

The governance of metropolises and urban areas. Territorial reforms, spatial imaginaries, and new forms of cooperation in France and the United Kingdom

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Maison des Sciences de l'Homme Val de Loire

33 allée de Lesseps, 37200 Tours, France

Call for papers

Over the past decade, several European countries have undergone institutional restructuring affecting different levels of government (Nunes Silva and Buček, 2017; Zimmermann and Getimis, 2017). These "territorial reforms" have modified the distribution of allocated powers and / or the geographical area of intervention of local authorities. Sometimes they create additional levels of action, drawing new spatialities for local public policies (Kantor and Savitch, 2010; Halleux and Breuer, 2016). Ongoing institutional developments seem to be following the decentralization movement that was particularly a feature of the period from the 1970s to the 1990s (Wollmann, 2012; Béhar, 2015). The reorganization of territorial powers is often challenged by local authorities who, based on their electoral legitimacy argue for the maintenance of established territorial governance networks. In contrast, national legislative and executive levels often claim that they only want to simplify multi-layered and complex systems of territorial administration. The merger of provinces in Sweden or of regions in France illustrate this logic in action. Elsewhere, the aim is to give densely urbanized areas a more integrative level of action, even if it means adding a level to the hierarchy of local governments. The creation of Combined Authorities in England and *métropoles* in France are two recent examples (Demazière, 2017). These two methods can be combined: in Italy, *citta metropolitane* align with the perimeters of the provinces they replace whilst being equipped with new competences (De Luca and Moccia, 2017). According to different times and countries, metropolitan institutions can adopt very different governance modes, ranging from being authoritarian creations of the State - like the *communautés urbaines* in France in the 1960s - to more voluntary approaches in which actors combine on a territory, through forms negotiated between state and local authorities (Tomàs, 2017).

At this symposium, three interdependent debates will be examined.

Firstly, are the *new public management* and the search for territorial competitiveness the main motivations for metropolitan reform? Or should we recognize other influences, such as the search for a better alignment of institutions on functional spaces, or the promotion of the "equality of territories"? Papers are sought that address these questions by analysing parliamentary debates and official speeches, to trace the movements of ideas for, or against, the creation of a level of metropolitan government. There is also a need for work detailing spatial development issues put forward to justify local government reform in the heart of large urban areas. In recent decades, the major western agglomerations have experienced both economic and demographic growth and a sharp increase in mobility, increased sealing of the soil, a rise in socio-spatial inequalities and the emergence of conflicts related to the location of major infrastructure (Scott, 2001; Kunzmann, 2004; Kirat and Torre, 2008; Herrschell, 2014). In this context, we invite contributions which explore whether the establishment of a metropolitan decision level can really increase the capacity of certain players in large cities to deal with issues that affect their territories?

Secondly, the symposium aims to explore what, if anything, is really new in the recent forms of coordination between municipalities, especially in terms of resources and capacity to deal with the problems of metropolitan areas (Tomàs, 2017). Alongside the metropolitan governments which have been explicitly created by the law to deal with the challenges of very large cities, there are other more, or less, institutionalized forms of cooperation, such as those associated with agencies tasked with managing and delivering specific services (public transport, waste management, etc.) over a large area (Breuer, 2017). Metropolitan policies can also simply result from coordination between existing levels of local government, whether they have the same competences (municipalities, for example), or not (region, province, county etc.). Can we distinguish different models of metropolitan governance according to the types of institutional arrangements that produced them? In the case of France and the United Kingdom, is there support from the national government for the implementation of metropolitan reform (e.g. legal autonomy, financial support ...)? And what forms of legitimacy does the new scale of metropolitan government have vis-à-vis other levels of government and inhabitants, for example in terms of its mode of election? How are the tools and approaches of metropolitan planning, characterized ten years ago by Booth et al. (2007), but today in great need of transformation (Desjardins, 2016), evolving?

Finally, metropolitan governance capacity building processes do not occur in a territorial vacuum (Baraize and Négrier, 2001; Louargant and Le Bras, 2015; Sykes and Nurse, 2017). A third debate therefore relates to the relationship of local governments to metropolitan areas in both countries. Emerging spatial imaginaries can also emerge at different scales, and play a role in setting the political agenda and allocating resources (Davoudi et al., 2018; Jaillet and Vanier, 2015). In light of this, the organisers also welcome papers that address the following kinds of questions. Does the metropolitan agenda really favour the largest cities and urban regions to the detriment of development, or spaces, "outside the metropolises"? What is the diversity of institutional arrangements, whether for Greater Paris, Brest, Manchester, or Cambridgeshire and Peterborough? How does metropolitan reform affect, if at all, national political debates? Do the new metropolitan institutions manage to build 'interterritoriality' between the spaces composing the same urban region? What kinds of reciprocal benefits or challenges may emerge between metropolitan core and intermediate urban poles (Dembski et al., 2017)?

Informed by the contexts and debates outlined above, this colloquium aims to develop a comparative approach to metropolitan reforms and their effects in two European countries/states: England and France. England is a nation of the current United Kingdom, the most centralized large country in Europe and, unlike Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, it does not have its own Parliament. France has undergone significant institutional reforms affecting all levels of local government. By comparative analysis, the symposium will seek to identify what is essential, and what is ancillary to the creation of metropolitan governments. The symposium will seek to elucidate the reasons for the establishment of institutions to govern cities or city-regions; to unpack the debates that have emerged within each nation; and, to consider the local effects of these in terms of the administration of territories.

Insights into other European, or non-European countries, are welcome as they complement and enrich the comparative debate. Contributions from fields including, but not limited to, planning, geography, law, political science, or sociology are warmly welcome. These may take the form of case studies, papers on different specific country/national situations and contexts as regards the themes outlined above, or attempts at comparative analyses of a specific area of public management and metropolitan reform.

Terms of submission

Anyone wishing to submit a paper is invited to submit a one-page abstract (2500 characters \pm 10%) in French or English until 18 January 2019. The abstract should show the name of the author (s), the university and the laboratory attached and a valid email address. It should include a short bibliography, accompanied by 3 to 5 keywords.

This abstract must be submitted via the conference website:

<https://metropoles2019.sciencesconf.org/>

Organization

This symposium is organized by Cities, Territories, Environnement and Societies (CITERES), a multidisciplinary research laboratory of CNRS and the University of Tours, together with the Study Group on French and British Urban Planning, an interdisciplinary network created in 1998 to promote dialogue between French and British academics doing research on cities in the other country. This network has developed a sustained activity of meetings and events in France and the United Kingdom since that date and has produced a number of academic publications in English and French. The Tours colloquium is a continuation of a seminar held at the French Embassy in London in June 2017, organized by Xavier Desjardins (Sorbonne University) and Olivier Sykes (Liverpool University). Today, the group has more than 50 members, mainly British and French, but also includes researchers from third countries interested in planning and society in France and the United Kingdom. Since 2005, the group has been formally established as a thematic network of the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP), which has enabled it to reach a wider audience of European researchers and a network that can help it launch initiatives that generally require more than bilateral cooperation.

The symposium is also supported by the APERAU France-Europe, European section of the French-speaking network of research in spatial planning and urban planning.

This event will benefit from the scientific contribution of the "Platform for Observation of Urban Projects and Strategies" (POPSU) initiated by the Plan Urbanisme Construction Architecture (Ministry of Ecological and Solidary Transition). Between 2004-2016, this platform consisted of two research programs co-constructed with the metropolises (POPSU 1 and 2) and a program of exchanges on development projects developed in French cities and towns. (POPSU Europe). Between 2018 and 2020, POPSU launches three new research programs in synergy to deploy transversal approaches and a hybridization of knowledge between actors and researchers: POPSU Territories, POPSU Metropolises, POPSU World.

The event is supported by the City of Tours, the Tours Loire Valley Metropolis and its Development Council.

The symposium will strengthen links and create synergies between French and British (and more broadly European) researchers working on the emergence of new forms of metropolitan development and governance. It can form a basis for responding to relevant national and European calls for tender.

After the symposium, a selection of papers will be published in two books, one in English, the other in French.

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