fascinating private projects, but most of all, it was interesting to see that teaching was taking place at CBA, with multiple departments connected to the place. Interdisciplinarity is an obvious practical thing here. And the course "**How to do (almost) anything**" (set up by **Neil Gershenfeld**) is part of the original story about fab labs' birth and lists among the three most requested courses at MIT. Impressive. Is that surprising for an independent, open movement? But fab

labs, the myth, visuals and concepts around them, were absent from the spaces I visited.

Less than one hour later, we explored another place at MIT, the D-Lab, with both a close and a different philosophy from that of fab labs.

A D-Lab is much more socially and politically grounded in the space itself of the MIT. Their **website** states: "MIT D-Lab works with people around the world to develop and advance collaborative approaches and practical solutions to global poverty challenges." Likewise, it stresses an interdisciplinary orientation (in particular in the courses) and research in "collaboration with global partners, technology development, and community initiatives — all of which emphasize experiential learning, real-world projects, community-led development, and scalability."

The place was founded in 2002, with a strong focus on developing solutions to countries' needs. Although not as widespread as the fab lab network (which is outside the MIT structure), D-Lab has an amazing **international** inscription and is connected to communities in 20+ countries. Two interesting times of the visit epitomise the culture of the lab: the presentations of a corn sheller and a mechanical washing machine rotated by a bike (**see Picture 33**).



PICTURE 33: A MECHANICAL WASHING MACHINE AND A CORN SHELLER PRESENTED AT D-LAB  
SOURCE: AUTHOR'S OWN PICTURES

In both cases, the community's body gestures (hand gestures, postures, ways of

moving...), habits, embodied practices (e.g. of crafting, moving, sharing...) and its

needs are both the starting and final points of the co-creative process. The method and output are expected to be documented and diffused globally.

Local availability of skills, habits, knowledge and objects is key. If you have barrels around you, do something with barrels... If you are used to a particular gesture, let's see how to extend it to other routines and artifacts.

This philosophy is interesting to compare with the more digital, global sharing, network-grounded, and documentation focus of fab labs, whose ultimate goal is about co-producing a common good for

society. Interesting ideas can travel in time and space, be full of improvisation and bricolage in their local co-production, and be also adapted later in their appropriation in other local contexts. The use of (still) costly tools can also help to represent the object, which will be later produced with laser or water cutters, 3D printers and other tools likely to be produced locally as well.

In contrast, D-Lab has no expectations about a pre-existing set of tools or skills, and starts with the embodied practices of the community. The possible commodification of knowledge, the articulation of business is not part of the story. Both philosophies could be presented the following way:

	FAB LAB MODEL	D-LAB MODEL
<b>Focus</b>	Both the Fab lab network and local communities.	Mainly and ultimately the local communities.
<b>Resources</b>	Knowledge and skills documented by the network, local knowledge and skills. Digitalization of skills and projects in the spirit of a common good for the Fab Lab community and society at large.	Gestures, skills, available objects on site, embodied practices. The local community is the both the starting point and final destination.
<b>Property</b>	Both private and open. Access to facilities and knowledge is a key thing.	Not really the key issue as available objects, gestures and technologies are at stake. Out of reach of effective or potential platforms and markets in a way.

TABLE 8: DAB LAB AND D-LAB MODELS OF INNOVATION

Of course, both models presented here are just 'archetypes' and for sure the D-Lab model exists in local fab lab practices, and vice versa. And to return to the example of the mechanical washing machine (which is a re-invention of an old technology), the tripod at the back of the bicycle (see **Picture 33**) could perfectly be a fab lab-documented and -engineered technology. Both approaches are for sure largely complementary.

But they are not 'open' the same way, and do not raise the same political questions for society and the urgent issues we are coping

with in the world. For fab labs, knowledge and skills co-produced need to be part of the 'commons' for all society and humanity. For the D-Lab, local communities, their needs and habits come first, and co-producing 'commons' is ultimately an idiosyncratic, local thing. The higher commons for D-Lab is maybe a 'meta' thing, a method (i.e. how to identify what is locally available? How to extend it? How to transpose it? How to re-combine it?). Interesting food for thought, both for public policies and corporate strategies coping with distributed, heterogeneous local communities.

## Chapter 3.7: "Walking in Berlin"- a Newbie's reflection on an unexpected OWEE experience during #Collday2017

**AUTHOR:** JOHANNA VOLL (European University Viadrina)

This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section.

### #Collday2017: 8th-10th March 2017 – Berlin and the Collaborative Economy: Old Friends?

Collday2017 was the first event of RGCS Berlin and combined a conference, a workshop as well as a learning expedition over the course of three days in various locations throughout the city of Berlin. See the full program [here](#) (RCGS Berlin 2017). Highlights were the kickoff at Betahaus with several presentations, a co-creation workshop at Fab Lab, the visit of the French Tech Hub Berlin and some surprises along the way including a vertical farming startup, a concert and even some touristic sightseeing.

### 1. FASCINATION COWORKING

The practice of "doing coworking", but also the emergence of more and more coworking spaces has been fascinating to me for the past eight years - both from an academic point of view as well as being a practitioner myself. The numbers speak for themselves: By the end of 2018 there are 18900 coworking spaces and 1690000 people who cowork (Foertsch 2018). During my action research about and within the European coworking movement I have gotten to know many different collaborative spaces. I am especially

interested in the driving factors of cooperation within these spaces of communitization. I am part of the German Coworking Federation e.V. (GCF)<sup>5</sup>, the European Coworking Assembly (ECA)<sup>6</sup> and involved in a few Coworking related projects such as the Coworking Library<sup>7</sup> – an interdisciplinary open online database with links to all coworking research in various languages. I regularly teach about new work practices and temporary as well as contemporary communities.

### 2. RESEARCH GROUP COLLABORATIVE SPACES AND #COLLDAY2017

I have met many researchers that are interested in these topics along the way but have never managed to actively start functioning collaborations beyond my university. With great joy did I notice the newly formed academic network exploring communities and collaborative

movements (RGCS). I enjoyed the additional insights about innovation labs, coworking spaces, hacker spaces and incubators in Berlin. Little did I know that I was part of an experimental phase of the OWEE-method.

### 3. ACCIDENTAL OWEE?!

Different parts of the program of #Collday2017 took place in various parts of the city of Berlin. This made it necessary to move our physical bodies using several modes of transportation, but mainly

walking. This felt very strange and unorganized as the program was even adjusted during the day when one participant suggested to add more stops along the way. I felt like no one knew where

<sup>5</sup> [coworking-germany.org](http://coworking-germany.org)

<sup>6</sup> [coworkingassembly.eu](http://coworkingassembly.eu)

<sup>7</sup> [coworking-library.com](http://coworking-library.com)



we were going, and I was constantly trying to suppress the urge to act as a tour guide. After all Berlin is the place I called home for the past seven years. But, being the introvert that I am, I kept the growing anger in me to myself and was wondering why this jolly French professor kept talking so much along the way, while I was more concerned

with the practicality of leading 20 people through Berlin – seemingly without any plan.

Many minutes were spent waiting on street corners or locations – as is often the case when people move in groups. It became quite a challenge for me to manage my inner conflicts during those days (taking control vs. walking with the crowd; speaking up vs. being introverted; waiting vs. moving; individual needs vs. collective goals; small talk vs. in depth conversations).

#### **OWEE: Open Walked Event-based Experimentations**

“Key to OWEE is spending time among people in third-places, keeping bodies and emotions active, walking and talking, breaking down barriers and creating new synergies. Intended to be open to all stakeholders, OWEE emphasises creativity, experimentation, and improvisation” (de Vaujany & Vitaud 2017).

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## 4. REFLECTIONS OF A NEWBIE

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Obviously, I did not know about the meaning of OWEE before being part of one. It very much reminded me of the often-used concept of serendipity when community managers explain the magic of coworking. This refers to an unplanned discovery or happy accident. The method implies a notion of serendipity as well. Yet it provides a framework – just like coworking spaces – that encourage these points of commonality. This walked experience is a direct reaction to the ever same academic principles (submit abstracts, present at conferences, publish papers and books, repeat). The many conversations along the walk, in various settings would not have happened if we had been in a closed conference setting. Conversations started while waiting, riding on the double-decker bus, exploring new collaborative spaces or

unforeseen encounters along the way and made it easier for me, as someone who is rather shy in public speaking situations, to talk to most people from the group at one point. The governance structure of the OWEE seems very similar to collaborative spaces I have looked at. Formal rules are not explicitly enforced, yet there is a common understanding about them. The value of sharing seems central – during the walk but also afterwards through shared data collections and open data access – possibly followed by open access publications. By using shared hashtags on social media platforms this method offers an interesting approach to involve online and offline discussions in the analysis afterwards. The extensive RGCS network provides a great context for this.

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## 5. OWEE OUTLOOK

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Resembling a discourse that has been discussed within the European Coworking Assembly lately I want to suggest rethinking aspects of openness and inclusion. How open is this movement and how can we make sure that the diversity of the places and the people who work (or even live) within them are represented? Or: How open is the OWEE method? In this process we must critically question the so-called coworking values, namely **sustainability**,

**accessibility, openness, collaboration and community, which are often cited within the lively discussions among practitioners of the coworking scene as well as stated on various websites and social media accounts of coworking spaces** (Coworking Wiki, 2013). With that in mind Yochai Benkler argues that among other factors it is this *diversity* that makes a system more productive (Benkler, 2011). Comparing this to collaborative spaces we



can observe different approaches among rather homogeneous spaces (focus on one industry and/or similar members in terms of race, gender, sexuality, social class, age, disability, religion etc.) and an emphasis on explicitly articulated openness. Moreover,

the diversity of personal motivations within a space but also while being part of an OWEE shapes the degree of cooperation. Therefore, I am very optimistic about this new research method of shared learning expeditions and its outcomes for the future.

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# CONCLUSION: TOWARDS AN EMBODIED VIEW OF COMMONS: MAKING COMMONS WALK, FEELING SOLIDARITY

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Where are we now? After the organization of 19 learning expeditions, we feel we are somewhere between a (new) research practice and what could become a new method collectively documented. More and more, we also believe that several kinds of OWEEs and learning expeditions should be distinguished:

- **Exploratory OWEEs:** the idea is to learn, to explore and comment new places. Our learning expeditions in Paris, Berlin, London or Geneva were mainly exploration-oriented (see hashtags #RGCS2016, or #OWEEUN for instance). Exploring places has often been a way to explore practices (of innovation, of work, of communication...);

- **Creative OWEEs:** the key stake here is a co-production, doing and creating something together. We organized two particular learning expeditions (#visualizinghacking2016 and 2017) in Berlin and Tokyo whose aim was to take pictures, draw sketches and paint about hacks, bricolages, DIY gestures and improvisations in new places for entrepreneurship and innovation. Our productions were then exhibited during RGCS symposiums in 2016 and 2018;

- **Inclusive OWEEs:** inclusion and pacification are here at the heart of the walk and the mix of stakeholders. Playing and co-designing together is a way to better know each other. Participants aim at overcoming stereotypes and tensions by putting them in the flow of the walk. The learning expedition we organized recently in Paris (#OWEESA) has been a first opportunity to experiment that kind of learning expedition.

Of course, exploratory, creative and inclusive OWEEs are just archetypes or caricatures. All learning expeditions draw

more or less on the three logics which we would like now to analyze and understand further.

In recent writings and discussions inside the network, we have started to elaborate an Embodied Narrative Temporalities (ENT) perspective which stresses both the importance of narratives and embodiment in our experimentations (de Vaujany et al., 2018). Our idea is that our walks, discussions and writings before, during and beyond our events, are all part of a verbal and non-verbal (e.g. gestures based) set of narratives that combines different kinds of temporalities and practices. These narratives and temporalities are disparate and often conflicting in contemporary practices. Practitioners need to reflect in the short term, in the flow of their activities. Academics produce long term narratives, often published after very long editorial processes (i.e. revise and re-submit). Activists follow both long-term and short-term agendas. By making academics, entrepreneurs, managers, activists and artists walk and produce visible narratives together, OWEE involves a different in situ discussion. By means of social media, posts (e.g. those reproduced in this document), videos, collective times, walks in the context of the problems encountered, we try to share or articulate usually separate or conflicting temporalities. But the practice we try to co-develop has more and more a political dimension. OWEE endeavors to contribute to the elaboration of commons for the network and maybe at some point, for society.

Notions of commons and commonalisation (see David Vallat's section in this White Paper) keep attracting a growing attention in scientific, managerial and political debates. Co-developing commons seems to be the new black of a generation which

hankers for a more altruistic, generous, shared world.

Nonetheless, part of today's world has become disembodied and strangely, communalizing can also mean consolidating, indexing, abstracting, in particular when the common is a knowledge or a set of skills. Documenting processes, sharing online, 'organizing' and 'managing' the commons, can also be a deep misappropriation process which has already been stressed. Merleau-Ponty thus "saw ahead for humanity an increasing reduction of the world of meaning to that of data to be endlessly manipulated in order to solve practical problems; this reduction would ultimately cause us to lose touch with the depth of sense. This depth is comprised of the felt gestures of the world, the imaginal deepening of this felt sense, the poetic articulation of the unique way things appear to each of us, to each group and age, and a rootedness in deeper and vaster horizons that take us out of the petty and partisan." (Mazis, 2016: 15).

The ethical and political implications of Merleau-Ponty's writings are extremely important for our project and the strengthening of its philosophical underpinnings. Flesh, as a set of shared, reversible perceptions, can be the basement of a new ethics and politics for collective activity.

On the issue of enmeshment and solidarity, Merleau-Ponty has borrowed or shared key ideas from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (e.g. from *Pilote de Guerre*). Basically, "one can feel empty and hollow pursuing ethical action for the sake of an abstraction called "humanity", unless it is based on a more immediate felt connection with humanity through its concrete presence in one's life. (...) If there is a depth of perception that encompasses the nexus of relations that are the lining of each percept, then to be immersed in the myriad acts of humanity of friendship, kindness, love, beauty,

discovery, creativity, and so on, that have spanned the long history of human beings on this planet in uncountable instances of community, gives us another sense of humanity as inexhaustible and of an unfathomable depth". (Mazis, 2016: 319).

Eventually, OWEE is a philosophy, an approach of life and the sense of togetherness. In continuation to hackers', makers' and doers' values, it is a co-production in the making.

Walking is a way to elaborate a narrative. This narrative is that of a collectivity, RGCS who does not know where it will go and how. But it walks. Through the process of walking, conversations, encounters, ruptures in the narratives occurs. Writing posts, articles, tweets, Framapads, messages on Whatsapp or elsewhere feed the narrative and its sharing in time and space. It also constitutes more or less assembled times and space.

Walking and drifting together is a way to make visible for those walking a felt solidarity. In the flow, dangers, unexpectedness of the street and public spaces, we obviously share or do not share something. We are all more or less lost and we depend on each other as much as we rely on our Google maps. To stay together and remain a group, we need to adjust the rhythms and speeds of our walk to the weakest of us. We are all in the airplane described by Saint-Exupéry, and sometimes close to Arras, one of his worst episode.

Co-producing a common may be most of all this process, with its depth and its silence. It may be most of all this felt solidarity and this ethic of flesh at the heart of Merleau-Ponty writings.

Let's document this process, let's share it, with poetry, humor, numerous encounters and improvisations. The process will always be much more important than the 'final' results embodied by this document.

**When you want to build a ship, do not begin by gathering wood, cutting boards, and distributing work, but rather awaken within men the desire for the vast and endless sea.**

**Antoine de Saint Exupéry**

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“ Et comme il n'est point de but atteint, ni de cycle révolu, ni d'époque achevée, sinon pour les historiens qui t'inventeront ces divisions, comment saurais-tu qu'est à regretter la démarche qui n'a pas encore abouti et qui n'aboutira jamais — car le sens des choses ne réside point dans la provision une fois faite que consomment les sédentaires, mais dans la chaleur de la transformation, de la marche, ou du désir. ”

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Citadelle

“ Et le simple berger lui-même qui veille ses moutons sous les étoiles, s'il prend conscience de son rôle, se découvre plus qu'un berger. Il est une sentinelle. Et chaque sentinelle est responsable de tout l'empire. ”

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Un sens à la vie



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# NOTES

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**Research  
Group  
Collaborative  
Spaces**



Open Walked Event-based Experimentations