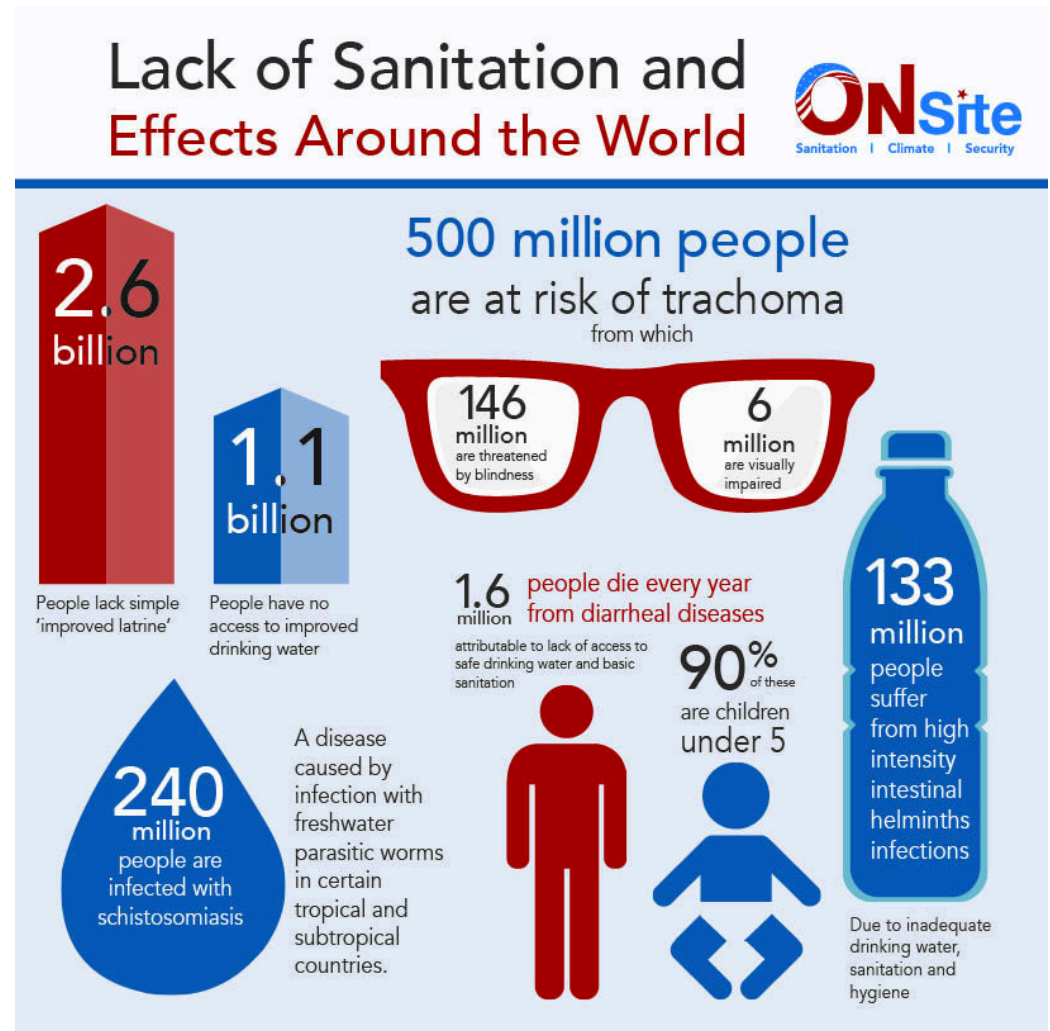
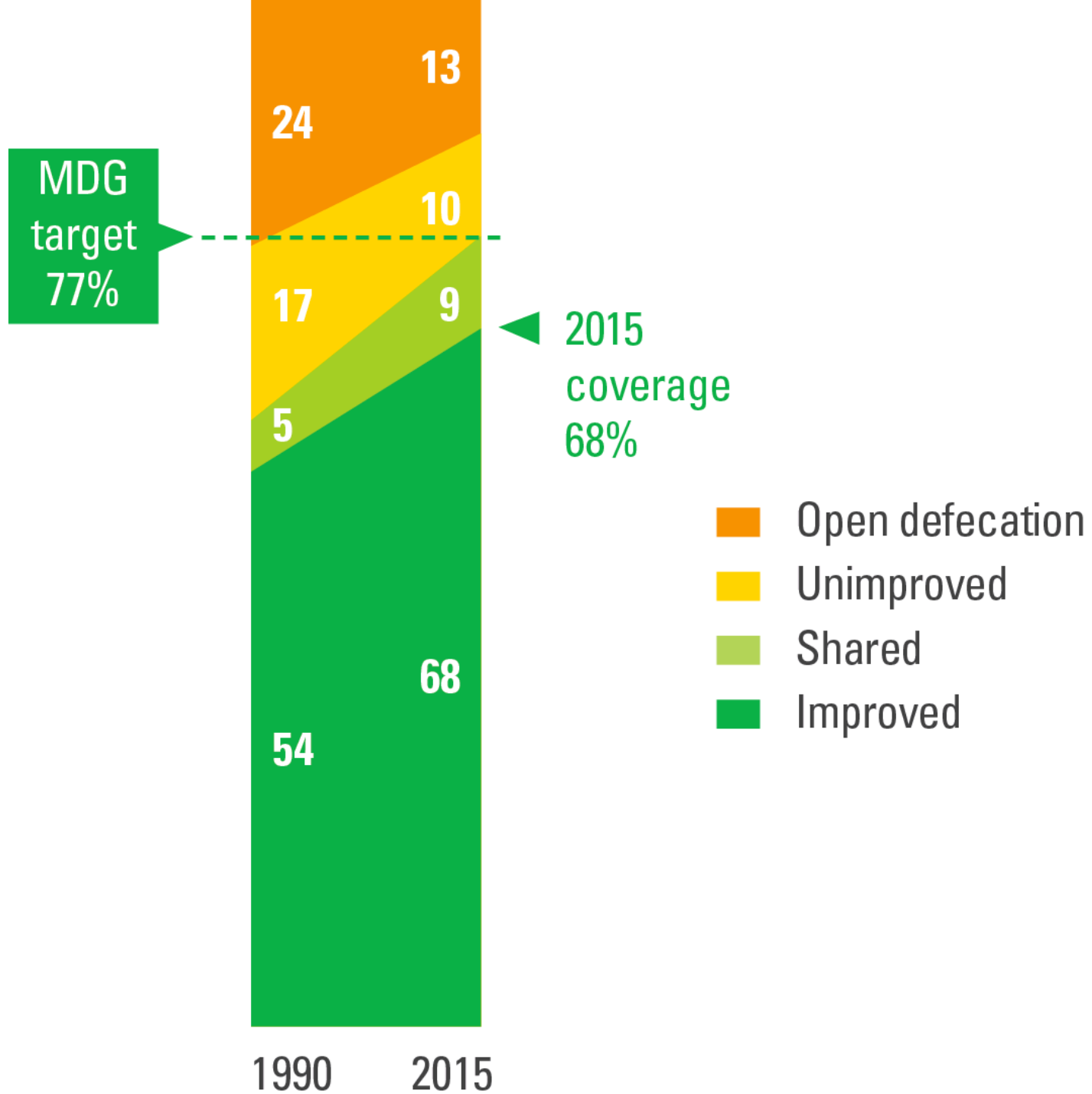


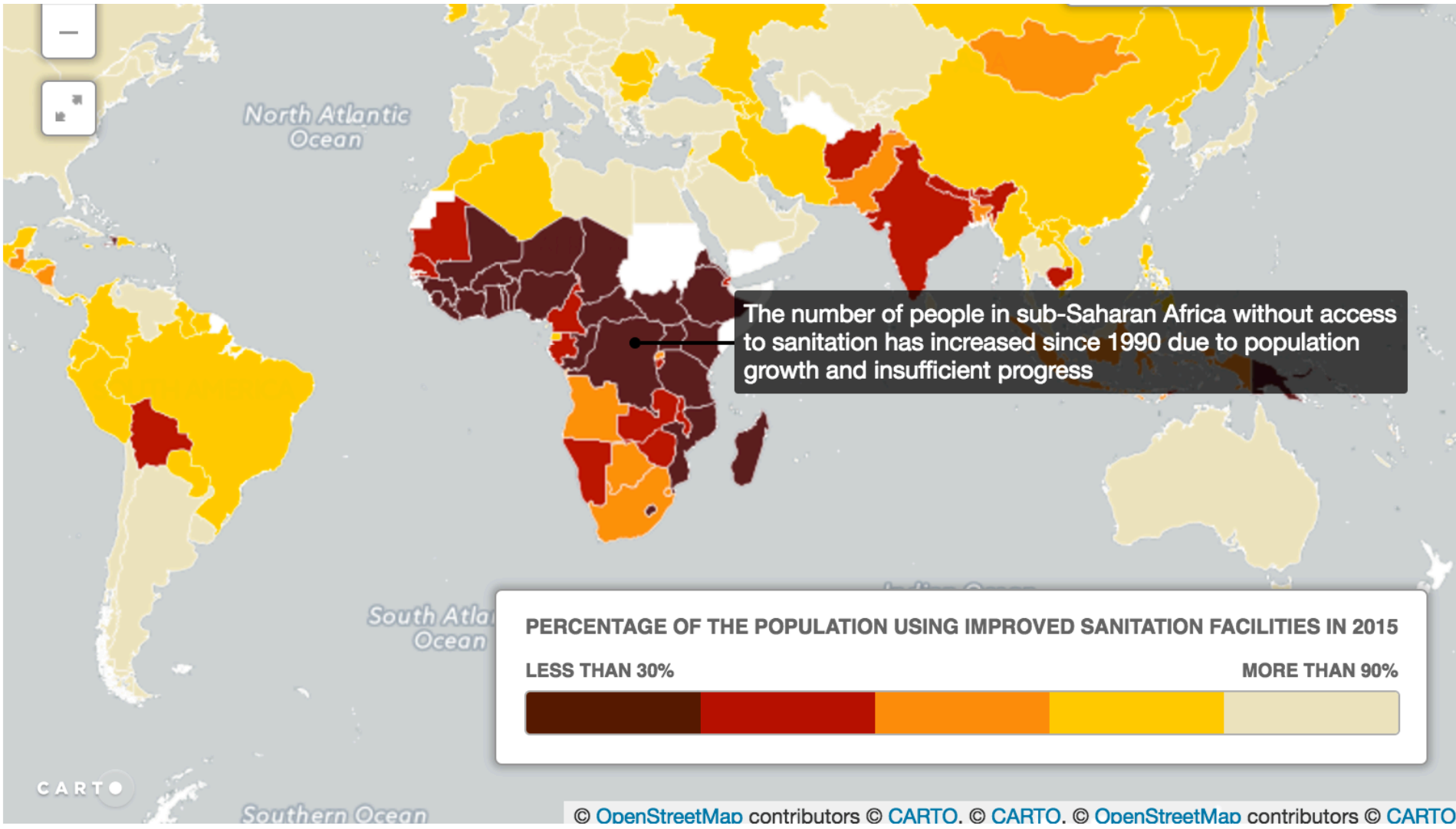
There is No Magic Toilet: Heterogeneous Infrastructure Configurations of Urban Sanitation

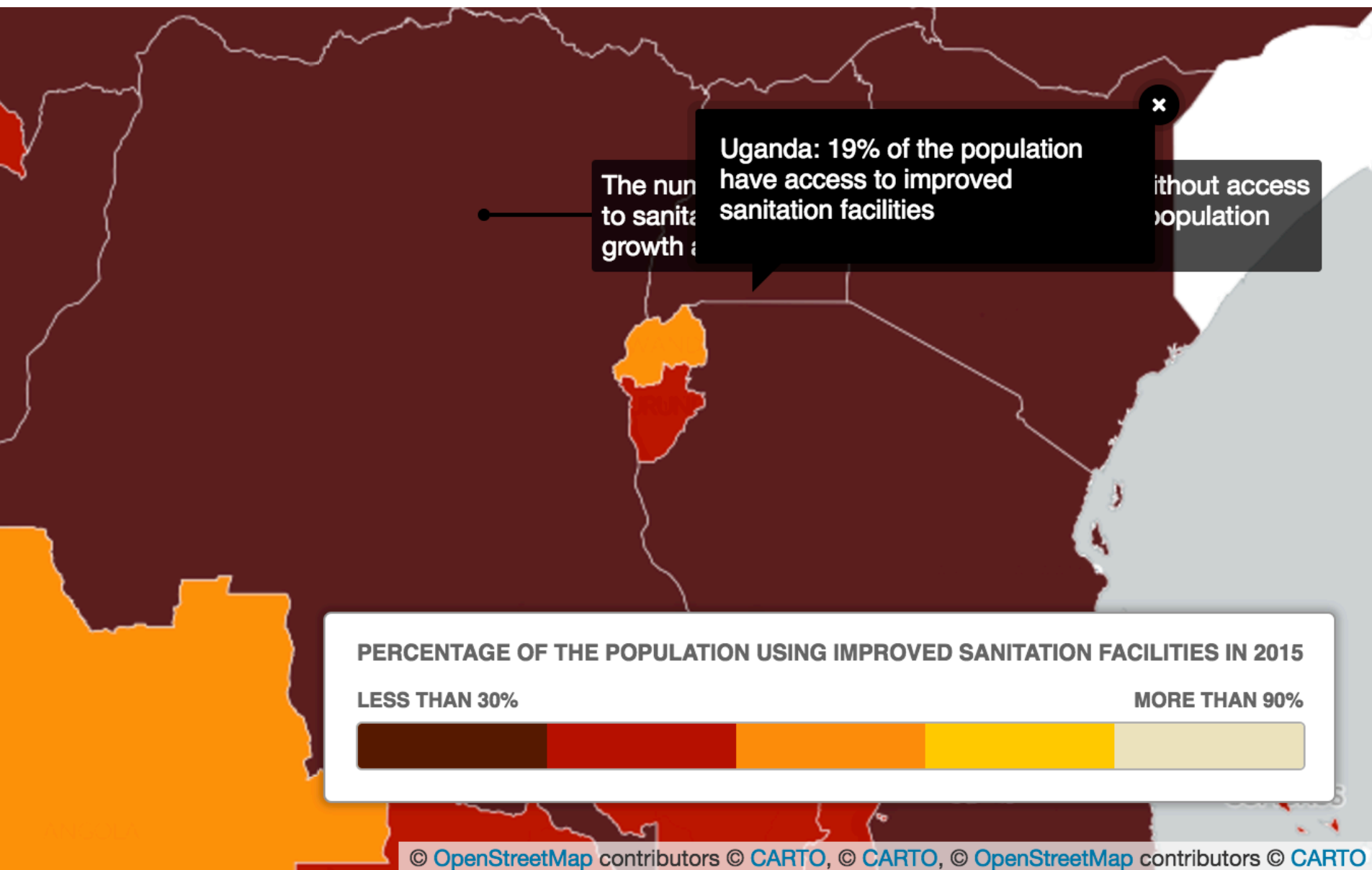
Why study poo?

- Significant health risk
- “Easy” “solutions”
- Limited knowledge
 - Taboo
 - Eww factor









Everyday practices

- In the morning, Amaka wakes and goes to the community garden. Nearby there is ***open space*** where she relieves herself.
- She packs, goes to town to work at her vegetable stall. She uses a nearby private ***pay toilet*** that costs \$.06.
- On her way home, it is dark. She goes a bit out of her way to stop by her evangelical church, which has a ***VIP toilet***.

- Her youngest child must be woken in the night and taken right ***outside***.
- There is a nearby ***municipal toilet***: some weeks, it is dirty; some, it is locked.
- There is also a local ***private, pay toilet*** used occasionally.

A plethora of artifacts & social relations

The search for the magic toilet...



Blue Diversion Toilet (Kampala)

Winner of the Bill Gates
“Reinventing the Toilet Challenge”

“Failed” in Kampala





Figure 1. Six themes in sanitation debates (Credit: Jonathan Silver).

How do scholars study this?

- Mostly: Technical, health & everyday
- Our approach (analytical & evaluative):
 - *Sociotechnical systems theory + political ecology*
 - **Postcolonial (provincializing) theory + urban political ecology**
- *Lawhon and Murphy 2012; Lawhon 2012 E&PA; Lawhon 2013 Policy Sciences*

Provincializing theory

- Theories developed in Northern contexts have limited explanatory power in the South
- Most provincializing in urban studies demonstrates “why theory X doesn’t work in place Y”
- *Chakrabarty, Said, Robinson, Roy*
- *Ernstson, Lawhon and Duminy 2014*

Situating & Unlearning Theory

- “No single theory suffices to account for the variegated nature of urbanization and cities across the world” (Leitner & Sheppard 2016)
- All theory comes from people, in places, at certain times, based on a limited gaze; all theory is *situated*
- We need to identify the underlying assumptions- to “unlearn” (Spivak)
- *Lawhon et al Regional Studies in press*

Why does this matter?

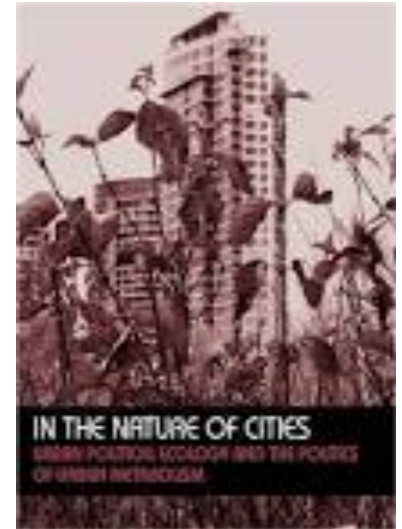
- “Metropolitan academics... discover what they set out to discover” (Mariganti 2013), creating blinders to other questions
- “What is at stake is the renewal and vitality of concepts and methodologies of the urban” (Robinson and Roy 2016)
- *Theory has real world implications: informs ideas about what a city **ought to be***

Towards new theorization...

- *Provincialize* Northern theory
- *Situate* all theory/theorists
- We need for ***new ways of thinking*** to emerge from the provincialization of theory

(Marxist Urban) Political Ecology

- Politics of human-environment relationships
- PE grew out of human-environment geographies
- UPE draws more from (Marxist) urban geography



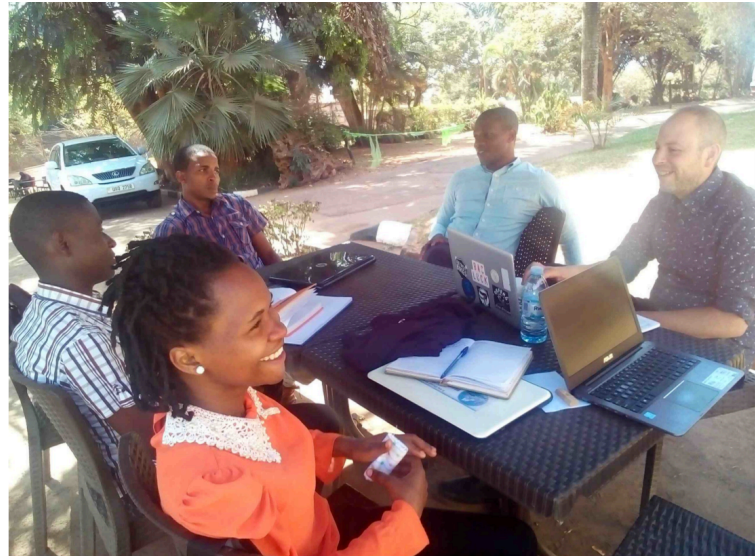
Marxist UPE

- Power as structural
- Examine material flows →
- Critique of structures



Situated UPE

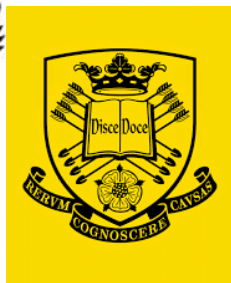
- Start with everyday
- Distributed power →
- Radical incrementalism



What: Heterogeneous Infrastructure Configuration of Cities in Uganda Project (HICCUP) Thinking Infrastructure with the South

Where: Hotel Africana

What it's about: The workshop which is in its second day, is being conducted by Dr Shauib Lwasa, and Jonathan Silver, who are part of a team from various international institutions involved in the initiative. The workshop is intended to engage four students (three MSc and one PhD), who have been selected to be part of the initiative to promote critical and radical thinking about Global-South Urbanism. The event will also be attended by several civil society organisations that could potentially be partners under the HICCUP initiative. The project is meant to work in Kampala and Mbale, two cities in Uganda where the focus will be on waste and sanitation



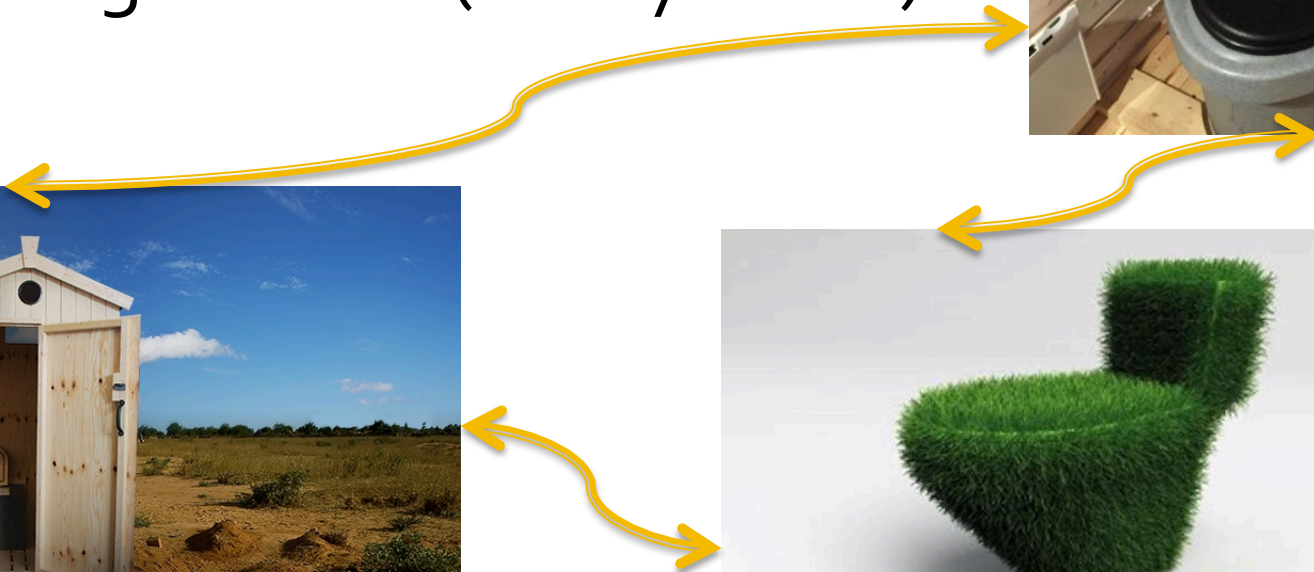
What does this mean for Kampala?

- Northern theory: “Modern infrastructure ideal” (Furlong 2014)
 - Has led to a normative prescription: more access to formal, universal, uniform, state-provided services; formal social movements, etc. (Splintering Urbanism, MUPE)
- Starting from the South
 - Limited resources, inevitable disruption, persistent malfunction



Starting from the everyday

- Heterogeneous (not hybrid)
 - Places, users, needs → toilets
- Infrastructure (socio-material)
- Configurations (not systems)



Heterogeneity & high risk

- Variable physical conditions: rain, dry, slopes, mosquitos, etc.
- Variable social conditions: irregular incomes, irregular maintenance, etc.
- Variable demographics: age, gender, religion, cultural beliefs, etc.
- **Conditions of persistent malfunction**
- *We posit that any socio-technological artifact probably won't work sometimes*

THERE IS NO MAGIC TOILET

Distributed power

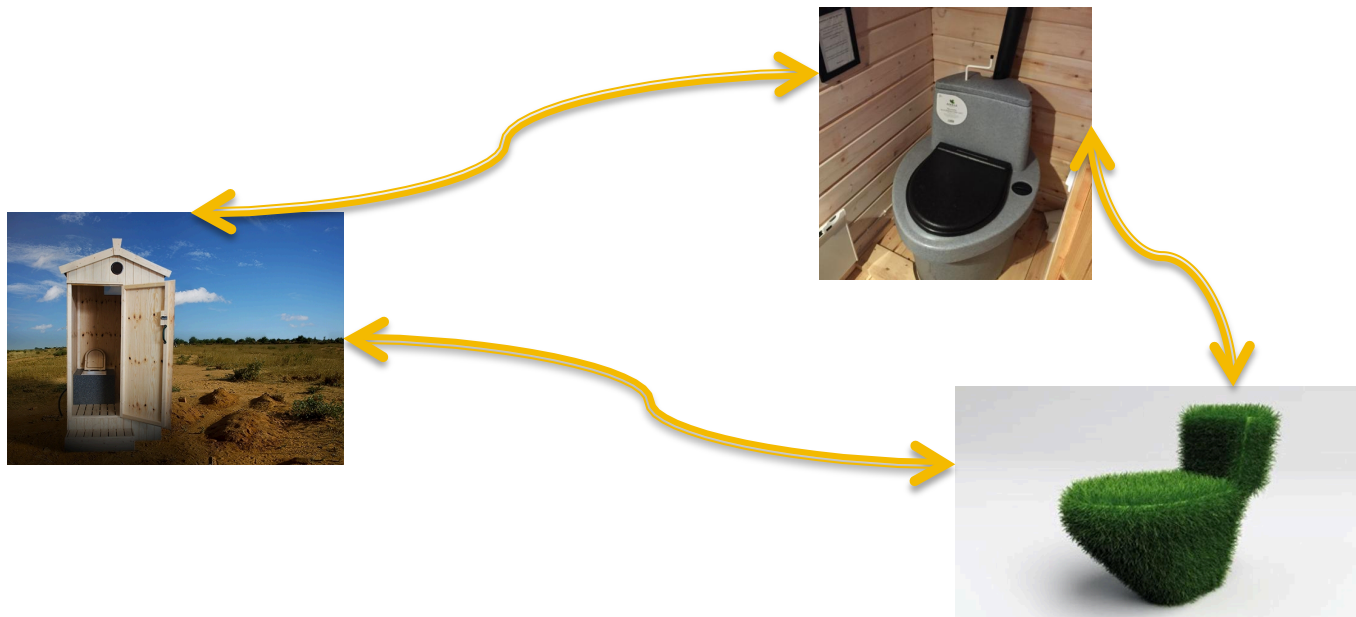
- All infrastructure involves power relationships
- *Power can be more localized, more distributed*
- State ownership solidifies relationship with, legitimacy of, state
- Local ownership creates local power brokers
- NGO (incl churches) creates interdependencies

THERE IS NO MAGIC
SOCIAL ARRANGEMENT

- In the evening, Amaka goes to the evangelical church, ***but her daughter became pregnant and she is now ostracized***
- Her youngest child must be woken in the night and taken just outside the door to urinate, ***but now has diarrhea***
- It is the rainy season, and the ***municipal toilets are filled with mosquitos***
- There is ***not enough money*** for everyone to use the pay toilet all the time

Radical incremental intervention?

- What can we add to reduce risk?



- Can help with decision-making, *but all interventions remain power & value-laden*

Projected outputs

- Historical
- Maps of use
- Catalog of artifacts
 - analysis of risk & power
- Framework for thinking about radical incremental intervention
- 3 Masters & 1 PhD student from Makerere
- My roles: theoretical intervention, student training, methodology, writing (writing, writing)

A SUPE approach to urban sanitation

- Brings together my interests in justice, health, urban, environment
- Provincializes the “modern infrastructure ideal” as a normative practice
- Starts from conditions of precarity
- Requires extensive, participatory research
- Provides an analysis, not an answer

Thank you!

- Acknowledgements: Swedish Research Council (VR), Drs Henrik Ernstson, Shuiab Lwasa, Jonathan Silver, David Nilsson