

GOVERNANCE AND GEOGRAPHY EXPLAINING THE IMPORTANCE OF REGIONAL PLANNING TO CITIZENS, STAKEHOLDERS IN THEIR LIVING SPACE

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SUMMARY

Governance is a process which enables states, local authorities, elected representatives to co-construct, alongside the population on every level, decisions for the common good with long term future consequences. After the study of how this concept came about, we will look at a conceptual structure and make a critical analysis by clarifying the theoretical presuppositions. Finally, geo-governance, or governance examined from a spatial viewpoint, will be defined by examining a few French and Swiss examples demonstrating the difficult path towards a collective decision involving institutions and citizens in terms of town and country planning.

Key words: governance/geo-governance, citizen/political relations, power of decision, participation, representative democracy/participative democracy, actors, common property, management, consensus, information/training.

INTRODUCTION

Governance is a catch-all word that is scattered throughout numerous publications, in many communiqués and speeches, and spouted by many a CEO¹, politician or civil servant. “Googled” in French in February 2008, this word came up nearly 1000 times; limited to the most pertinent web pages. The keywords enabling a more refined search were: “*definition of governance, governance, local governance, corporate governance, good governance,*

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management, global governance". Limiting the search to *definition of governance*, it is to be noted that the articles that come up involve *environmental regulation* of the economy, the *democratic consequences* that governance suggests; conversely that governance is simply an *ultraliberal tool*, and also different types of governance: *urban governance, global governance, territorial governance*... This widespread explosion of the use of the term *governance* brings up the question of pertinence of the concept: where does it come from? How did it spread throughout the sciences and society? Where are we today in terms of the meaning of this concept? Is it pertinent in terms of geography? Why do we see it linked to sustainable development? What are the theoretical pre-suppositions of its use? Does it matter how it is used or does that have an effect on economical, political or territorial conception? Questions that call for answers, or at least an attempt at this.

Therefore, initially we will try to make up a sort of archaeology of the concept, and its paths through the domain of the social sciences. Then we will try to set up a theoretical base giving a certain order to the concepts and notions applied to *governance* today and attempt a critical analysis. Finally, based on a few concrete examples, we will demonstrate the possible effects in the area of geography as a social science, on how citizens manage their territory, their living space, their true involvement in this management: illusion or reality? Which instrument does a geographer play in this orchestra?

I. ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE CONCEPT OF GOVERNANCE

The term *governance* was coined by American economists more than thirty years ago, and was used in particular by those involved in *corporate governance* and/or management. It meant optimising economic efficiency by taking into account the human aspect of market prices at the beginning, and then later integrating the notion of territory such as the town (*urban governance*) where the spatial dimension is considered as a facilitator for the local actors. The term *corporate governance* was used in American business circles throughout the 80s. In the late 80s – early 90s, the concept of *governance* then migrated from economics to English political science and in particular to the area of regional planning. In fact, from 1979 on, following Margaret Thatcher's attacks on the power of local authorities, deemed to be inefficient and costly, *local government* was transformed and the analysis of these transformations gave birth to the notion of *urban governance* taken up by other European countries for the purpose of studying local authorities, frequently in the context of *local planning*. Within this framework, it examines how private enterprise enters into the decisions that one could consider as being exclusively public. In a way, it is a sort of questioning of centralized state structures that work from the top down and the introduction of an alternative solution that is more modern and efficient in regional planning: interactive structures between the public and private sector, the conjunction of which would be more efficient in solving the problems posed. In parallel to economic and political science, the concept expanded into international relations, both in financial and environmental areas (*global governance*). Here the approach is more technical: there is *good governance* and hence *bad governance, good practice* and *bad practice*. Economists at the World Bank and the IMF brought in the concept of *good governance* to describe state management that would respect macro-economic principles recommended by institutions coming out of Bretton Woods, but forgot somewhat

to ask themselves about the meaning of *good*: *good* in relation to what? We are now in a moral domain and this “*good*” is condescending, even imperialist. It also suggests that there is no alternative to the solutions put forward by these international organizations. Therefore, these organizations (IMF, World Bank, UNDP, Asian Development Bank, OECD...) dictate the rules of *good governance* to countries to enable successful development aid programmes by states. The European Union and the EBRD have gone in this direction resulting in the intention of organizing in a supra national way the rules of functioning of Europe over the heads of the individual member countries. The same goes for the organization of *global governance* according the principles of the concept of *sustainable development* as understood in the now famous statement:

“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”

On the basis of the principle of human survival, there is an underlying technocrat idea that development is possible by re-orientating the economy and society thanks to new techniques that prevent us from exhausting the resources of the planet. They can be implemented by international structures who lay down the rules, and by States who ratify and apply the decisions taken. In this context, citizens are invited to participate in this collective work and *governance* is presented as the *social facet of the principle of sustainability*: Agenda 21s multiply at a local level, with the aim of bringing together citizens and decision-makers (elected representatives and experts), to propose solutions agreed by all to the problems posed. *Participation*, which forms the subject of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (June 1992), has become the master word. But for all that, does participation signify *democratic debate*? In fact, it is often presented as a necessity in the face of current setbacks in *representative democracy* whose level of intervention and therefore decision-making no longer corresponds to the scale of problems either at a local or a global level, nor to the function of existing administrative and political structures. Examined more closely, this *participation* simply consists of allowing citizens access to information that concerns them, which of course already means a great deal. It hence leads to a certain *transparency* in the decisions, whilst at the same time favouring the surfacing of information concerning the citizens’ point of view. However, the goal is indeed to better reveal decisions that do not necessarily appear clear to the local community, without debate except for information meetings, arguing that the urgency of implementing procedures and the technical aspects of problems that go beyond the comprehension of the general public, concerning the solutions considered by the experts alone.

However, economic science, from whence the concept came, seems to ignore the effects of other social sciences on these same subjects. One of the reasons put forward is that economics would be the only social science to pride itself on the use of models and concepts having a strong mathematical content, which is not correct. Furthermore, it is its weakness as much as its strength: human and social behaviour is difficult to quantify as a mathematical model, as shown at the end of the 70s; social sciences had to consider qualitative concepts as much as quantitative aspects in proposed behavioural models. So it goes for cultural models. We can hypothesize that the concept of governance, born to economists in the USA to suit

the needs of a triumphant ultraliberal economy, especially following the collapse of socialist models, was spread throughout the world via international organizations to eliminate any existing obstacles in the way of this liberal model, be it economic (customs duties...) or political (centralized structures, representative democracy jealously guarding its power...)

II. THE CONCEPT OF GOVERNANCE: CONSTRUCTION AND DISCUSSION OF THE THEORETICAL BASIS

The concept of governance as seen across all the social science disciplines mentioned have the following points in common:

The first element is that we move from the concept of *government* towards that of *governance*, after having used *governability*. To go from *government* to *governance* implies the denouncement of the traditional political model of government. It follows on from the idea that there is a crisis of *governability* in the traditional system that needs to be solved. In consequence the first common point is that in every sense of the concept of governance there is a ***transformation of the forms of public action***. We go from the State and elected representatives as the sole *actors* in the traditional model (fig 1) to a multitude of *actors* in a governance model: alongside public institutions (national, regional etc.) we now see citizens' groups, lobbying groups, associations, NGOs, religions etc. (fig 2). These groups *interact* to expose problems and find collective solutions.

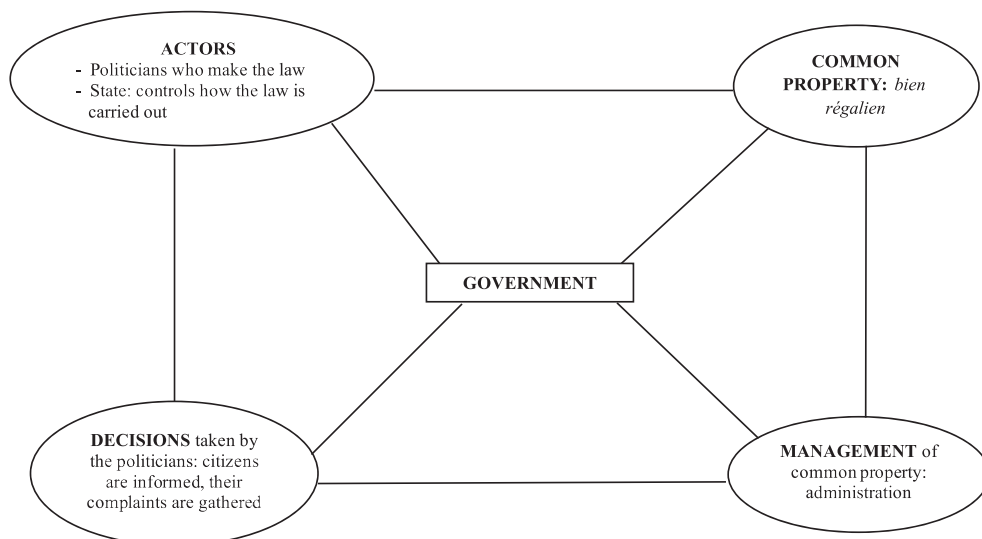
The second point in common is that after negotiation, interaction and coordination between the actors, a *decision* is taken with emphasis on the ***interdependence of the powers associated in this collective action*** (fig 2). The consequences are of several sorts: first of all, the way the decision is made changes the roles of the actors, principally that of the State: In the traditional political model (fig 1) the elected representatives have sole power in the decision making process (law) and the State is sole guarantor of the decision being carried out. Citizens may be informed of the problems posed and possibly give their opinion (election campaigns) on the decisions proposed and make their comments (e.g. in France, when there is a public survey for local planning). However the power to take a decision and the responsibility that that involves lies solely with the elected representative and the State or the local authorities. With the process of *governance*, the state's role changes: it is just a facilitator, the leader of the decision-making system. There is a move of the decision-making and its responsibilities towards *civil society* and also above all to the private sector, and what should be in the public domain sees the barriers with the private domain falling away.

The third common point concerns what one could call the *common property, public property, public service*. However, ***common property is not considered in the same way in every culture***. The Latin conception of common property originates in Roman law, and in "droit régalien" a concept more recently applied to common property as a "bien régalien" inalienable from the state². This is not the case for the Anglo-Saxon conception of

2 "Droit régalien" is traditionally applied to 3 areas: 1: justice, 2: police and army, 3: finance, inalienable from state control and which cannot be administered privately. "Bien régalien" is a property inalienable from the state. It follows from this, at the beginning of the 20th century, the introduction of the notion of public service. The state is endowed with supplementary missions in order to meet certain social needs and be present in vital economic sectors (water, energy, mines, railways become "biens régaliens" that cannot be administered privately).

common property where it is considered as being able to be managed privately. If we look at another culture, the conception can be different again: for example in Berber populations, water, *a rare commodity*, is perceived either as a *local property* under the responsibility of a *customary authority* who takes into account the populations upstream and downstream with whom negotiations are carried out concerning its use, or as a “bien régalien” from a *centralized authority* with whom one must deal for the best management of this resource. There only needs to be a local development project in this area set up by large international organizations, for the concept of *governance* to be added on top, which advocates interaction between all parties and does not necessarily recognize the traditional interactions. New actors end up being piled on those already in place and upset the former negotiating space, their ultimate goal being to integrate this area into the global territory by submitting it to liberalist laws (Auclair, 2007).

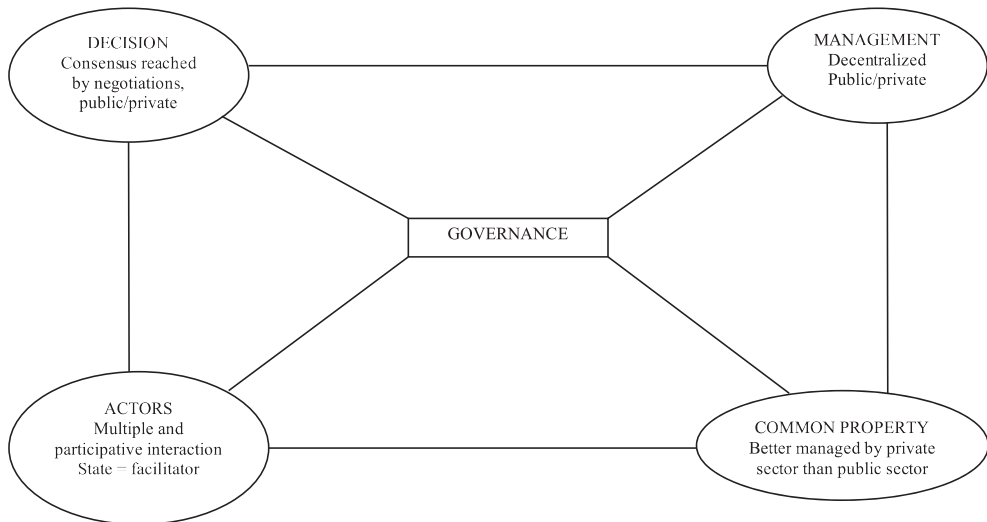
Figure 1
TRADITIONAL MODEL OF GOVERNMENT



Finally the last point in common is the *management of this common property*: It is the aim to reach. Centralized management, descending from the traditional model is considered inefficient and in the model of governance it is proposed to replace it by a ***decentralized management, from the citizens upwards, and is described as healthy, efficient and as the only alternative***. This problem is posed by Pascal Lamy, former European Commissioner for international trade, and currently head of the WTO, who writes:

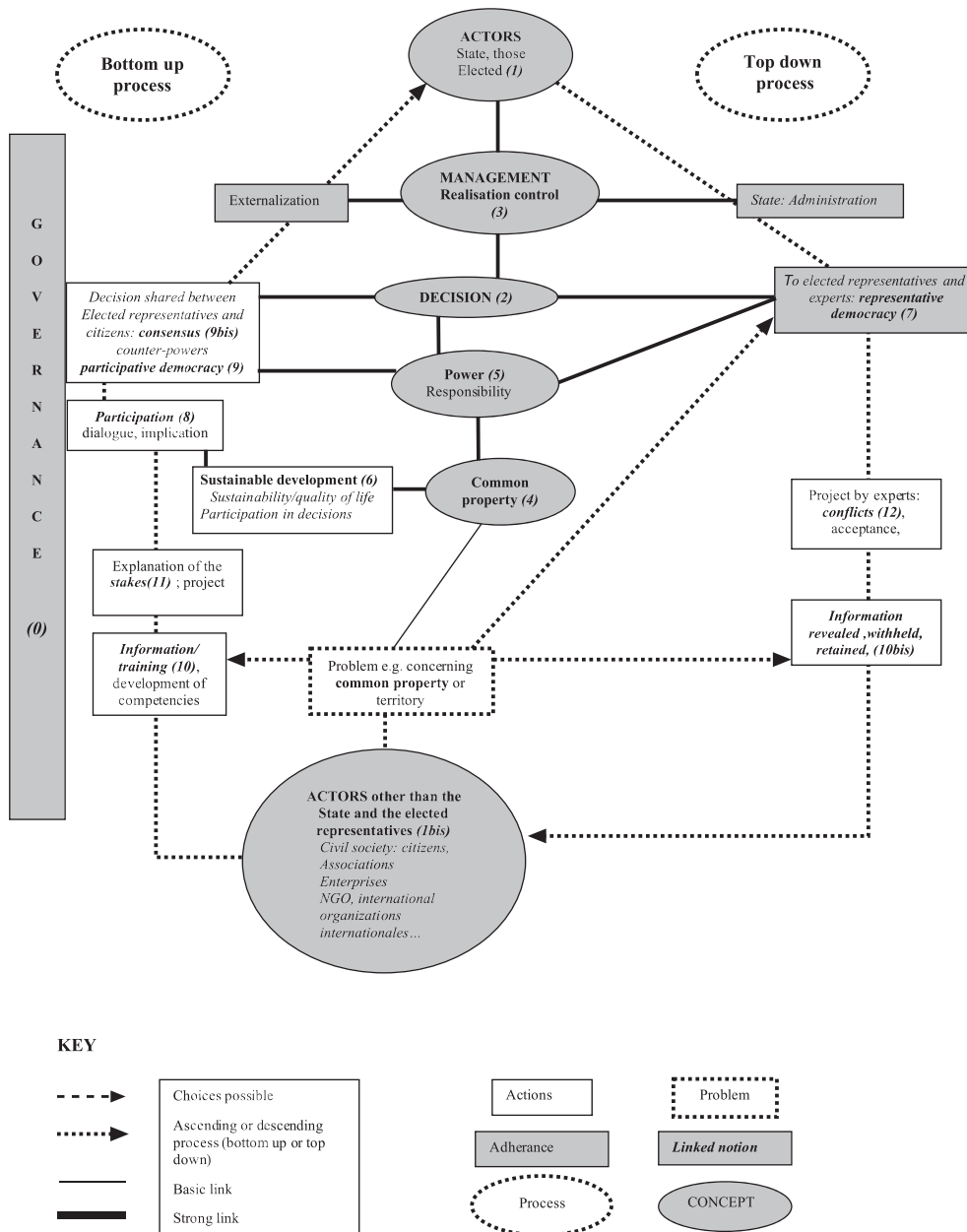
“On one side [a civil society] suspected of illegitimacy, and on the other those who have the legitimacy (states and politicians) do not have the means to be master of the changes... In short, those who possess competence lack legitimacy and those who have legitimacy lack competence” (Lamy, 2004)

Figure 2
PROCESS OF GOVERNANCE AND ASSOCIATED CONCEPTS



On the basis of these two models, we will attempt a definition of the concept of *governance*, and to do this will set up a conceptual structure (see Figure 3). The four initial concepts associated with *governance* (0) are to be found at the centre of the structure: *actors* (1 et Ibis), *decision* (2), *management* (3) and *common property* (4). *Decision* is inevitably associated with the concept of *power* (5). The implementation of the process is initiated by a precise problem such as economic, financial, or regional planning of general interest. This notion of general interest is frequently used in economics, possibly perceived as the equivalent of *common property*, used in conjunction with the concept of *sustainable development* (6): air, water... is property common to the whole of humanity and must be managed as well as possible by human society as a whole, as they are not everlasting. However, the management of common property and/or public service depends on the cultural conceptions of the societies in which people live. Even in western societies alone, there are two opposite models: one inherited from the *Latin tradition* and Roman law: the state manages common property in the best interests of all the citizens and the process for this management goes from the *top down*. The power of decision is concentrated in the hands of elected representatives of the citizens (*representative democracy* (7)) and in the hands of the State and its administrations, which carry out the decisions made and keep control of the management of these decisions. This tradition is the opposite of the *Anglo-Saxon tradition* in which all property, including common property and public services are best managed by the private sector. *Governance* in this sense is the search for *consensus* (9bis) between the *actors* to reach a general support of the *decisions* made. In this case *participation* (8) is a notion linked to the concept of *governance* from the *bottom up*, problems being settled by starting at the base with actors from civil society to move up towards the State and the elected representatives who then

Figure 3
GOVERNANCE: CONCEPTS AND NOTIONS IMPLEMENTED IN A GOVERNANCE PROCESS



arrange the *consensus* obtained: the *decision* is a shared one, just as the power to take it is shared, and this case we call it *participative democracy* (9). In order to work, this last process passes via *informing/training the citizens* (10) so that they may understand the *stakes* (11) of the problem. This active participation of citizens in the decisions forms the social aspect of *sustainable development* as formulated at the Rio conference. On the other hand, in the top down process, the problem, expertise, defining what is at stake, the project remain in the hands of the experts, elected representatives and the State and its administration. If the citizens or private sector do not agree with the project, the reaction is either disillusioned acceptance, or *conflict* (12).

Presented thus, the bottom up process seems infinitely superior to the top down process. But is this really true? One of the characteristics of governance is that it has a large ideological content that is rarely explained by the authors of various works.

First of all, the concept of *governance* has the quality of exposing in the traditional model of *representative democracy* that not only the State and the elected representatives of the people hold sole power of public decisions. There are authorities, more or less secret, who discreetly bear weight in the decisions made: when revealed, these acts are at the origin of the scandals that regularly discredit representative democracy and the State and contribute to the crisis of governability at the origin of governance. In the latter, ***the fact that there are multiple actors intervening is recognized and integrated in the process. One can compare this to the culture of lobbying*** in Anglo-Saxon countries. Public policies would be more efficient thanks to the coordination carried out between all the public and private actors who would unite their knowledge, know-how and competences to come to decisions in the interests of all. However, there is a big problem. Who are these new *actors* from *civil society*: businesses from the private sector, NGOs, various associations including churches...? Are they legitimate? They are counter-powers that are badly identified. It is not a coincidence that the notion of *civil society* is associated to the process of *governance*. In fact they have the same origin. English political philosophy in the 16th century defines it:

“as a social body organized on the basis of a contract, de facto co-founded with the State... Today civil society is defined... as a public space where associations, formed on a voluntary basis, seek to remodel the rules of life in society... [It] has neither status nor legal existence, but has shady contours. Only associations, NGOs, thinking groups, expression groups are part of it. Therefore individuals only take part in civil society through them... Their aim is to influence public policy and political choices” (Arrt Scholte, 2006)

However, it is important to note that the barriers with the State are blurred since it finances sometimes certain groups, and that enterprises can create pressure groups that are favourable to their business. Let us take the European Union as an example: It has integrated the process of *governance* in the running of economical and political affairs. However, the results of a survey of European employers' lobbies (Balaanya, 2000) show that members of some of the most powerful employers' associations created specifically at a European level (ERT, INICE, AMCHAM, AUME), as well as members of a multitude of consultants, public relations agencies, NGOs, unions and churches, move and live in the same circles as the

European political staff (Commissioners and Directors). They are often asked to make studies or expertises or belong to the numerous committees of experts created by the European Commission to help it define European policy. The studies provided by these “neutral” “experts” serve as a base for European directives and/or regulations that the European Commission enacts. It is also true that all these “para-European” structures are recognized by the European Commission and enables it to present its actions as being open to consultation, discussion and dialogue; to say that governance is a committed part of the institutional European authorities. However, this way of functioning would result in the expression, through the writing of the texts, not of the people’s will expressed through parliamentary or various other Council members, but rather that of an oligarchy which prepares technically the texts and rules in committees, with no other legitimacy than that conferred by the Commission. The Commission officially has sole initiative, even if it is shared more and more in certain areas with the European Parliament and the council of ministers. These European texts nevertheless keep the form and very often the spirit suggested by the various committees and lobbying groups, despite the fact that parliament and European councils manage to obtain various re-drafts. This approach, which is often qualified as administrative and technocratic, is also political. Behind the technocratic aspects lurks the question of *power*, of the legitimacy of those who take part in the decision-making process. The problem is not only who decides, or who holds the initiative, but also who constructs, under cover of technical aspects, the proposals of texts to be decided on. It thus happens that the proposals are very often the expression of partisan lobbies and have nothing to do with the interest of the citizens. It will be like this as long as the “experts” are not independent from lobbying groups, whatever institutional devices are put into place to ensure more democracy.

So it is that for some authors, *governance* is an instrument in the service of liberalization of societies by limiting the roles of the State and the elected representatives, often considered as incompetent to reply to the problems posed, thus removing obstacles to economic liberalism by introducing non-governmental competent actors into the decision-making process. For others, *governance* is perceived as the road to democratization of the State functions, to civic mobilization and to local political initiatives. It is also perceived as a tool to reinforce regulation mechanisms to counter the perverse effects of liberalism and in particular social breakdown. In this case, the concept of *governance* is the social facet of the principle of *sustainability*, and the question is whether or not its application to the *decisions* to be made implies or not a *sharing of power* between elected representatives and citizens.

III. WHAT IS THE ROLE OF GEOGRAPHERS: TOWARDS A CONCEPT OF GEOGOVERNANCE OR SPATIAL GOVERNANCE

Geographers seem to be missing from all the literature devoted to the process of governance. Yet geographers are often involved in regional planning decisions, whether it be to analyze a territory, or to come up with potential solutions via maps or diagrams. They work as experts. They rarely study the process of governance itself as applied to regional planning³.

³ As they did in the case of the ESPON Programme 2000-2006, and specially in the ESPON Project 2.3.2 entitled “*Governance of Territorial and Urban Policies from EU to Local Level*”.

However, recent publications state the scientific case for geographers to get involved in *the sustainable town* (Mathieu, Guermond, 2005) or in the *town and [its] environment* (Dorier-Apprill, 2006) and its theme in regard to the process of *governance*. They could be involved either from the viewpoint of *sustainable development*, or from that of *urban and territorial governance*.

The original ecological logic behind *sustainable development* has by now forgotten its initial scope: the improvement of quality of life and human well-being, today and in the future, which has for effect to go from an ecological to a territorial logic. Some development models containing quantifiable factors and integrating a simple human activity are replaced by complex regional planning with social, cultural, political and historical aspects, and emphasis on qualitative aspects, permanency and change. Thus, *spatial durability* consists of solving socio-spatial imbalances and reorganizing planning from a sustainable viewpoint. The goals to reach would be limiting concentration or conversely fragmentation of developed sites, to solve problems of quality of life, to enable social equality in terms of inhabiting territory, and to strive for a new social cohesion; to respect cultural markers such as patrimony to preserve and rehabilitate as witnesses to territorial identity. Finally, the choice of solutions enabling flexibility and reversibility should be favoured.

We can associate what one might call *geo-governance* to this *spatial durability* where the need for minimal *information* to be given to the *actors* of a given space is required, e.g. to local communities so that there is acceptance and admissibility by all of the *decision* made. This sort of *geo-governance* goes toward the sense of the finality of the second meaning of *governance*, i.e. the democratization of the functions of the State and the fight against the perverse effects and the excesses of liberalism. The question being whether, in decisions to be made, it implies a sharing or not of power between elected representatives and citizens. As things are, an expert geographer is capable of presenting and explaining the project to the people to ensure a good understanding of the aims of the decision-makers and the spatial stakes. The following step would be to engage a broad discussion to bring out ideas and expectations of the end-users to be compared to the project presented. This long process should lead to the potential integration in the project of end-users' ideas, or at least to complementary explanations demonstrating the impossibility of their integration, hence reaching trust and consensus.

The other involvement of geographers would be through *urban governance* and *local planning*. In this context the vision is also territorial and *governance* would enable a fight against the ill effects of market forces by implementing public regulation tools. The underlying hypothesis is that the State, local authorities and elected representatives would not be able to manage public affairs because of ongoing economic and social mutations which affect the territory and worsen the gap between rich and poor populations. Because of this, the territory is "*unravelling*" on all levels: fragmentation, territorial imbalances, spreading of towns and disintegration of their edges makes for an ever more complex system that is increasingly difficult to manage. Furthermore, it turns out that making decisions having an effect in the future, when the future is *uncertain*, complicates things. Add to this the fact that citizens consider politicians to be totally disconnected from social and territorial realities, whilst in parallel, all over Europe, the decentralization of power is developing and therefore a bringing together of the decision-makers and the citizens centred on where they live. This

is all mixed up to a large extent with extremely urbanized areas with large concentrations of inhabitants; these areas are both the driving force behind urban development and the catalyst of all the problems. *Urban governance* therefore enables an analysis of the changes in local authority, the organization of the contradictory interests of the actors, the mechanisms of the creation of a collective identity and the efforts made to re-compose or integrate various aspects of the territory to struggle against the forces of disintegration. It often only has an effect on the decision-making structures and not on how to co-build the image of the territory of tomorrow.

But more precisely, what about the experience of citizens' participation in these projects to make planning projects coherent with the aspirations of society?

A study concerning several experiments carried out in France and Switzerland demonstrates the limits of the process of *governance* and of *participative democracy*. They illustrate these limits when governance is applied to space, to territory and its planning, a domain where geographers excel. We have shown that geographers are consulted as experts or are asked to produce planning outlines, using what Michel Philipponneau has since called applied geography. Applied geography is in use in university labs, but also in public and private research departments. Today geographers take part in the process of *geo-governance* in two ways: either they just *inform* the public about planning projects with advanced tools and techniques which make the projects virtually more real than real (3D), or with the same projects, they explain what is at *stake spatially* when inhabitants pose a problem and become *teachers* to the citizens and even the elected representatives, the aim being not to obtain a consensus, but above all to make people aware of the more or less long term spatial consequences of *decisions* made today. In this case *geo-governance* results in the *training* of the *actors*, thus stepping beyond the current limits of the process of *governance*.

In order to evaluate these limits and the possibilities of stepping beyond them⁴, we will, concerning France, go over our own experiments carried out between 1998 and 2002 (Masson, 1998) and concerning France and Switzerland, use the reports of experiments from 1990 to 2005 published in "Les cahiers du développement urbain durable" of Lausanne University⁵.

III.1. The social requirements of sustainable development of urban spaces

Following European directives, in order to apply findings of the large world conferences on *sustainable development* (creation of Agenda 21s (CNUED, 1992), Aalborg Charter, European conference on sustainable towns (1994), Aarhus Convention (UNECE, 1998)), the states, regions, urban areas and towns in Europe are more systematic about including the people concerned in the decision-making process of planning. In France, as in Switzerland, which, while not belonging to the European Union, implements its particular requirements, it is now obligatory to have the citizens take part in the creation of their living space. In

4 Table 4 gives the analysis of experiments of so-called citizens' participation in the planning of several towns and shows a typology of less participation towards more participation and shows a few conditions for implementing an efficient participation

5 Urbia 3-2006, online publication on the University of Lausanne website www.igul.ch

France, three laws cover these requirements and lay down the basis of urban sustainable development: the “Chevenement” law (July 1999) about inter-community cooperation at the level of urban areas; the “Voynet” law (June 1999) of directives for regional planning and sustainable development (LOADDT) which provides for cooperation contracts between urban areas, the State and the region; the law of Solidarity and Urban Renewal (SRU) (2000). They control the spreading of urban areas, encourage social mixing and recommend that elected representatives work together to define a common vision of regional planning. In particular, the law of “local democracy” from 2002 which requires that towns of more than 80 000 inhabitants have participative structures enabling people to get involved in decisions about planning their living area. In Switzerland, in 1979 “the notion of participation ... is part of the statutory texts: article 4 of the federal law on regional planning (LAT) [which] stipulates that the population has the right to be informed about measures planned for their environment, and participate in an adequate manner to the corresponding plans... a series of tools [is] planned to implement this new principle ... talks with key actors, meetings with associations, workshops...” (Bonnard, 2006)

III.2. What is the application of the principle of participation, at the heart of spatial governance?

Figure 5 shows a typology of situations concerning citizens’ *participation*: is it not an *information* and an involvement of citizens in the process of *governance* understood as part of *representative democracy*, leaving all the *powers* to the decision-makers, or true *participative democracy*? The grading of the types of citizens’ participation is shown in abscissa, and in ordinate, the degree of citizen satisfaction. It shows that the field of maximum participation is empty, therefore there is no sharing of power between elected representatives and citizens; the process of geo-governance has failed. There are three types of *participation* from the weakest (simple information) to the search for more extreme participation that is blocked either by elected representative who fear opposition, or by institutions as a whole who fear different problems being raised and therefore different solutions to theirs being proposed.

The first type, that of consultation procedures in Grand Lyon (Toussaint, Vareilles, 2006), shows a situation in which there is *no citizens’ participation* and the process of *governance* is managed between elected representatives, technicians and experts, inhabitants being represented by associations. Such an organization can be deemed to be *technocratic* where the experts and elected representatives alone make the decisions necessary to urban management. The local associations are considered to vouch for the local inhabitants adhering to decisions made by a small group, as they are supposed to represent them. They support the decisions: in the present example they are involved in the writing of a charter to adjust spatial practices of the end-users to the public areas being rehabilitated.

Table 4
TYPOLGY OF EXPERIMENTS ON CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING DECISIONS

Where ?	Aim a citizen participation	Who?	How?	Practical result	Positive Estimation	Limits concerning This participation	Type of participation Type of governance
Lyon (F) ⁶	Rehabilitation of public areas Information about the uses of space Charter concerning the uses of public space	Elected representatives Technicians Associations	Meeting Advertising the actions	Elaborating a charter in order to use the public space		Poor participation Little interest	Technocratic participation and governance. The entire power is in the hands of the elected members despite the idea of co-elaborating the charter
Geneva (CH) ⁷	Participation of the citizens in the management of their health	NGO Canton Elected representatives Skilled medical workers Inhabitants	Question on paper Workshop	A few answers but a few of them put into practice	Inhabitants listened to, but disappointed: their propositions are less and less taken into account along the process	Resistance from the elected representatives No representation among the socially weak minorities Varied knowledge	Fear from elected representatives of losing their power The attitude of the elected representatives makes the process appear less credible These health problems are to be treated on a global scale The governance has to include in-formation/information training

6 Jean-Yves Toussaint et Sophie Vareilles (2006).

7 Alexandre Burnand (2006).

Where ?	Aim a citizen participation	Who?	How?	Practical result	Positive Estimation	Limits concerning This participation	Type of participation Type of governance
Tours (F) ⁸	Local Life Council (LLC)	Elected representatives Technicians Associations Inhabitants	Meeting : a space to exchange ideas and information oneself Allocated budget for an action they chose	Carrying out of small projects	Obtaining a consensus Spending the budget	No different opinions Screening the propositions Rejecting the important actions Disappointed inhabitants : feeling of backing	LLC = means for managing and advertising Governance : means for a representative democracy Power of decision in the hands of elected member and technicians; fear of counter-powers
Yvorne (CH) ⁹	New planning for a public square	Experts Inhabitants Citizens	Preliminary analysis of the square ; Questions paper 2 Meetings	New planning for the public square taking into account the citizen wishes	Common culture perfectly obvious Establishing social links	Too little representation among the socially weak inhabitants; spect-ificities not enough taken into account No different opinions taken into account Omnipresence of the expert; choice of the space, balancing and selecting the criteria, hierarchical organization of the projects, interpretation of the final project	Complementary participation to technocratic vision Governance means for a representative democracy Strengthening the legitimacy of the elected representatives

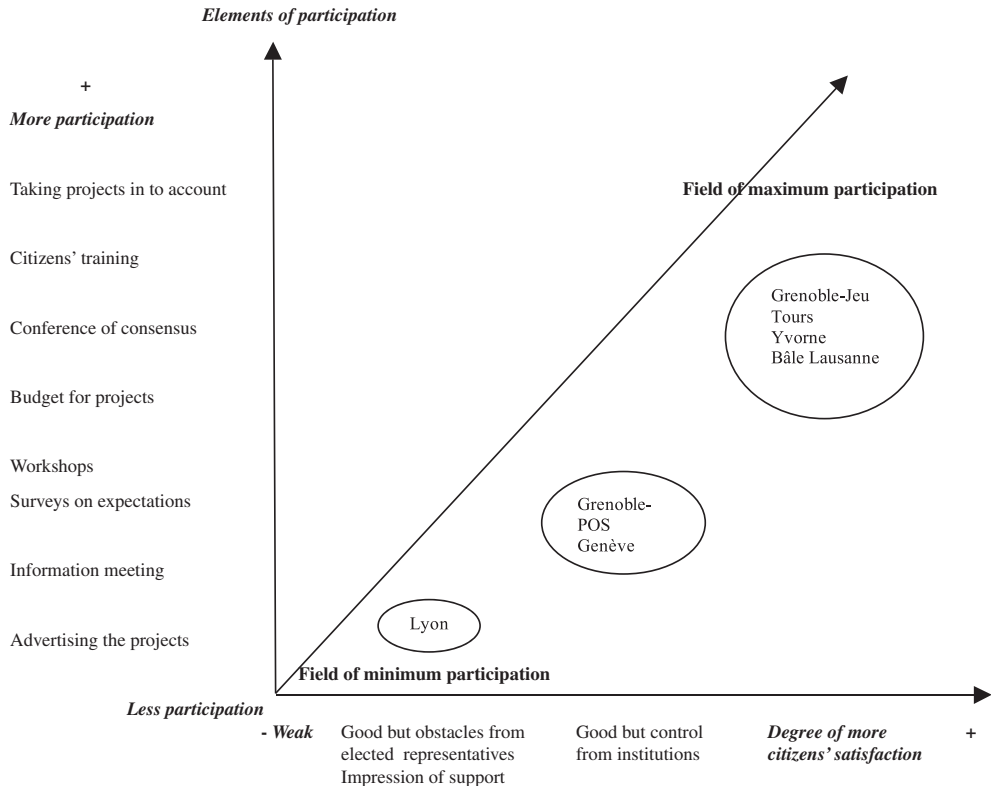
8 H el ene Bertheleu (2006).

9 Yves Bonnard (2006).

Where ?	Aim a citizen participation	Who?	How?	Practical result	Positive Estimation	Limits concerning This participation	Type of participation Type of governance
B a s e l - Lausanne (CH) ¹⁰	Action against the town centre depopulation Preventing systematic rejects of the projects	Elected representatives Technicians Inhabitants	Innovating workshops Consensus Meeting Studies of the propositions	Information about the inhabitants Sketching out the projects by the inhabitants ; Integration of them in the final project	Information of the inhabitants about the constraints Tacking into account of the inhabitants interests	Supervising of the process by the elected representatives and the technicians	Governance means for a representative democracy Strengthening the legitimacy of the elected representatives No sharing of the power
Grenoble (F) ¹¹	Revising the local urbanization plan (PLU) involvement of the inhabitants	Elected representatives Technicians Inhabitants	1 Informative posts 2 Exhibition of pupils projects on the town district problems and its planning	1 Information of the inhabitants 2 Modifying computer terminals to attract inhabitants' interest	Survey by the elected representatives about the lack of interest from the inhabitants New interest from the inhabitants after the exhibition	1 Lack of interest from the inhabitants at the beginning Publicity for the elected representatives by the papers and TV 2 Concerning the new informative posts refusal from the elected representatives: publicity for their action whereas they refuse interactivity with citizens	Complementary participation to technocratic vision Governance means for a representative democracy Power still in the hands of the elected representatives: publicity for their action whereas they refuse interactivity with citizens
G r e n o b l e urban area (F) ¹²	Planning game for the elected representatives and citizens	Elected representatives Technicians	Create a game (CD Rom) with interactivity	Presentation of the game by elected representatives Inhabitants playing the game	While playing, the citizens and the elected representatives become aware of spatial consequences as regards to their planning decisions (formation process with the part played by interactivity)	For technicians: the images are not good enough! For elected representatives: their power of decision may be limited because the level of reflection among the citizens provided by playing the game the people who conceived the game use implicit models and control the game	Participation of the inhabitants: possibility to create own proposals and co-decide with the elected representatives Governance: co-decision citizens-elected representatives In terms of power: sharing of the power

10 Daniel Dubas (2006).
11 et 12 Michelle Masson-Vincent (1998).

Figure 5
 TYPOLOGY OF EXPERIMENTS ON CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION IN A FEW FRENCH AND SWISS TOWNS



A second intermediate type is represented by “an experiment on the ground... carried out... in a canton of Geneva... to develop a participative process aimed at giving the inhabitants of a neighbourhood collective and individual means to act in favour of their health and quality of life and to put at the disposal of local elected representatives and administrators a decision-making tool” (Burnand, 2006) Here, some elected representatives fearful of having to relinquish or share their decision-making powers, and some public health officials too confident in their knowledge of the public and its expectations, discredited the process of public participation and diminished the results. These fears and self-importances could have been avoided if it had been announced that the process was just an aid to decision-making. Nevertheless, the process managed to find a few solutions to problems raised. There were fewer results in the following cases.

The third type shows that the citizens' participation in the governance process is a *supplementary participation of technocratic conception* making *governance a type of representative democracy*, reinforcing and re-legitimizing the elected representatives' power

of decision. The experiments in Tours (Bertheleu, 2006), Yvorne (Bonnard, 2006), Basel and Lausanne (Dubas, 2006) and Grenoble (Masson-Vincent, 1998) are illustrations of this to varying degrees. In Tours, for example, the participation in Local Life Councils is clearly a management and public relations tool for the elected representatives who retain control of the situation throughout the process. In the other cases there is more the illusion of a *participative process*: during meetings and surveys the inhabitants give ideas and information on their needs and expectations. Concerning concrete proposals about the project, experts intervene all along, giving a framework and eliminating all points of discussion contrary to the project. After the initial ideas have emerged, they ponder, sort and give priorities to criteria and arguments, they make choices between competing projects and decide what is viable or not. They are the alpha and omega, and the risk of disillusion for the inhabitants is great, who have the feeling of being used, or worse, manipulated.

The case of Grenoble merits a closer look. The idea was to involve the inhabitants of a neighbourhood in the revision of the local land plan (Plan d'Occupation des Sols (POS)). In strategic places, the municipality installed interactive computer kiosks at the disposal of the inhabitants to give them information on the project. However, inhabitants were very reticent in using this type of information, did not come to the exhibitions about the projects or any public meetings. They did not take part in any of the public surveys that are obligatory in this process, whereby anyone can note what he does not agree with before the project is re-examined and goes to vote by the local council. A request to the schools was made by councillors to involve children and teenagers from the neighbourhood, to have a knock-on effect on the parents. Pupils worked on an exhibition concerning the problems of circulating in their neighbourhood. Their proposals culminated in an event with extensive press coverage, and so parents came back to see the exhibition and then started to go and see the planning projects and go to the public meetings, having been informed of dates and times at the children's exhibition. Because of this success, councillors asked why the computer kiosks had been a failure. A series of surveys were carried out during six months where the kiosks had been installed, that revealed that it was not the place where they were or how they were set up, nor the inability of people to use a computer tool, but the content shown on the computer did not correspond at all to the expectations of those consulting it. The whole programme was re-configured with different levels of information: Presentation of a maximum of information on the local land plan and the decision-making procedures involved, presentation of Grenoble as a whole, with historical elements, its assets and constraints and problems, and those of the inhabitants, with a zoom on the neighbourhood in each case, and how the future was envisaged through the local land plan. At first, the councillors asked for an e-mail address to be included in the computer terminal so that inhabitants could ask their questions directly, then once this was included, it was removed as they realized that they were going to have answer all the e-mails! This experiment should be classified in the second type of situation, as, like Geneva, there were information meetings and collection of the inhabitants' wishes without going any further.

The following case concerning the Urban Area of Grenoble (total of 600 000 inhabitants, 150 000 in Grenoble) is on a different scale and represents a step forward towards more participative democracy. Following the experiments just described, the local institutions requested the creation of a game, as an information tool, about planning in this area showing

the spatial stakes in the perspective of 2030. This was carried out under the name of *Gratianopolis*¹³ available as a CD Rom. For technicians and experts, the aim was to inform the inhabitants but also the councillors of the potential spatial consequences. For councillors, it was an aid to presenting projects in public meetings, and a tool for teachers. It was also created as a training tool, thanks to interaction between the subject and the object. The game contains several modules: a module about knowledge of the urban area, one on the planning documents to make and the procedure to do this, one on the goals of the regional development plan, and lastly a game module. The hypothesis was that in order to understand the spatial stakes, training by simulation was important and also an obligatory part of interaction in the planning game. The person playing could show the spatial consequences of his planning choices in a 3D image, having the possibility of revising his initial goals, and returning to the information and content available to change his choices if he did not reach the initial goals or if they turned out to be incompatible with the goals fixed. The aim is definitely to participate thanks to this multimedia tool in the training of the citizen of today by allowing him to intervene actively on all levels in the process of creating his living space. In this case the inhabitants' participation is to create planning proposals with spatial renderings and landscapes of the consequences and to use the same presentation tools as the councillors. They are then able to hold discussions on an equal footing and share the decision-making in a better way. However, there are limitations even to this, the most important being that behind the game there are base models which determine all the possibilities available in the game: it is obvious that according to who places an order for a game the proposals can be more or less biased. A councillor can also feel threatened by citizens' proposals, illustrated by a councillor's remark who was chairman of the committee who ordered the game and also a geographer and university lecturer: "and what if the simulation shows that what we want does not correspond to the inhabitants' expectations?" If he sees the positive side to the situation, the councillor can also be ready to go towards a co-production of the citizens' proposals. Here the result would be a true *participative democracy* where the search for *consensus* is not just a search for popularity, and the show is not stolen by associations with only their self-interest in mind or by scientific experts who conveniently forget that their expertise often finds itself in a context of scientific uncertainty. *Geo-governance* like this would be the basic concept to consider the inhabitants' opinions in the organization of sustainable planning of their living space. The use of the conditional tense in these final remarks shows that the road to *geo-governance* is still long to go from governance as a process of representative democracy to a true participative democracy.

Geographers have a role to play in the process of spatial governance. Since the 60s they have been geographical experts, providing regional plans on all scales to local authorities. Today, however, it is important that they consider that their role does not stop at being an expert to the State. More and more they are required to produce extremely technical planning projects and so de facto become integrated in the participative procedures: They give all the necessary spatial information, and can then bring to the surface the regional planning

13 The first name of Grenoble was Gallic: *Cularo*, before becoming *Gratianopolis* (town of Gratien) in 3rd Century AC, which became *Grenoble*.

stakes and the positive/negative consequences of all the proposals made to reply to these stakes. This information/training aspect is a prerequisite of any participation by the citizens in planning decisions, enabling a co-production of decision by all the actors involved.

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