ABSTRACT

Territories called ‘cities’ cannot be regarded as neutral descriptions. They are tools that, in themselves, establish a spatial demarcation – which is also a socio-cultural situation that acts as a reference in the different areas of knowledge (i.e. an act of production). It's thus necessary to consider their objectification and their production in the light of the actor network that underlies them. It's precisely due to this network that some territories are instituted and acquire a normative value (e.g. the capital or the world metropolis) while others become marginalized, irrelevant. In that vein, if American cities are traditionally described in opposition with respect to European ones, it could be useful to consider them in a cross-border context. Their historical thicknesses are certainly hardly comparable. However, what may unite them is that they are no longer singular, autonomous territories but administered ones, at the bidding of administrative circumscriptions that do not correspond to their physical boundaries. In other words, the differences between them lie perhaps not so much in their morphology than in the state model itself, i.e. in its capacity to exercise physical and symbolic ‘violence’ while shaping forms in situ.

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