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History of cooperation in the measurement and control of air quality: framing administrative, scientific neutrality and overflows citizens

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Abstract: Concertation is a recent addition to environmental issues, enabling the historical exploration of new avenues on compromise and incrementalism on the one hand and urban issues on the other. Tackling history with a close look at “concertation”, shades new light on urban metabolism in particular. It underlines connexions between metabolism and technical and organisational tools for its measure, its monitoring and its regulation. This is a good introductory focus on “administration”, proof administration as well as prevention and compensation in a spirit of general interest. Our hypothesis is that the issue of air quality is an epitome of the ambiguity by which “concertation” has been handled what concerns public policy conduct, in the way it relies upon “collegiality” of technical and associative actors. As a form of technical democracy, “collegiality” doesn’t pertain to a system officially involving citizen in decision making, although it assumes one figure or another of citizen to function. We will study this fictional citizen necessary to the accomplishment of “collegial” work in the air quality monitoring institutions, as evaluated against more spontaneous forms of “concertation” raised by local contests of industries, or garbage dump etc. After two years of archival and interviews’ work, we expect to produce a more articulated vision of “concertation” in technical environments, across different regions. We will study Rhone-Alps and Pas-de-Calais regions and we will pick examples in Belgium. An international conference, open to private sector will ensue in the third year along with academic publication.