BEFORE METHOD:
Analytic Tactics
The *making* of histories

- An analysis that seeks to recover how a condition, a system, a subject, were made.
- The diverse elements that got assembled to make that condition or that subject.
Analytic Tactics

Destabilizing stable meanings

In the shadows of powerful explanations

When territory exits conventional framings: it becomes institutionally mobile, nomadic and can alter the meaning of nation-state membership.
Two Framing Propositions
Larger ecologies of meaning: in cities it becomes extreme

- The specific technical capabilities of interactive technologies deliver their utilities through complex ecologies.
- These ecologies include more than just the technical:
  - They also include the logics of users
  - And these can diverge significantly from the engineer’s logic.
- In the city this means maximizing open source urbanism
Specificity of ‘socio-digital formations’

- A basic proposition is the importance of capturing the diversity and specificity of ‘socio-digital formations’.

Different kinds of socio-digital formations make legible different articulation between the technical and the non-technical (cultures of use of, aims of users).
Focus is on digital interactive domains

- Analytically, I distinguish the technical capacities of digital networks from the socio-digital ecologies within which those tech capacities get activated.

- Intervening mechanisms that may have little to do with the technology per se can reshape network outcomes.
Digital Formations of the Powerful and the Powerless

- The technical properties of electronic interactive domains deliver their utilities through complex ecologies that include non-technological variables, such as the social and the subjective, as well as the particular cultures of use of different actors.

- One synthetic image we can use is that these ecologies are partly shaped by the particular social logics embedded in diverse domains.
Making a “whole” via recurrence

Multi-sited knowledge

- The technology can accommodate multiple particular settings or struggles, and still encompass them into a “whole” through horizontal dynamics, such as for instance, recurrence, rather than vertical integration.

- Recurrence of conditions/situations constitutes those localized settings/struggles as a multi-sited whole.

- Such possibilities and systemic drives undermine generalization. —about the local, the powerless, immobility, potentialities
Velocity: a driver for informalizing knowledges

- The greater velocities that digitization makes possible further drive the informalizing of whole bodies of knowledge, or some of their components.
- Velocity also makes legible, or helps us realize, the fact that a given knowledge might be in a trajectory that can go in different directions.
- This in turn can generate emergent types of knowledge – that is, knowledge that is as yet informal, though it may eventually become formalized.
Social logics can alter tech capacities

- Interactive domains are inherently distributive given their technical properties.
- But once we recognize that social logics are at work in such interactive domains it is not necessarily the case that those distributive outcomes will be present every time.
- In both situations though, informal knowledge is ascendant – holds for high finance and for civil society orgs. Both exit bureaucratized and formalized systems.
IN THE CITY ...all of these elements interact and produce a complex set of spaces
Intelligent Cities: Risk of technical obsolescence

- Excessively ‘closed’ technical systems that involve people (example Intelligent Cities) are at high risk of becoming obsolete. They do not register the way users might keep diverging from what the engineer had in mind.

The more widespread the use of intelligent systems in a city, the more the city itself is at risk of becoming obsolete.
What has enabled cities to have long lives?

The City is a complex system. BUT IT is Incomplete.

- Historically, it is this mix of complexity and incompleteness that has enabled cities to outlive enterprises, kingdoms, and nation-states.
- Installing closed technical systems in a building to govern all its major functions would weaken that mix.
The city tells us what works

- The city is one window into understanding successful technological innovations for urban systems and urban life.
- The city as a powerful “hacker” of technologies: it alters the original design, adjusts it to urban users.
Can Technology Hack the city?
DE-URBANIZING A CITY
But --- The City as Hacker

- Of spaces
- Of technologies
- Of individual’s self-interest: the capacity of making a collective good even if the individuals involved are selfish and nasty.
- Of excessively rigid technological systems
URBANIZING AN OLD OIL PLATFORM

Transforming abandoned oil platforms into ocean mini cities
The City: Knowledge Partner

- The city is a generous partner in this work:
- it is a lens onto larger realities
- Many non-urban processes and organizations now have an urban moment in their trajectories.
- This type of analysis keeps us from only seeing as technologists/engineers.
Why do we want to keep cities complex and incomplete?
UNSTABLE MEANINGS

- Deurbanizing the city
- Membership in a nation-state
Surveillance regimes

- 1,271 government organizations and 1,931 private companies work on programs related to counterterrorism, homeland security and intelligence in about 10,000 locations across the US

- An estimated 854,000 people – nearly 1.5 times as many people as live in Washington, D.C. – hold top-secret security clearances
MAP OF GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SECURITY AGENCIES IN THE US
