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Territories and governance, a research-action actor's point of view

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Abstract: Once repositioned four different experiences in relation to issues of governance, in a first step, we shall come back very briefly on our initial and very traditional approach of the governance and of the relationships between actors. Then, drawing on the four axes of analysis suggested by A. Dauphine, presenting different situations encountered, we will propose an other way we used to better understand governance by and for observation a complex system: the territory.

Keywords: territory, governance, observation, complex system

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I. Introduction

The individual looks for its resources in a background, mobilizes them in multiple project plans before acting and modifying it. The background is not neutral, inert. As a result of physical, chemical or human phenomena, it affects certain action skills. The Territory is home to multiple interactions between different hardware and intangible components. The actor is then placed at the heart of the complex system to observe (Moine, 2007, Signoret, 2008). Among the elements of the territory system, individuals and groups interact in "a process of coordinating actors, social groups, institutions, to achieve specific goals discussed and defined collectively in fragmented environments and uncertain" (Bagnasco and Le Gales, 1997) that can be called System of social action, or more generally "System of actors" (Moine, 2007). It then returns to a more or less formal organization of the actors in a governance system that we define as the seat of the confrontation of needs, projects and power. The governance system appears as a subsystem of the territory and as an avatar of the territorialization (Signoret, 2008, 2009). In fact, this "the sum [combination] of different ways in which individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. [...] It includes official institutions and governments with executory powers as well as informal arrangements on which people and institutions have agreed or that they perceive as their interests" (Smouts, 1998 p. 88). So, governance and territory are inseparable concepts. When one tries to define the governance, it often leads to distinguish a first institutional level and a second applied to the business world. We consider these two levels are closely intertwined as to make them nearly inseparable; this is especially the case when we think about knowledge production and therefore entrepreneurship to the territorial intelligence support. For managers, the study of entrepreneurial phenomenon (or the fact ...) refers to three levels of analysis (cognitive, structural and praxeological) within a system of actors and an organization (Verstraete, 2003). For geographers, the territorial development approaches are very similar to those implemented by managers but with the introduction of three complementary components: place, space and time. A combination of these two approaches would be closer to the Territory as we understand it. Thus, A. Dauphine (2003) suggests us to understand the complexity of the territory by several angles of approach. The first focuses on the structure and the interrelationships between different elements; it is the cognitive base of the phenomenon analysed. The second is to take into account the different spatial and temporal scales and in particular to define the proper level of relevance. The third focuses on understanding the organization of elements in space but also in terms of hierarchy. Finally, the fourth tends to better understand the functioning of the system by introducing into the analysis patterns the causalities and the feedbacks. We find all this in the foundations of the structural geography which, according to G. Desmarais Ritchtot and G. (2000), is "to describe and explain the appearance, organization, transformation and evolution of forms, both natural and cultural present on the surface of the Earth".

The response scales overlap and combine. The actors in land planning and development are more and more interconnect. But, territorial policies are too often sectored and there is a lack of coordination of public action. New patterns of work to be developed; it is the demand of both administered and local authorities in a context of modernizing public practices. In addition, the culture of sharing can help in the fight against the emergence of practices at different speeds (Ormaux & Signoret, 2005). Finally, it appears that the development of monitoring tools is an approach that must rely heavily on the future users (Moine & Signoret, 2007). We are then confronted with different situations in which the traditional political model is denounced by a variety of actors involved in governance characterized by greater interdependence (interaction) between the authority and collective action. This new situation is reminiscent of the first concept involved in the definition of any system.

In our research on the territorialisation, the actor's game, as "ongoing process of cooperation and accommodation between different and conflicting interests" (Smouts, 1998, p. 88), remained central to our concerns, until to take the risk of proposing an approach of the Territory sometimes too anthropocentric. So, our interest in governance issues is not new and we have been, alternatively and sometimes simultaneously, placed in positions of agent, actor, observer and/or decision maker: the basic functions of an individual acting as an element of the governance system. We therefore propose to draw lessons from

our involvement in various systems of governance that we were allowed to cross over the research. To do this, we will rely on four research projects, conducted at different scales, taken as an illustration of the evolution of the approach and methods used by local actors, but also of our own representation of an organization and its functioning. Two of them were conducted in the framework of the preparation of development and land planning projects. The two others are part of the development of observation systems (tools and methods for territorial intelligence).

Once repositioned these experiences in relation to governance issues, as a first step, we will return briefly to our original and very classic approach of the governance and relationships between actors. Then we will enter the heart of the matter, drawing on the four axes of analysis suggested by A. Dauphine, presenting different situations encountered. Our thinking is rational and empirical, theoretical and pragmatic and we could summarize our motivations in a few words: observing to better understand, communicating to contribute to the practices modernization, clustering needs and decisions to foster social innovation (Bouchard, 1999). We will talk a lot of complex system and modelling, in support to the construction of representations, discourses and illustrations.

II. Four research actions in the heart of the system of governance

According to Claude Lacour (2003, p. 325) "It is fruitful to focus more on functional and institutional logics of organizations that deal with space, social, urban and less on obvious to undefined". During our research, we were faced with the field reality. What seemed clear and obvious is now marked with the seal of the complexity. In this communication, it is with great caution that we will return to four achievements.

First project: The Territorial Coherence Plan (SCOT) is a planning document that sets basic guidelines for organizing the territory and the evolution of urban areas, established by Act No. 2000-1208 of 13th December 2000 on solidarity and urban renewal. The first action (the White Paper SCOT) (Dubos-Paillard & Al, 2005) was located far upstream from the formalization of the land planning pattern that is expressed through such document. It was indeed responding to a request of the association of communes: - dentify and articulate policy, planning and programming documents; - Cross the points of view and reveal the thinks kept dark or the inconsistencies; - Focus on important planning purpose to provide opportunities for development.

Second project: Project of the Great Besançon agglomeration (CAGB). It was not a command to the organizing authority, but an opportunity that was offered to us to take part, as an observer, in a participatory process in the context of a territorial development project. Citizens and elected officials were required to share their points of views about a diagnosis and a project taking into account people's expectations; speakers proposed new areas of thought, technicians fed the reflections through cases and situations analysis.

Third project: OSER 70. Its objective was to develop an observation tool (platform for storing and processing data shared via the Internet), for the department of Haute-Saône, in anticipation with the regional level complementarity. Our work was at the intersection of the expression of the needs of future users and ITC development: translating the needs and explaining the technological tool as part of a collaborative implementation. The supply of the tool, the "path of the data", has also been the subject of special attentions in order to remove obstacles and organize the flow of data (Moine & Signoret, 2007)

Fourth project: this research includes the issues of technological development of the previous project but for the city of Nîmes. However, taking into account the experience in the field, we suggested not to provide toolkit, but to take the silent partner in a process favouring the use of the tool, but also involving a larger community concerned in local issues related mainly to employment (Signoret, 2009b).

As regards the geography of the places concerned, we are here in the presence of very contrasted situations (See table 1) and that if we consider the effect of dispersion dependant on the number of communities concerned, the weight of the population and of his representation implied in the measure. So, our objective is not to compare similar projects even different approaches in comparable places. Indeed, we could observe that the local context necessarily did not intervene in the choice of the method planned to contribute to the territorial development.

	SCOT	CAGB	OSER70	OMEN
Number of municipalities	133	59	545	27
Number of intercommunal organizations	6	1	30	1
Population (in thousands)	203	180	236	240
Number of elected concerned	56	140+85	Many thousands	103

Table1 – Characteristics of the four sites of project

In addition, the instrumentation of management and processing of geographical data become a major issue for the participative process in land planning (De Sède Marceau, 2002). The successive projects led us to re-examine certain approaches and that less in terms of methods and technics of the geography than in the manner of apprehending the relation researcher-local operator and thus our own relation of actor (agent) to a local context. Project management must be considered with lot of attention. The comparison of the four projects on governance criteria can be very delicate and that more especially as they do not fit in same temporalities. However, the grid of analysis (See table 2), built starting from the references borrowed from sociology (P. Lascoumes, M. Koebel, P. Le Gales) and from political science (W. Genieys, B. Jobert, G. Pinson), enable to raise part of the difficulties of a compared analysis. It shows the complementarities of the new modes of interpellation established between the actors as well as the new forms of relations between, on one hand, citizens (or stakeholders to be more general) and, on the other hand, public authorities. The territorial intelligence provide evidences of the need to support the multidisciplinary exchanges but also, in a social innovation goal, to better consider non-institutionalized and anonymous expert testimonies which then alternatively act as proposers and applicants of the public intervention.

	Development an land planning Projects		Territorial Information Systems (Intelligence)	
	SCOT	**CAGB**	**OSER70**	OMEN
Materializing and	Political Initiative		Technical Initiative	
operationalizing the processes	"Food for though"	Outlook achievements to be confirmed at the time of the	Operational tool: technological solution	
		contractualization	Territorial showcase	Tools for the technicians
New "instruments" mobilized in the context	Consistency of the levels of intervention	Participation widened during the development of the project	Tool for observation and decision-making Collaboration	
of public action		and Participative Council of development (CDP)		Participative systematization
Authorities / citizens relationships	Authorities seek with better understanding the great issues	Space of dialog between local organizations (Political, technicians), citizens, civil society	Steering committee (political and technical) and transfer of competence Network construction	Supervising staff and internal management Restricted and access
Way in which, the action	Opinion of experts ->	The participation is used to	Knowledge to the service of the technicians and the decision	
to control the territories	decision makers ->	value the practices and to	makers	

is legitimated operationalized	orientations -> technical solutions	legitimate the choices	Public access Autonomy + collaboration	Restricted access Coordination
Project	Political prospect	Plan of community of destiny	Democratization of the instrumentation	Technological and cognitive development
New professionals of	Scientists			
public action		Territorial Co-ordinators		
			Web developers Database Managers Information System Administrator	
Competition between the territories	Between several intermunicipalities within an area of project and with peripheral spaces	between different geographical sectors within an area of inter-municipal project and with neighbouring ones	Interdepartmental	Rural / urbain
	Municipal Engineering		Comparative Approaches	
Information Technologies			Data Platform (Data-sharing) Dynamic mapping (WebMapping)	
				Concept Mapping
Public Development Action redesigned	The expert presents his point of view and elected use it to build its own representation	Technicians make a diagnosis and to make it shared	Share a technical and organizational solution Take into account the multi-representations and needs	

Table 2 -Summaries of research activities conducted within the framework of territorial projects

III. Governance and complexity

In 2004, we were considering governance as a component of a triptych (combining policy, functional and operational levels), in which also appear disparate considerations (Collective interest, economy of means, culture of decision, coordination, pedagogy, territorial cohesion). Our second vision of governance could be described as a stack of levels of response from citizens to the European institutions through the various levels of the state organization, the whole being obviously governed by a certain idea of the hierarchisation of these various layers. All that was corresponding to a linear and vertical representation of the public intervention. Our approach of this subject is now based on complexity.

1. The spatial dimension

Paul Villeneuve establishes relationships between geographical scales and social cohesion (See table 3). If we proceed to the same exercise with the instruments available for the implementation of the public policies of land planning and territorial development, we will arrive at a similar result:

- Global (synoptic) scale: land planning guidelines of the State and the broad guidelines laid down by the European Union.
- Macroscale: SRADT regional land planning and sustainable development of the territory plan (SRADDT), departments plans, regional nature park, etc ; the SCOT is more often just between macro and mesoscale.
- Mesoscale: the scale of intervention would be more about the commune (e.g.: land use plan) and of the intercommunality which received, since the last laws of decentralization, by transfer of competences, new missions (e.g.: urban displacement plan). - Microscale: they are generally land operations (ZAC, ZAD,…), but also of documents of orientation and/or programming (POIH, ZEP, ZFU,…) which can be decline at the level of the quarter or smaller.

Through this "interest from now on carried to the emergence of new relationship between the places (or the regions) and the world, and to the establishment of new inter-territorial or intergovernmental relations (various forms of regionalization at the continental scale, international exchanges of the regions, networks of cities, governments of urban area…)" and which is presented like "a certain territorialization of the systems of action" (Palard, 2003, p. 317), one can perceive a superposition of scales of intervention which introduces the need for a consistency of the approaches and work methods. Indeed, for example, since it is a question of setting up a SCOT, this one coming to print the territory of a development strategy as regards urbanization and economic development, it becomes inconceivable that the actualization of the Land use plans does not take into account of the options decided at the other scales.

An archipelagic definition of the Territories (Signoret, 2009a) forces to go beyond the one that propose a representation based on a defined and limited space. Then it can help us to better understand the different forms of power and conflicts. Here, the stretch imports then less than the infrastructures of communication or transport and than the interconnectivity of the places and the actors. For aught, by the subjacent powers that it conceals, the scale is very important. We have to take into account fitments of spaces corresponding, for example, with administrative and electoral cuttings or with spaces of projects that partition the operations whereas the new economic and social contexts invite us to transgress these perimeters because and take into account what occurs to their margins or, in addition, to admit that the territory does not necessarily correspond to a continuous space. Organisational levels, their interrelationships, and their overlaps have also to be taken into account. As with the nesting of spaces, temporalities are different and consequently it is more difficult to put consistency in the large variety of planning or programming instruments so why the necessary sustainability of the tools dedicated to the territorial intelligence (observatories). Finally, the question of the scale also relates to the level of precision of information and thus returns to the definition of concepts and the role of the relations of causality in the comprehension of the mechanisms which influence the dynamics of the territory.

Echelle	Level of aggregation	Dominant value	Political orientation	Relation of property
Micro	Individual	Liberty	Liberalism	Private
Meso	Community	Solidarity	Communitarianism	Commune
Macro	Society	Egality	Socialisme	State

Table 3 : Effects of scale and social cohesion (Villeneuve, 2003)

2. A structural approach

We recalled in the introduction the definition given by Desmarais G. and Ritchtot G. (2000) to the structural geography. According to the National Center of Textual and Rexical Resources (CNTRL) the structure indicates the "ordering, between them, of the components of a built unit, which makes this unit a coherent whole and provides its specific aspect". Thus, we should first understand the space structure: the fitting of the geographical objects and the nature of the relations between objects which nourish the representations of space. But, within the framework of this exercise we will avoid this approach to concentrate us on the structure of the system of actor: better understanding of what will affect the multiple representations, the actors network, and their capacity to act, arrange, use and manage space, all this contributing in return to better understand the organization/structure of the anthropized space (Moine, 2007).

The structure precedes the organization. It is a kind of compost in which appear intrinsic potentialities, endogenous and exogenic influences. Understanding the territorial structure requires to have the means of reconsidering the regulations and the optimization of the territorial system who organizes itself. Indeed, it seems fruitless to want to turn over an unfavourable situation of a given perimeter, for example in terms of employment, simply while exploiting an increase in the attractivity of place realizing zones of activities having for vocation to accommodate activities with strong technological value. Indeed, the profile of the populations of the ailing districts, where unemployment rate exceeds the 25% of the work-

ing population, only very seldom matches to the potential of qualified job creation. The ignorance of the territorial structure cannot be an excuse in such an obvious situation. Thus, the authorities single to ignore some of the elements of the system and is at the origin of the thinks kept dark.

"The competition between the municipalities have for result a scattering of the areas of activities, a degradation of the landscape, even a weakening of economic efficiency." (Chevailler & Signoret, 2007, p.159). In answer to the superposition of the frame space, to the scattering of competences and to the local development issues, it is necessary to rationalize the territorial organization taking into account the difficulties related to the "critical size" allowing, in particular in rural environment, "to carry out the budgetary effectiveness necessary for the development and the implementation of projects". It also runs up against obsolete logics of tax competition which could be still exerted by the means of the *"taxe professionnelle"*, a clashing cocktail being able to lead the State authorities to impose regroupings (Chevailler & Signoret, 2007).

Causes or effects? The forces involved are often differentiated by specific languages (vocabularies), partitioned areas for intervention, labor practices that make the economy of collaboration and participation, and, as we mentioned earlier, different levels of intervention and dilution of responsibilities. If all of those causes are put in our triptych (decisional -operational -functional), then we can easily explain a part of why local development has failed. We are here on the diagnosis and empirical approach, which may refers to sociology and political science, is nevertheless an important research base for geographers, especially in modelling and observation of territorial systems.

3. Organizational entry

The organization and the development of territories of projects (SCOT, CAGB), go with shared interests or the confrontation of demands (it is one of the objectives of the participative workshops). The will to deal with a common destiny, to organize a collective territory, then imposes "prioritization of the levels of intervention, of the urban functions and of the services, while taking into account and distinguishing what concerns the local services and what must concern the higher services which have to be organized at the level of a department, of a region or the level of the network" (Chevailler & Signoret, 2008, p. 17). Moreover, the complexity of the distribution of the competences between the communities can, under the effect of a bad reading, nourish the feeling of an incoherent stratification where everyone does every thing. The observation of the various levels of intervention (competences, complementarities, redundancies, inconsistencies), or of the circuits of information and the practices then makes possible to better understand the territorialisation and the organization of the system complexes Territoiry.

Concerning observatories, the corollary is to well understand and organize all the line production of geographical information and knowledge of the local phenomena. Thus, an observatory cannot be proposed like a simple software but like an information system, applied to a geographical space, appealing, for its optimization and the production of added-value, to a system of actor in which each one plays a determining role: software development, data flow management, exploitation or the valorization of information, etc. Obviously, all this have to be replaced within a framework of a larger local governorship. During the meetings which marked out the deployment of the observatories, we have heared that the change generated was the cause of new demands. The new organization which is set up then forces to re-examine the economic model of the observatory: to specify the needs for the maintenance and the development of the process. Such an exercise then reveals that the only reorganization of the existing resources, diluted between the actors of the preceding organization, makes possible to ensure the main means but also, in many cases, to carry out substantial resources savings.

4. Impact of logics and behaviours of actors on the construction of the territory

Here, we have to consider the behavioural psychology (e.g. Law of effect of Edward Lee Thorndike) and the sociology of the organizations (e.g. Theory of the strategic actor of Michel Crozier and Erhard Friedberg, 1977). The individuals use spaces of freedom and the organization of the territory is the product of the actor acts such as the political competitions between elected officials (SCOT), the mobilization of the populations (and the elected officials) around a question which concern themselves (PCAGB), agreement of the changes in the practices (Oser70) or the personalization of the exchanges and the will to share a common language in a sociocognitive process (OMEN). The participation of the actors then often depends on the satisfaction of an individual or collective interest what makes possible to grant an additional legitimacy to the process or, at the opposite, to reinforce antagonisms aiming to ruin it. In all the cases, the issue reinforces the actor in the role and the posture which it defends, Then the institutionalization of the actor can be considered as the ultimate stage of the maturity of the play.

If we stick to the systemic approach (Crozier & Friedberg 1977), the empirical observation of the actor can offer to better understand what will energize the structure and will govern the organization of the territorial system. Within our framework on "participative Systematization", we met representatives of about thirty organizations, joined together during the meetings of groupware. We thus could observe, without necessarily seeking to analyze them in a scientific way, various attitudes. Some of them concern what we will call "Lobby": to take the benefit from the meet to flaunt one's a corporative logic, to handle by the speech, to occupy the speaking time, etc. Some others can be associated with institutional logics which, when the reference marks are disturbed, cause a certain distrust with respect to the others or contradiction in the scales of intervention; the quality of the institutional actor is then a crucial factor. Some behaviours do not appear directly related to the organization represented but raise more of individual logics. That initially goes with the adhesion and the appropriation of the process suggested. But that also implicate the ability of the participant to act in the process with the authority of its organization, its competences, its knowledge of the other, its will to cooperate, its culture of the responsibility, its detachment compared to its trade, its political opinions and convictions, its perception of the change, its relationship to the power. All that influences the quality of the individual actor, its reactivity during the exchanges, its will to take part, but also on its construction of the representation of the context and thus on its spatialized vision. Lastly, the project supervisor and the authority also have an important role: choice of a work method, complexity of the subjects of study, means implemented to achieve the goals, awaited and proclaimed repercussions, avoidance or forgets of certain actors, governorship within the work group (competence of the steering committee and of the technical one, collective validation mode, etc).

Our matter focuses more on the defect than on the virtue of the stakeholders. But, the construction of the individual and collective representations of the territory is subjected to the influence of the individuals and of the organizations. Behind the construction of a shared information system, inevitably hide convergent or contradictory strategies which will be the keys of success of the device of territorial intelligence and of the efficiency of the means which will be put to the service of the information and the knowledge. du partage de l'information et de la connaissance.

IV. Conclusion

First of all, it appeared difficult to us to take the diagrams of causality (fourth shutter of the approach of A. Dauphiné) like a specific study axis of governorship of the territories (of and by the observation). Nevertheless, we can find them throughout the speech and we use them in our method of analysis of the structure and organization of the territory or in the play of the actors. Its also a means to study the feedbacks between space, system of actor, representations, intervention and individual or collective mediation what is not done in an explicit way. According to Jean-Pierre Gaudin (2002), "the governance, it would be thus simply public action in networks, a relational practice of nonpreset and always to reinvent co-operations, remotely linked to hierarchical reinforcements of the past and routinized procedures.". The various situations described, show that space, time but also the object of the public action and the nature of the stakeholders mobilized around a shared project have a strong impact on the organization of the system of governance adapted to the situation and that all have to evolve in time. So, if the actions are based on collaborative or participative process, the observatories contribute to a better

organization of the competences and thus increase the ability of the actors to face the challenges. The models of organization then find their relevance and contribute to the determination (differentiation) of the territories.

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