

## “Changing cultures: cultures of change”

December 10-12, 2009, Barcelona

### CALL FOR PAPERS

Across disciplines, topological or intensive approaches to the study of culture treat change as normal and immanent rather than exceptional and externally determined. In these approaches, cultures are defined by the possibilities they offer for change rather than by their size, location or essence. These approaches thus provide a set of tools and concepts to think about different levels and kinds of change – learning, transmission, innovation, adaptation, self-organisation and evolution. This conference asks: what is the potential of topological and other intensive approaches to culture and space for thinking about change? It explores the value of thinking about culture as a privileged site or mechanism for change, but it also asks how and why the question of change is being posed in relation to culture today. This question is especially important at a time when calculation and complex technical systems have become ubiquitous elements of human life, in specialised sites of scientific enquiry and in everyday life. In contemporary society, numbers do not just describe but they construct and – in topological thinking - take on virtual properties, building abstract spaces of calculation and opening up the possibility of new perspectives on the questions of cultural predictability and innovation.

What are the tools, techniques and artifacts of thinking topologically about cultural change? What spaces do they make? How can the current development of a material culture of topological thinking be taken into account, reflexively, as a research topic? What are the cultural implications of the growth of technical systems, quantitative calculation and ideas and procedures concerned with number, counting, and logic, the increase in lists and registers, and the rise of logistics, of innovations in thinking about linkages and technologies of address, and the combination and organization of these operations into systems in everyday life? What kinds of engagement are adequate to the task of thinking and acting in response?

Finally, the conference will also address issues of method, and in particular examine the current interest in the use of quantitative methods to investigate and understand qualitative change. Can anything – or everything – be measured in numbers? What role do modeling, simulation and experimentation have in the study of culture? How can we understand cultures of quantification? What are the implications of studying culture for the uses and meanings of numbers?

Speakers will be drawn from across the humanities and the social and natural sciences, from architecture, design, mathematics, physics, biology, medicine and AI, with plenary presentations from Rosi Braidotti, Manuel DeLanda, J. Doyne Farmer, Matthew Fuller, Alex Galloway, Penny Harvey, Scott Lash, Richard Rogers, Luc Steels, Eyal Weizmann.

Participants are invited to explore these questions in relation to four broad areas of cultural change, though other domains are not excluded:

Media – networks, digital methods, interface, algorithm, ubiquity, emergency, trash and spam, identification, communication and interaction

Markets – models, probability, crisis, performance, devices, cultures of quantification, noise, financialization.

Migration – movement, state spaces and spaces of passibility, lines and borders, flows, blocks and stoppages

Mind – consciousness, language, the human, imitation and evolution.

There will be special events for industry and policymakers, with a focus on social and cultural trends, different ways to think about predictability and the management of cultural change, in relation to processes of innovation.

There will also be special events from graduate students, with an opportunity to participate in a training workshop. Further information about these events will be announced on ATACD website <http://www.atacd.net>.

The deadline for paper submissions to the conference is **Thursday 28 May 2009**. Abstracts with a max length of 300 words will need to be submitted online in text only format (no diagrams, tables or graphs are permitted). Full instructions for online submission can be found on the Conference home page at: [http://www.atacd.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=27&Itemid=40](http://www.atacd.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=27&Itemid=40).