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Urban peripheries: The political dynamics of planning projects

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With this dissertation I had the possibility to combine some of my personal fascinations: traveling and discovering new places, the exploration of cities beyond known touristic locations and my profound interest in politics. This dissertation also expresses three of my personal beliefs. First, that the beauty of cities can only be appreciated by comparing them, as an open confrontation that valorizes their particularities and specificities. Secondly, that each city, small or large, has something extremely interesting and unique to tell to any observer. Thirdly, that the main way to grasp these differences is to interact with the people working and living in those places and, ultimately, to live in these cities. In my work, I tried to combine the fascination of discovery the unknown with the need to design more rigorous analysis of social events. The thesis has traveled across different countries. It has been immersed in the context of research as I tried to embed myself in the cities I was living and in the institution I was visiting.

During the last 4 years, I relied on a large network of colleagues, friends and interviewees. Already at the time of my Master at the University of Amsterdam, I settled the first bricks of this research, investigating urban development policies in Paris and Amsterdam. My first exchange in Paris as student has increased my fascination for the French capital and Parisian politics, a city of incredible densities of ideas, people and activities. Christian Lefèvre made my staying at the Institut Français d'Urbanisme fantastic and today he is still guiding me through the study of metropolitan governance in France. Paul Lecroart at the Institut d'Aménagement et Urbanisme of the Ile de France introduced me to the world of regional and metropolitan planning. I thank him for having promptly suggested the right interviewees during all these years. In the same period in Paris, I had the pleasure to be directly involved in an atelier coordinated by Brigitte Guigou, that introduced me to practical issues of urban policy making. I particularly thank Mai Diep,

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