

Séminaire du LATTS

LUNDI 6 DECEMBRE 2021, 14h00

Le séminaire aura lieu en B235 (salle du LATTS) et sera retransmis via un système de visioconférence :

Lien zoom: <https://univ-eiffel.zoom.us/j/84728838073>

Identifiant : 847 2883 8073 / Mot de passe : V8GqdF88

Phil Ashton

Associate Professor of Urban Planning & Policy, University of Illinois at Chicago

How many bankers does it take to screw in a lightbulb ? Chicago's public building retrofits and the political geographies of assetization



Successive waves of privatization in the US have transformed policy discourses around urban infrastructure from an indivisible public good into a set of revenue streams available for capture by private actors. In the post-2008 period, the focus on turning urban infrastructure into negotiable financial assets – “assetization” – has endured within new policy initiatives seeking to capitalize flows of people, energy, water, and/or data through financially-intensive investments in the built environment. This paper takes up one such example of this experimental assetization: a public-private partnership leveraging private finance to retrofit Chicago’s public buildings for energy savings, one component of that city’s sustainability plan. I use deal-level analysis to examine the multifaceted production of financial assets out of public buildings and their components. Specifically, I engage with notions of real abstraction to examine how the city worked through a mobile set of financial logics as it assembled the deal, producing shifting material combinations of buildings and building systems as the basis for assetization. Further, I focus on the legal, technical, and political problematics of turning energy savings into financial payments and collateral, beginning with the need to “fix” the materiality of a building’s various flows as investable, and extending to long-term commitments over how the city uses and occupies its buildings. I argue these offer a lens into the evolving and contradictory nature of infrastructure assetization; as these assets depend on very specific combinations of material flows and political commitments, I highlight how they introduce new political geographies characteristic of the “assetization state.”

Phil Ashton est professeur d'urbanisme à l'Université de l'Illinois à Chicago. Ses recherches portent sur la restructuration du système financier américain depuis les années 1970, avec des projets sur la montée du marché des prêts hypothécaires subprime, la crise des saisies et sa gouvernance locale, et le rôle des banques d'investissement et des fonds d'infrastructure dans la production du marché croissant des infrastructures urbaines. Il est professeur invité au LATTS dans le cadre du programme FUTURE.



Contact : virginie.detournay@enpc.fr