

*Entrevista a Crystal Legacy en el marco del proyecto "Infraestructura y transformaciones territoriales en Paraguay (1960-2014)", cofinanciado por el CONACYT y la FADA-UNA. Realizada además con la colaboración de James Whitten, (investigador internacional del proyecto y doctorando por la Universidad de Melbourne)*

**JW:** – Hi Crystal, welcome and many thanks for taking the time to participate in our research project.

Dr. Crystal Legacy is Senior Lecturer in Urban Planning at the University of Melbourne. Crystal writes about the politics of transport planning and citizen participation in Canada and Australia. She has also written extensively about strategic plan-making and, more broadly, about governance of urban and infrastructure development. Thank you, Crystal.

**JC:** – Crystal, thank you again for your time. Today, we're very interested in talking to you about two recent transport megaprojects in Melbourne, the East-West Link (EWL) and the West-Gate Tunnel (WGT), that are subject of your research. But first, we would like to learn more about yourself and your research. So, to begin, what interests you most about large transport infrastructure planning? What challenges or issues surrounding contemporary urban transports motivate your work?

**CL:** – Ok, well thank you for that. Thank you for the introduction and for the invitation. This is really fun and cool. Now, what motivates me with my work? Well, my PhD research was looking at strategic planning and plan making, and through that work I was interested in deliberative processes of how politicians, planners, and the public engage around the challenges they face in their city and how they might develop policy in response to that. But I became acutely aware of the fact that producing a plan is one thing, but actually implementing it is something quite different. When we move from plan making into plan implementation and infrastructure investment, decisions, and priorities, there seems to be a disconnection between what our policy ambitions might be and how they're reflected on the plan, and what the investment priorities tend to look like. Initially, I was very interested in the gap between plan making, and investment priorities and decision making, and I saw that there was a governance gap reflected in that, in the fact that those decisions don't seem to co-last in a line always. My work is motivated on understanding that governance gap, and I tend to do that by sort of foregrounding the role of the citizen in those processes, in part because the gap is identified by a citizen backlash in community conflict and resistance that occurs in response to the fracture from what the plan initially had said it would do. So, that was my initial motivation for engaging in the kind of infrastructure planning work that I've been doing now over the last few years. I am interested in citizens' participation, but I am also interested in questions of politics, and how politics is performed by the different players, as how politics occurs as a dance between respective players. Politics and politicking and politicization is often constituted by the context and the context is always changing, so I try to map that. And then from more of a theoretical perspective, I am also interested in questions of conflict and how politics helps bring to life the different ways in which conflict happens and shapes infrastructure planning essentially.

**JC:** – Perfect, thank you very much. Transport planning is traditionally a technocratic activity, but your approach to this field is from a socially-grounded perspective. How do you approach your research work and what does it entail?

**CL:** – With respect to methods, previously in my research training as a PhD student, I did research that was retrospective. I looked at plans and infrastructure projects that had already come to light, in terms more of a historical institutional perspective. But because of becoming really interested in the EWL and now the WGT project (these are projects that are happening now), I had to learn very quickly what ethnographic research looks like. I am not a trained ethnographer, so I feel very uncomfortable with that as a title. So, another way in which you might describe my work methodologically is also participatory action-research through a critical lens. What I do is I embed myself in the campaign surrounding infrastructure projects that are being proposed. I also engage in formal processes of decision making, so I attend public hearings, and analyze public submissions. I embed myself both in the formal and informal spaces in which citizens engage with these projects. I also do a lot of policy analysis, institutional analysis and I do that through a critical-discourse approach. As a critical researcher, I think it's really important to always ask the

question of: Where does power lie? Who wins? Who loses? Who benefits? And, what knowledge is at play? That kind of colors my methods. Another part of my work is that I'm also a subject of my own research as a transport academic, and I wouldn't call myself an activist, but I feel like I am starting to move into that space a little bit. I'm also really interested in the role of the academic planner and the academic transport planner specifically in these processes, as a way of shaping the discourses. I am myself in the community of scholars and I am surrounded by and am also part of the research work. I do a lot of interviews, I interview politicians —if I can get access to them— I interview policy makers or planners —if I can get access to them— and I do a lot of work interviewing and observing community groups and citizens. I also do a lot of media analysis, which is historical, and I think that is probably it. A lot of the work that I do is quite informal, for instance I am going to a community rally on Sunday and while I won't be walking around with an audio recorder, I'd be taking lots of notes about the kind of things people are saying and how they are engaging with each other.

**JW:** – Fantastic. Thanks, Crystal. It's really interesting to hear how the approach to your research has evolved from your PhD studies to now and continues to evolve. I want to ask a question that turns us towards the EWL and WGT project in Melbourne. I was wondering if you could tell us a little bit more about these two projects. Both were conceived in 2008 as part of an integrated East-West road corridor, connecting the established eastern suburbs of Melbourne to the rapidly growing western suburbs, but both projects have since advanced in quite separate ways. What informs these projects in your view? In what ways are they similar, and in what ways might they be different? Since it's such a big question, we can break it down. Why don't you start by giving us your take on these projects, a little description of them.

**CL:** – Ok, so these projects were born out of a study that came to light in 2008. They didn't arise from a plan, they came from a study about an East-West corridor, so it was not about Metropolitan Melbourne or about Victoria, it was a specific focus on a corridor which people, the politicians and planners at the time, were believing was probably going to be problematic and needed to be addressed in terms of where our freight movements align and how people get in and out of the city.

So, the EWL was an 18-km corridor and the WGT project, which is the project that is currently being proposed —and contracts just signed this week— was an element of that. It was conceived as part of the action plan, although the project now in its current form is much bigger than that. The projects then formed a plan, the Victorian Transport Plan, and immediately then these projects were controversial, so citizens and community groups started to protest them as being not an appropriate response to our transport mobility challenges in that corridor. They were very politically-sensitive projects for politicians to engage with, particularly in the lead out to elections. In 2010 we had a change in Government; up to that point we had a Labor Government that did the study and a Liberal Government who eventually got elected to do public transport, because that was what was palatable politically, and also what was reflected in our metropolitan strategies and the plans up to that point. But of course, the Government was one, and the decision changed to prioritize stage 2 of the EWL 18-km corridor and that was very unpopular, and then that decision was defeated in 2014. We got a Labor Government who now has decided to build a project, which is a much bigger project than what they had proposed to do in the lead up to the 2014 election, so these projects are political projects essentially, in my view. They are politically in so far as the alternatives to those projects are not being properly conceived and rigorously analyzed with respect to the road-based solution to the East-West problems. We have a couple of public-transport solutions that could be proposed, one of which is being built, called Melbourne Metro 1, and there is also Melbourne Metro 2, which would provide us with a second level, a second crossing over the Melbourne arm river which is where one of our big choke points occurs, which fractures the west from the rest of Metropolitan Melbourne, where the jobs and services are mostly located. Sorry... I feel like I'm rambling because it's such a big and complicated project.

**JW:** – Thank you! You're describing it well. I have another question, you mentioned before that the two projects are quite politically contentious. So, in your work, what strategies and tactics have you observed that the governments are using to take these projects out of the political realm? I am just wondering, if you reflect on those, there might be some parallels with projects in the Paraguayan case.

**CL:** – Well, one of the things that may be of interest to you and what we try to bring to light as transport academics is the disconnect between what would constitute good transport planning versus what could constitute good politics, and unfortunately, we've got a lot of bad politics and a lot of bad planning happening at the same time, which makes these projects incredibly frustrating to deal with. When I talk about bad planning what I mean is there is often not a business case that is transparent, the cost-benefit analysis may be not favorable to the project but the *modders* might manipulate the data in such a way to make the project more favorable. They are not rigorously assessed against other alternatives, so the alternative might be an alignment alternative to their project but it's not an alternative to THE project. An alternative could be a public transport solution for instance, or a way to manage travel behavior as another solution, and so those are the kind of things that we teach in transport planning schools and in the classroom. Then we've got bad politics and good politics. Good politics in my view is getting elected on a mandate to do x, y, and z, and then doing that. At the very least, in the absence of a plan—we don't have a transport plan here in Victoria which is astounding—in the absence of an integrated transport plan at the very least we should be able to rely on the political cycles to deliver at least a political mandate and a political legitimacy to support these projects. But what we've seen over a couple of changes in Government now is that governments are very quick to change their minds, and they just use the fact that they are sovereign and that they were elected, and their ability to make those changes happen, so that's part of the issue. And then the other ways in which governments seek to manipulate the politicization—that is to squash the politics out of these projects—is to sign contracts very, very quickly, and so by signing contracts they then create this campaign where if you cancel contracts then you create an environment where foreign investors and the investment community will not want to play with the Victorian government or Victorians, and so we will lose investments and we'll lose infrastructure opportunities, and that will have an impact on our productivity, and then of course on jobs which is always how these projects are often sold, with jobs creating opportunities. And we are seeing quite a lot of that happening now here in Victoria, where the Government is seeking to sign contracts, to create an environment of certainty for the private sector (but of course the private sector isn't stupid, they've been reading the news), and so you need to also take consideration of other clauses within these contracts that are signed. If the government does change, in case the project is cancelled, how much money will the taxpayers be up for in terms of having to payout these private consortiums? These is the game in which transport planning is being played here in this state, it has become very ugly and very contested.

**JC:** – From what you are saying, Crystal, I think you are mentioning that there are two aspects. On one side, we have some kind of technical frailty, or technical limitation or bad quality, of the projects themselves, either by error or either by, I don't know, bad intention directly in the technical elaboration of the projects. And there is a second dimension in which, if I got it right, democratic debate is in a way being substituted by a policy of what we call here "*hechos consumados*" or "consumed facts", you sign a contract and then say "well, we have to stick to the contract because otherwise it could be in bad shape" and in a way—by saying that decisions have been made, and contracts have been signed, and projects have been allocated—you bypass or declare a democratic debate to be impossible, I got it right?

**CL:** – Yes, you are doing what Ben Flusberg would describe as "lock-in", you are locking a community into a particular trajectory by virtue of the steps that have been taken to embed this project to a point where it becomes an inevitability. Signing contracts and articulating implications of canceling those contracts is one way to suppress the politics that may arise either from the community or from the opposition parties, which are always looking to politicize these projects, of course for their own benefit, which is something that we always have to be very mindful of, too. Certainly, this lock-in thing that happens with respect to these projects is a problem, and also a misrepresentation of the facts, of the evidence, going back to the issue of evidence-based planning; we have a lot of manipulation of the facts and an overreach in terms of the narrative that surrounds that. Myself—and James was part of this as well—sat in on the formal process to assess the negative impacts of this project, and the way in which the lawyers for the State Government were framing the benefits of this project in terms of the language they were using to describe it, in a very emotive way, was a way to manipulate the independent panel that had to assess this project, and it was a very sinister and clever way to do it. But the way in which the community, because the thing that is really interesting here about this context, here in Victoria, is that this kind of politicking around infrastructure planning is not new, and perhaps something that

you should know, and I'm sure certainly James knows, is that in the context of the East-West link, which was the project that was defeated at the 2014 election, that project itself has been defeated three times already over the course of 40 years. It's not a new project, it's like a zombie project, so there's some effort to revive that project again. So, what we have here is a community that is really attuned to the politics and the manipulation and how this course can be used. Studying the community's response to that is really quite interesting, because what I see is a movement away from just NIMBY politics and just a motive politics, with respect to "don't acquire my home," or "what about the children" in terms of emissions, all those things are incredibly important, but they're also (the community) incredibly politically savvy in terms of trying to manipulate the political discourse to achieve their own benefit, which is also equally interesting. So again, what we have around infrastructure planning in this State is applied between good and bad politics, depending on where you sit, and in complete disregard for planning from all players, and it's really, really interesting, I think.

**JC:** – Crystal your work also studies local governments in community groups working to resist projects, to either amend them in some way or stop them outright. What strategies and tactics do these groups use to re-politicize transport planning, to face this project? And how is their work evolving?

**CL:** – Just to clarify, in addition to the toll roads I follow here in Victoria, I also follow light-rail projects in Canadian cities. So, the groups that I study are groups that are resisting projects, but also advocacy groups that are trying to get certain forms of infrastructure built, so it's a little bit more nuanced than just groups that are in opposition to it. And in part one of the main strategies that these groups employ, particularly the groups that are in opposition, is an articulation of an alternative. They know that in order to be heard and to not be simply dismissed as NIMBY groups, they also have to offer a vision, their own vision for the city, and an alternative to the project. In part because they understand that there is a problem, they just have a different interpretation and a different view of how that problem can be addressed. These groups are incredibly astute and savvy in terms of being able to manage the kind of critiques that they would be subject to in the media (i.e. lefties, ratbags, NIMBYs) to try to charge a different kind of narrative. I went to a community meeting on Saturday, for example, in the West, and it was really interesting because the effort, the focus of that meeting, was to stitch together the different campaign groups, because there's a number of tollway projects being proposed here. So, there's a group in the Northeast, around the North-East link; there was a group associated with the East-West link, and then of course the groups associated with the WGT project, and it was very interesting to see them negotiate how they might work together in terms of a broader coalition, and those discussions are just starting to happen, and I find that incredibly exciting. Again, that's another strategy, is to kind of see that even if they were to defeat this project, it doesn't mean the project will be defeated forever, or that it will stop another project that's equally sinister from emerging in their view. They're trying to find a way to kind of intervene in just the way in which we talk about transportation planning and problems, so that we can actually move the discourse away from trains versus tolls—which is how the problem is conceptualized here—to something that moves away from one or the other (one good, one bad), to just moving to a position where public transport becomes normalized as the priority for Metropolitan Melbourne, the first priority, and then road-based solutions being what we do, if we can't deliver a public transport solution. And that's one of the big differences I see between my Australian case studies versus my Canadian case studies. In my Canadian case studies, they have normalized public transport. Public transport systems cross the political spectrum left and right, so the business community is fully engaged with public transport as a solution. Of course, this raises other issues in terms of gentrification and other sort of economic ambitions that don't necessarily align with social justice ambitions around rail transit, and that's a different discussion. But unfortunately, here in Victoria we're just not even there yet, we're still having a debate whether or not roads versus trains, you know, the debate is couched in such polarizing ways.

**JC:** – Just a quick question to give kind of a broader illustration to our conversation. You have mentioned that one of these projects has been defeated several times and it has been many times in discussion. So, two sides: first, in your view, which are the shortcomings of the projects, which are the problems that the project has? And on the other side, because that would necessarily be the rational question, I guess, why does it keep coming back? Why this zombie keeps rising again?

**CL:** – I think I'll answer the second question first, because it's a little bit easier, I think (but it doesn't have a simple answer either). We've got a plan called the 1969 Transport Plan, which has been around since 1969 and it was essentially a roads vision for Melbourne. And many of those roads were built, but what has happened is that not all roads were properly connected, so we've got gaps in our network, and so there's a strong interest in connecting and filling in those gaps, in completing the whole network. So that's one thing, that's one aspect that's driving this. The other one is just automobility, the politics of automobility. We have a culture of automobility, people love their cars here, and to move that, to shape that, requires a full political economic analysis of automobility in terms of who the key stakeholders and interest groups are, in terms of those who are trying to reproduce that, and certainly that's an ongoing discussion. Right now, we're seeing the State and Federal Government get quite excited about autonomous vehicles, which is another way in which to locking our trajectory of road building, because roads may be required for autonomous vehicles to run in the way that they're meant to run, I suppose; so, there's the automobility issue. And there's also —I mentioned this a few times but I kind of foregrounded— the lack of vision and imagination in terms of what an alternative could look like, and I think that's fair enough. Some folks who live out in the deep southeast or the deep north are faced daily with a long commute, and they would like to have a shorter commute. In their view, the only way in which that can be achieved is by widening the road, possibly, or creating another road. They've never seen an opportunity for public transport to be extended, they don't see the role of public transport playing in their lives, they just don't have that experience. And in the absence of that, it's really easy to see that a large constituency in Melbourne and Victoria to just not vote for a party that is pro public transport, because they don't see how it impacts them and their lives, and also these things take a long, long time to build, and so much of our network is incomplete in terms of public transport. So even if you were to vote pro public transport and you live out in Cranbourne, you may not see the benefits of that in your lifetime. I guess that's in response to your question about why this project keeps coming back. It's also a political motivation as well; the Liberal Party would want to see this East-West link built because it's an opportunity for them to weaken the Labor Party, because for the Labor Party it is their home, their base used to be in the West as well as in the inner city, but that face is now shifting because we're seeing the rise of the Greens Party, which is a party pro public transport. So, that's one reason why the Liberal Party decided to lead with the EWL in 2012; it was in part by a political game to unsettle the Labor's base.

So, what's wrong with this project? When it was first conceived in the 1970s, it was a surface project, it was part of the urban renewal movement which was quite popular in North American and Australian cities (you know, the Jane Jacobs stuff), but in the last iteration of this project, it was a tunnel project, so it wasn't going to result in urban renewal —the removal of wide swaths of land— but it was going to destroy a lot of parkland, and that was not a popular thing for Victorians. Inner-city parkland is really sensitive and important, and worth defending and saving. There is also housing acquisitions, and people get really upset about it. That's one thing that Transurban has managed quite well with the WGT project; they ensured that there were very few housing transition acquisitions, because that's one thing that helps galvanize opposition. And the other reason why this project is problematic is because it's an inner-city toll road. Many cities around the world aren't building inner-city roads anymore, they're building public transport to facilitate movement in and out of CBDs [Central Business Districts] and downtowns. The other thing that's problematic is that it's a tolled road; it doesn't sit within the context to some kind of network-demand management whereby we're trying to manage people's use of roads by introducing tolls and congestion tax and things like that. This is a project that would be fully operated and therefore would benefit a private operator, so it seems like a real missed opportunity in terms of developing and generating new revenue strings that could be redistributed into hospitals, schools, and public transport. So, there's also a major governance challenge that is really hard to kind of foreground because it's not sexy, people don't get excited about governance, but it is something that people are now starting to raise eyebrows around in terms of the inequity that produces, in terms of who's paying for tolls and who's not. And the folks who are paying for tolls are often those who don't have access to jobs and services nearby where they live, and nor do they have an adequate alternative, i.e. public transport. So, we're starting to see, in other cities like Sydney, the inequity starting to produce and galvanize a political response by communities out in suburbs who are otherwise less politically engaged in transportation planning.

**JC:** – Super interesting. I just wanted to summarize because I feel that there were three super important points you touched. First, is this idea of the inertia of previous projects. In a way, what has been built has a super strong impact on the decisions that will be made in the future, there is a tendency to fill the gaps of the framework is already there, so that's one aspect that I would recover from your talk right now. The second aspect would be that there is also a more conjunctural discussion of politics; which party alliance, which tendency, or whatever. Those are two different items of the conversation. And the third one you just mentioned is this idea of infrastructure as a mechanism that can be either useful to use as a means of richness redistribution or concentration, depending on who pays the bill and who benefits; it's basically a mechanism that brings money from somewhere to someone, and it's always useful to see who can be potentially benefitted in economic terms, or who will pay the bill. So, these three aspects: the inertia of the projects of what has been filled in the past; the conjunctural political discussion; and who pays and who gets economic benefits are three super relevant aspects of whatever project we are discussing, so thank you very much for bringing these aspects to attention.

**JW:** – Crystal following on from your response to the previous question and some of what your research has been exploring more recently is just a blurring of the lines between the public and the private interests in transport planning in Melbourne. And some of what you touched upon before pointed towards the role of private actors, and in Melbourne we have a large corporation that has a very influential role in the planning of transport network. I was wondering if you could speak to some of the issues coming out of that mix.

**CL:** – The blurring of the public and the private is nothing new, it's not a new thing. I mean public-private partnerships have been a tool and instrument employed by governments to procure, deliver, operate public transport or transport, and build infrastructure for a long, long time. And I think that is something that's happening here in Victoria, the shaping of planning and policy by the private sector; and that's not being named as something that is happening. And it's always easier to make a point like that appear more cogent when you've got a case study to play with as an alternative story, which is the light-rail projects in Canada, whereby much of that work is embedded in strategic planning over multiple decades. Business cases were produced, discussions with multiple tiers of government were had with respect to funding arrangements, and then a procurement process that's put in place in order to bring the private sector on board to operate something. So, it's a very clear series of steps. Now, what has happened here in Victoria is that we've got this new thing called market-led proposals, where the private sector can come forward and propose a project that could be anything. It doesn't appear to have to align with a plan or a strategic ambition and the reason for that, I think, is because we don't have a plan in the first place. But these market-led proposals, when they're put forward, are then assessed through five stages and through a set of guidelines which are relatively opaque, not transparent, and again don't align well with not only a plan but also the existing legislation, which is the Transport Integration Act. The fact that there are no clear lines of engagement with policy frameworks and existing legislation, and that these decisions are just occurring in parallel but with no direct conversation with these other things, becomes really problematic. And the average citizen would have no idea how to engage with that, let alone the transport academic who studies governance. It's very, very difficult to understand what the motivations are, and whose interests are being served. So, we're only left to conclude that the interest being served is that of the private sector for their gain alone. And that's where the public and private relationship becomes highly problematic. So it's couched in terms of a partnership and that's how it's described on government websites, but the relationship with the details of that partnerships remain behind closed doors, and because politicians are not quick to have conversations and engage in public debate about project prioritization —nor are planners able to speak openly and frankly about the work that they do and the bureaucracy— it's really hard to know how these conversations occur and what the details are. So, we rely quite a lot on investigating reporters here in Melbourne, in people who have connection and can pick up the phone and get people to link things. But beyond that, we just have no sense of who is really shaping our transportation plan and that's the discourse. I mean, it sounds alarmist when I say it, I know it does sound like that, but that's the discourse that's coming through in the media reporting around these projects: that the public sector has lost control and indeed auditor general reports on these projects —of independent third-party analysis on the processes of decision making— often come forward and say that the project was fraught, the process was fraught, and that the public sector didn't advise the ministry accordingly, based on the evidence that they had or produced. So, a lot of the blame appears to be directed onto the

public sector, which is probably fair. The public sector and our governments have created this space for an entity like the private sector to arise. But again, it is pointing fingers on a particular part of the problem without a full understanding of the whole set of issues that are being played about.

**JW:** – I was interested in knowing, and maybe as we're wrapping up the interview on maybe a slightly more optimistic note, what are the prospects of recent innovations in governance in Melbourne and the introduction of the citizens' juries process and also the Transport and Integration act—one of the prospects that indicate a different direction for transport planning in Melbourne—, and are you able also tell us a little bit about these reforms?

**CL:** – Okay. Well, I've just published an article on citizens' juries looking at Infrastructure Victoria. We've got a third-party independent authority, statutory authority, called Infrastructure Victoria, which is tasked with doing research on infrastructure-funding arrangements, and they've put in place a 30-year infrastructure plan (our strategy, that was released just last year) and as part of that work they did a series of citizens' juries. I'm quite critical of citizens' juries, in part because often consultation, as it's used by a government, is to legitimize decisions, and it's also used as a way to manipulate and silence people who are dissenters, people who might have an alternative view as to what the trajectory of Melbourne should be. So, citizens' juries are one way to bring citizens together and it's a really fabulous process; to bring many citizens together to have a conversation about the future of Melbourne is really exciting, and for the people who are involved in it can be transformative, you know? These people end up writing to their MPs more regularly or also maybe might pursue a political career themselves, so they are really interesting innovations. But we also always have to be critical and somewhat cynical of what the motivations underpinning these citizens' juries actually are, in terms of what their purpose is and why have they arose at this particular point in time. My view is that transport planning and infrastructural planning have become so political that the Government is trying to find ways to defuse that, and citizens' juries is one way to point to a group of citizens that have been engaged over six weeks to say "they concluded this, we're going to go ahead with that and all you others, each people who have an issue with it, well I'm sorry your opportunity to engage is now passed." But that citizens' jury process occurred during plan making and, again, it's really easy to engage the citizens during plan making, it's really easy to come up with really cool innovative tools for engagement, because there's not a whole lot at stake at that point in time. It becomes a lot more contested and more political once you get to a point of prioritization and investment decisions, and that's where we need more innovation in terms of engagement with citizens, and I don't think we're going to find best-practice examples of that here in Victoria, unfortunately. I mean, there are best-practice examples of that in other places around the world, and I would encourage you to have a look at Canada, I'd be happy to talk about what's happening in Canada, but unfortunately here—maybe because of what's happened last week, you've caught me at a very cynical time—. But with respect to Canada, again, they do better planning. Relative to Melbourne, [Canada] is much better, because there are stages in the discussion, there's this direct connection to strategic plans which have existed for 10 years, so it has survived changes in politics, and governments, and leadership; these things are consistent and there's a degree of understanding of what the ambition is for these regions. Citizens can engage and make accountable the leaders who might have a different vision with that, which may sit in tension with the policy rhetoric and they could say "well, hold on, this is different because it hasn't changed so quickly". I mean not everyone knows—I'm sure if I talk to my parents they have no idea—. But people who are passionate about their cities, which is the kind of people that I study, they would be all across that, and they would be very quick to dissent. We also have a very active business community in Canadian cities, so we just had the Toronto Board of Trade come forward with a proposal to amend the governance structure of Metrolinx, which is the major integrated transport authority for the region of Toronto, in align with how the region is being shaped and it's becoming a mega region, so it's the kind of stuff that James talks about in his work. That's the level of engagement, positive engagement happening in the community there outside of strategic planning and that's a good sign, a very active civil society.

**JC:** – Crystal, just because in the course of the conversation you have brought this point several times, this notion of the lack of an overall transport planning. And I'd like to hear your comments on that, why do you think it is? Why is there not a general framework against which to elaborate the discussion? Because otherwise you have a base-to-base project discussion, which easily, as

you have presented, can fall prey to a rather speculative project, a short-sighted one... so if you don't have an overall aspiration it's very difficult to have a more rational debate. Why do you think there is no interest on developing this general framework, there isn't a condition? Why do you think this is the situation at this point?

**CL:** – Well, there is a body of legislation called the Transparent Integration Act which sets out what would constitute transportation planning, but that legislative framework just doesn't get engaged with or enacted, and so there's a legal question outlaid here, the extent to which our current government can be brought to account through a legal process so that they were to make planning in alignment with the legislative framework. That process hasn't commenced yet. I'm not too sure if it will, but that's one way in which you can maybe change that relationship. These, our bureaucracies, our government agencies have gone through a period of entrenchment over several decades, so a lot of the institutional memory and expertise that was once embedded within government has now gone to the private sector as consultancies, and we've also seen a fracture between the political tier of government's, who are ministers, and who advise them, which is mostly their political advisors, the government itself.

**JC** – Not technical advisors.

**CL:** – Not technical advisors, that's right. And so, decisions continue to get clouded in political terms. They talk about objects. How's this project going to be received and seen in the community by our base, our critical base. And I think they've just gotten away with it, I mean, it's this proverbial sort of boiling pot with the fog on it. I mean, there's a lot of literature that's now coming on to say that's a problem that we're now seeing, it is systemic, it is historical, and it is institutional, and it has now become embodied. And so, to do transfer planning in a different way will be such a structural and ontological shift at this point in time, that it would be quite a lot of work to make that possible. And that's why I study the role of the academics, because we teach that in our classrooms, so we've got a stake in this because we want our students to go in and be great transport planners. But also in the context of transport planning the last thing that I have to say is that it's dominated by engineers, so even if we are working with young ideological, idealistic future transport planners they are also confronted with the engineering regime, which has a different view on how transport planning is done in terms of a four-step modeling apparatus, so the tools that are employed to do transportation planning are themselves quite archaic and don't reflect the changing community and the changing values within our community.

**JC:** – Thank you very much for your time, Crystal. I think you have brought to our attention many points that are relevant to our context. These ideas such as the opacity of the debate or not bringing to public discussion projects that have very big relevance or impact to the communities. The idea of how infrastructural projects that have been built in the past, have a way to condition the future; how infrastructure projects can be mechanisms of concentration or redistribution of wealth and also political and technical debate and community participation, which are all extremely useful notions and considerations to our project and to the cases sites that we are researching about. So, thank you very much for your time.

**CL:** – Well thank you very much, it's really fun to be on the other side. I'm usually the one doing the interviewing myself, so this was cool. Thank you again for the opportunity.

**JC:** – Thank you, thank you. And thank you, James again, for the help.

**JW:** – Thank you, Juan, and thank you, Crystal.