



Call for papers

International conference of GIS International College of Territorial Sciences

« Founding Territorial Sciences »

23-24-25 November 2011

Espace Isadora Duncan - Campus Meudon Bellevue of CNRS

CONFERENCE GOALS

The territory is pervasive in many challenges that contemporary societies are facing. Be it with regard to climate change or energy transition, ageing population, increasing social inequality, urban-rural relations, migration and identity issues, or new North-South relations, the territorial dimension is often significant or even decisive. Does this finding suffice to justify the founding of a new scientific field, the "territorial sciences"?

Such interest in the territory could primarily reflect increasing attention of several sciences (history, economics, demography, law, political science, agronomy, climatology etc.) toward this field, and might reduce it to a mere multidisciplinary object. In other words, would the success of the territory simply point to a varied set of territorial issues faced by societies and existing scientific disciplines?

Conversely, we could consider that the territory is both a powerful indicator of the contemporary complexity and a resource for action. In a society that promotes mobility, accessibility and deregulation, bodies producing standards, criteria and recommendations are necessarily multiplying. The result is a new complexity in which meanings of individual and collective action are no longer predefined nor limited. These meanings are built and re-built, at all scales, and the overall consistency is less and less readable. Far beyond being a mere multidisciplinary object, the territory would be this "indicator" thanks to several qualities: *boundaries* (marked or gradual, with all issues related to thresholds and boundary effects), which can counteract accessibility; *materiality of place*, that is to say the local (biological, physical or social) features that reflect the structuring inertia of the past and the rhythms characterising each area; *interactions* (social, economic, spatial, political), whether they operate on a local scale or articulate different scales, and which shape the territory in a specific, not generic, way. Moreover, the territory is increasingly mobilized in individual and collective *representations* (the territory as a social narrative able to solve complexity); in *allocation* of resources, activities and responsibilities (territory as a structuring choice); and, finally, for *action* (the territory as main basis of legitimacy).

The analysis of these qualities depends principally on available territorial information (statistical, photographic, iconographic data), on technical, administrative or political categories organising them, and on their processing methods.

Territorial information plays a role in the general change in the relationship between knowledge and society. In order to produce meaning and projects, the society has to involve all stakeholders (debates on participatory democracy, on the "technique democracy"...). Because of its complexity, knowledge is increasingly a matter for experts while appropriation of knowledge and decision is less and less accepted. Many actors call for knowledge representation, information and debate visualization tools. Is the territory a relevant terrain where knowledge and "social demand" may meet through the public debate?



Given the growing success of territorial issues (environment, development, governance, mobility, international relations...), the territory may play the role of indicator of contemporary complexity, of vehicle of the answer to social demand and of resource for collective action. The scientific disciplines involved in this conference are thus numerous. Disciplines that concern primarily a spatial object (geography, urban planning, architecture) and those that involve a spatial dimension (demography, geopolitics, urban sociology, spatial economics...) will be central. Yet, territorial sciences concern many other social sciences (sociology of public policies, institutional economics, environmental law, international law...) and natural sciences (hydrology, geology...), life sciences (biology, agronomy, health...) and engineering sciences (geomatics, modelling, complex systems).

CIST's aim is to investigate how the territory may be relevant in multidisciplinary issues such as:

- **Relationships between individual and collective levels** (individual and collective mobility, identity issues, spatial practices and social fragmentation, individual and territorial policies...);

- **New standards and regulations generated by globalization** (new role of the state and increasing number of standards producers; national regulations outplayed by the rise of local and transnational levels; common goods and governance through multi-stakeholder engagement...);

- **Temporalities and breaks in social, physical or biological events** (vulnerability and risk; safety, durability and resilience; prevention policies and crisis management; long term planning in the face of accelerating social practices...).

Depending on how territorial sciences are considered, cross-fertilisation among disciplines will take different forms:

- (I) As scientific knowledge. Here territorial sciences are conceived through the dialogue among several scientific disciplines trying to gain a minimum common understanding of the territorial dimension of their own objects. The concept of territory will be discussed in order to find its meanings and possible deviations from one discipline to another, and space will be taken into account through sufficiently comparable methods. In this case, territorial sciences will be approached as a *methodology*;
- (II) As an emerging scientific discipline. In this case, concepts, laws and methods of analysis have to be defined. Researchers' efforts should focus on the concept of territory itself rather than on major cognitive issues (individual-collective relationship etc.). More precisely, reflecting on such issues may provide an opportunity to progress toward a better knowledge of the territory as a scientific object.

The conference will have to address this alternative through the following proposed themes.

THEMES OF EXPECTED PAPERS

Defining territorial sciences

Does the importance of territorial issues justify a new discipline dedicated to them? A less ambitious scenario could be the foundation of territorial sciences as an interdisciplinary field, in the same way that other sciences have emerged on the margins of several disciplines, constituting either hinge disciplines (biochemistry, astrophysics...) or sets encompassing several disciplines (cognitive sciences, complex systems...). In the most reductive case, the territory would be a mere multidisciplinary object.

Territorial information

This theme focuses on how territorial databases may cope with interactions between global, regional, local and micro local scales; how data belonging to different fields may be integrated (issues related to metadata and to the variety of normative data across countries and producing institutions); which implications does temporal integration of data have for prospective analysis; and how information may be interoperable. It also concerns the production of tools for data visualization and decision-making.

Mobilities, identities and territories

This theme focuses on the relationship between territories and identities in a context of increasing mobility and complexity of individual trajectories. It pays attention to the interplay between different temporalities of mobility in relation to their spatial contexts. It investigates the territory as material for "identity production", whether produced by politico-administrative action in the case of territorial

divisions (meshes, boundaries, territories of public action...), or individually or collectively appropriated while building a sense of belonging. It envisions the territory as a resource unevenly mobilized by individuals, groups and institutions.

Conflicts, compromises and territorial governance

New governance issues (conflicts and compromises between increasingly diversified actors, competition between standards in relation with cultural contexts, efficiency of public action and new regulations from local to international scale) can be best understood when tested on territories, some of which highlight these issues particularly well: cross-border territories, common goods, large multinational regions (Europe and its neighbourhoods, etc..).

Risks and territories

There is a growing social demand on the theme of risks: importance of tools for making the field actors aware of the issues, increasing number of studies and prevention plans, but frequent lack of preparation by public authorities in particular in developing countries. The need to analyze the entire chain of ("natural", technological ...) risk entails a requirement of "decompartmentalization": between disciplines; between research and social demand; between the different components that can be integrated by the territorial approach: causes (often systemic), hazard, crisis, crisis management, vulnerability assessment and prevention.

Biodiversity and territories

The spatial dimension of interactions between societies and biodiversity within territories and landscapes provides a good standpoint for observing the concomitant evolutions of social systems and of biodiversity: which effects do biodiversity changes have on societies? Which effects may be generated on these territories by possible spatial re-distributions of species, populations, or genes? How to manage ever increasing amounts of information and to derive spatialised policy recommendations from it?

Agriculture, territories and sustainable development

The status of agriculture has evolved from a sector often described as inherited from the past toward a domain bearing cross-sectoral issues of utmost importance: growing competition for access to food production resources (food security, purchase of land by foreign states...), health protection of consumers, preservation of natural resources, maintaining biodiversity, cultural diversity. This cross-sectoral character entails an essential territorial dimension.

Territories and health

As defined by the WHO, health is a particularly cross-sectoral notion, which implies meeting the basic - affective, sanitary, nutritional, social, and cultural - needs of the individual. Territories play an important role when trying to characterise and understand the health level of a population, to analyse and implement care systems, to identify alerts and to prevent contamination risks (public health observatories).

Other themes

Researchers may also propose papers concerning themes besides those listed, yet they have to conform to the three-fold approach: theorizing the interdisciplinary field of territorial sciences / territorial information / social demand.

CONFERENCE ORGANISATION

The three days conference will be held in Campus Meudon Bellevue (Paris) from Wednesday November 23rd to Friday November 25th, 2011. Each communication shall not exceed fifteen minutes.

Papers submission

Paper proposals should be written in French or English, and conform to the attached template, also available on the conference website. They should comprise between 12 000 and 16 000 characters and have to be sent to the email address chloe.didelon@gis-cist.fr.

The Scientific Committee of the conference will review each proposal.

Important deadlines

- Papers proposals submission: June 15, 2011.
- Notification of papers acceptance: July 13, 2011.

Publication of papers

All accepted papers will be published in the conference proceedings (available at the opening of the conference). Moreover, the synthesis of the conference and a longer version of some papers may be included in another scientific publication (a collective work or a special issue of a scientific journal).

For more information: <http://www.colloque.gis-cist.fr>

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