

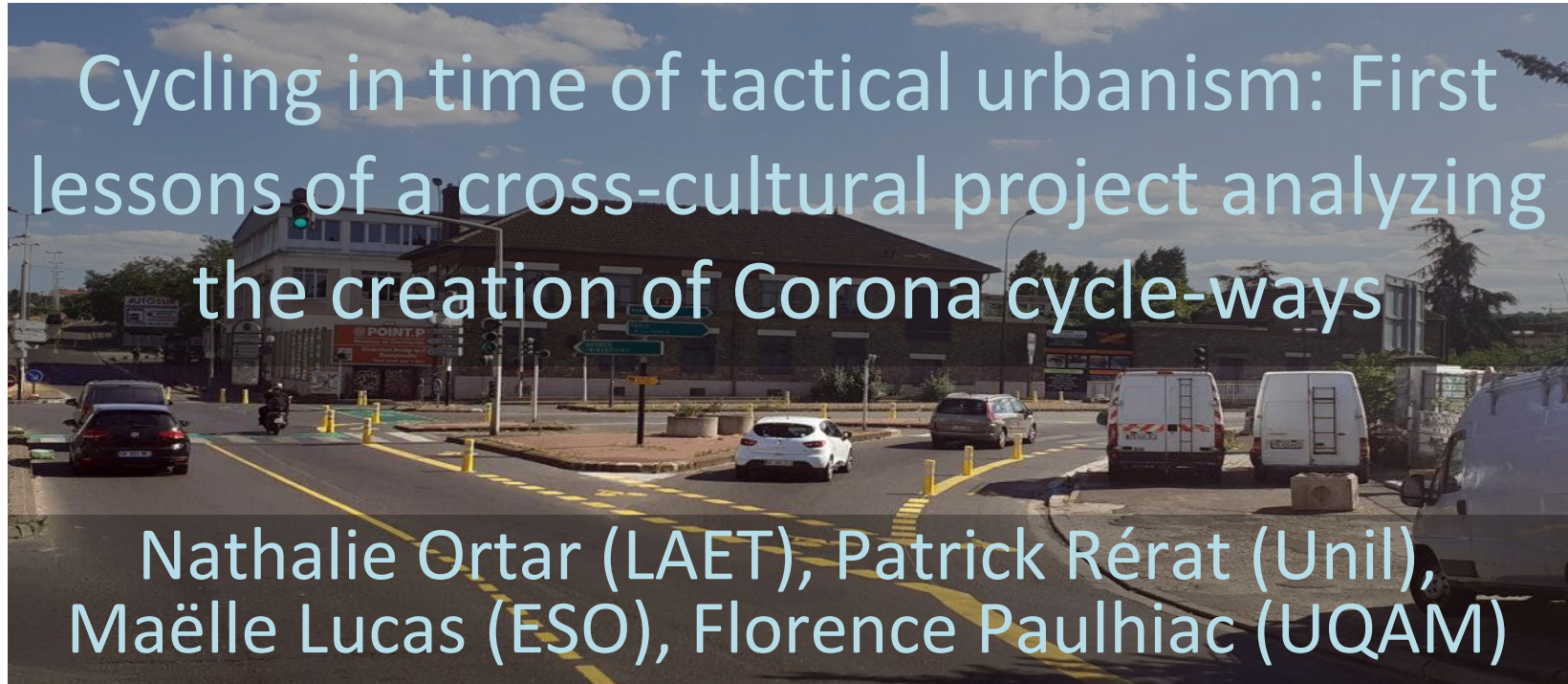


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Cycling in time of tactical urbanism: First lessons of a cross-cultural project analyzing the creation of Corona cycle-ways

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Birth of a project

- A double crisis:
 - Sanitary
 - Ecological
- Needs:
 - Distancing
 - Decongestion of public transport
 - Counteract the fear of a modal shift (in particular from public transport) to the automobile
 - Limitation of greenhouse gases and particles
 - In Montreal: Access to essential services, shops and leisure public spaces to help people stay in good health (physically and mentally)
- Answer:
 - Around the world: “corona bike lanes”
 - In France: le coup de pouce vélo (the bicycle boost)



transition: cycling recognized as a full displacement

- Cycling, a public issue: answering to climate issues and urban
- Cycling, a technical issue: a slow progression of prerogatives of mobility services
- The bicycle, a political issue: a means of transport recognized by all, become an electoral issue



The question of the research

- Which political decisions originated the creation of the tracks?
- What are their uses?
- Who are the users?
- To what changes in social practices are corona cycle ways and the cycling boost contributing?
- Are these changes reproducible?



Project's objectives

- Compare cities in four countries in order to:
 - Cross socio-political contexts,
 - Bring out constants and variants,
 - Contribute to the knowledge on:
 - Tactical town planning and its various variations
 - The change in social practices
 - Velonomy to:
 - Feed reflection on public policies
 - Help policy makers

How?

- An international comparative project:
 - 7 cities in France: Besançon, Grenoble, Lyon, Montpellier, Paris, Rennes, Saint-Etienne
 - 3 international comparisons: Colombia (Bogota), Switzerland (Geneva, Lausanne), Canada (Montreal)
- Interdisciplinary: geomatics, planning and urban studies, geography, political science, sociology and anthropology
- Partners: ESO, EVS, LAET, LAGAM, LVMT, ThéMA, Unil, Uquam
- 3 lines of research:
 - Analysis of public policies
 - Spatial and statistical approaches to bicycle use and facilities
 - Analysis of change in practices





Public policies analysis

- Methodology:
 - Mapping of stakeholder networks
 - Semi-structured interviews with key players
 - Press and social media scrutiny



First results

- Various emergence contexts
 - Swiss: French-speaking Switzerland is known for its lack of bikeability with a low cycling modal share: 6.8% in Geneva and 1.6% in Lausanne against 17.1% in Basel in 2015 (Rérat et al, 2019)
 - France: except in Strasbourg (13%) French cities also have a low modal share
 - In most cities it has been a major element of discussions during the 2020's local election
 - Bogota:
 - Modal share is high (10%)
 - A political willingness and a strong element of discussion during the 2017's local election
 - Montreal :
 - Modal share is low (3%) / higher in dense and central neighborhoods
 - A political willingness and a strong element of discussion during the 2017's local election
 - New infrastructure in 2020 : REV (Réseau express vélo)



Switzerland: a lively but short power struggle

About 7km of temporary bike lanes in Lausanne and Geneva

Process

- Unusual way of proceeding in the Swiss context (slow and rather consensual)
- Play with the law (possibility to change road marking for 60 days for safety)
- Accelerator of existing policies
- Lively debates between proponents and opponents
- Most bike lanes will be made permanent (with a few adjustments)

Lessons

- Pandemic => momentum for creating cycling infrastructures
- “Political champion” to support the measures (Wilson and Mitra, 2020)
- Power struggle that turned in favour of the measures (coalitions)
- Increased perceived safety for cyclists
- New proceeding: full-scale tests (with possible modifications)





France: first very large statements

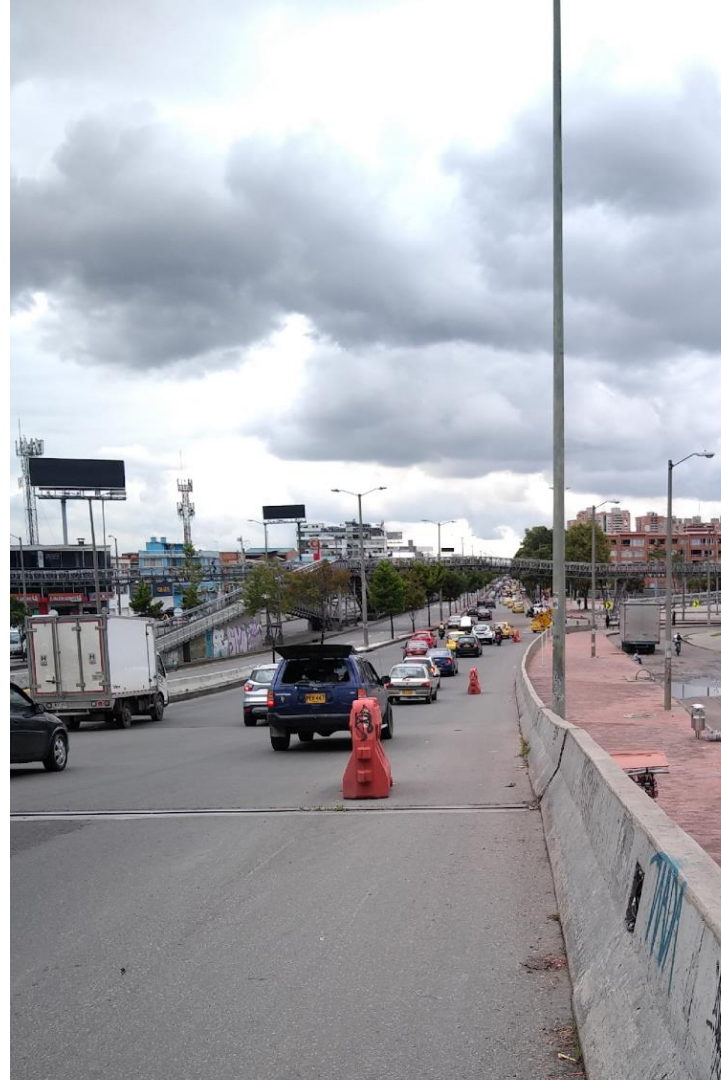
The pandemic has been profitable for the promotion of the bicycle

- It accelerated the implementation of projects;
- However the maintenance over time happens mostly in territories that have started developed a policies measures before the pandemic.
- Elsewhere, the acceleration has been counterproductive by:
 - revealing competitions between modes (with public transport, not only with the car) insufficiently thought out upstream,
 - radicalizing political oppositions which had seemed to fade with the crisis (a temporary unanimity)



Bogota: the uncertain future of corona lanes

- They extend over routes of several kilometers (the longest measure nearly 14 km)
- They absorb the flows which were previously dispersed on the surrounding axes.
- The temporary tracks have increased the safety and improved of the routes of "commuter" cyclists,
- Some have become "highways" for cyclists.
- However:
 - They have strengthened the conflict with motorized vehicles;
 - Since the end of 2020 there is a gradual abandonment of temporary tracks;
 - They have all been temporally dismantled during the demonstrations of May and June 2021.
 - Cycling has been accompanied by major safety issues (bicycle theft and increase of the number of accidents involving cyclists);
 - They are only designed for long distance journeys;
 - They are often located in the middle of the street, which makes difficult the entry and exit of these tracks.





Montreal 2020 /21: experimentation for the future ?

- Summer 2020 : mobility considered as an emergency issue to deal with
 - diverse arrangements for safe active mobility
 - 28 km of temporary bike lanes
 - A good bargain for users and ... for planners : a **Momentum a of experimentation** led by the Direction of Mobility (City of Montreal)
 - A piece of strong contestations (lack of communication; decrease of parking lot offer, issues of universal accessibility etc.) but many adaptations all along the summer
 - and positive assessment and satisfaction survey results
 - But in a context of emergency measures : all was dismantled in fall
- Summer 2021 : new directions
 - 13 pedestrian and shared street projects implemented (no more temporary bike lanes)
 - Issue : local economic redevelopment to support (on commercial street in districts)
 - bottom up projects led by the arrondissement (district) and commercial development association - Coordination by the Economic development service at the central level (City of Montreal)
- New perspective too: municipal election in november
 - in 2017 Valérie Plante was elected as the future " mayor of sustainable mobility"
 - during the 2021 electoral campaign she now can promote both active mobility actions and recent economic development action
 - but cycling arrangements are still a delicate issue even controversial in a city where car user are still more numerous and car dependency still increasing





First statements and open question

- Tactical urbanism raises:
 - tensions and political barriers, relating to resources to the oppositions of actors who could slow down a development (Aldred et al, 2019)
 - Highlights
 - the opposition forces: retailers, conservative voters, car lobbies and cyclists not consulted for developments (Wild et al, 2018)
 - The driving forces: the “political champions” (Wilson et Mitra, 2020)
 - The cultural dimension: automobility (Urry, 2004) vs bicycle culture (Cox, 2015)
- Open question: is the power struggle unavoidable when it comes to reallocate space from automobility?



Are temporary cycling facilities redefining planning practices?

- Corona bike lanes have:
 - Been an opportunity to develop improvements
 - Speed up measures already thought about
 - Allow to play with laws, standards and recommendations: rapid actions that escape the principles of consultation
- A redefinition of tactical urbanism



Thank you for your attention !

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<https://cyclops.hypotheses.org/velotactique>

Crédit photographie: Marion Boulestreau, mai 2020, point de rencontre Bobigny/Noisy/Pantin



L'école de l'aménagement durable des territoires

