

Jean Monnet Project EURÉGIO CALL FOR PAPERS

Lille Jean Monnet Conference REGIONS AND REGIONALISM IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Dates

June 26th, 27th and 28th 2017

Place

Université de Lille 1, Cité scientifique, Villeneuve d'Ascq, France
<http://www.univ-lille1.fr/Accueil/plan-access>

Topic

In many European States, particularly from the 1960s, the region progressively became a salient territorial unit and polity, situated on an intermediate scale, between local scale and the central or federal State (Keating 2004, Pasquier 2012 Grabher & Mathis-Moser 2015). At the same time, regions were able to reinforce their participation to the European construction process, especially from the 1990s in the framework of the so called New Regionalism agenda, which relates both to the operations of regionalisation and to the rise of the regions as relevant *loci* for post-fordist economic activities (Balme 1996 Benko & Lipietz 2000 Lachapelle & Paquin 2004, Massart-Piérard 2005, Barone 2011).

Regional policy is precisely one of the flagship policies of the European Union, launched in 1975 with the creation of the ERDF, the European Regional Development Fund (Jouen 2011). It forms the Chapter 21 of the *acquis communautaire*, so that each Member State had to set up a regional division of its territory to manage the structural instruments of this policy. Nevertheless, the analyses and researches on New Regionalism completely revised their hypotheses about the Europe of the Regions, due to the diverse and concrete evolution of the “regional fact” in Europe, without undermining though the importance of the regional level in the territorial (re)configuration of European Nation-States (Paasi 2009, Picouet, 2012, Keating 2013).

Regional bodies and entities are widely variable, both in their spatial boundaries and in their policies and institutional capacities (Cherrier & Guérard 2014, AER 2015). Some States present quite ancient regional divisions, with somehow a certain historical continuity, like Spain, Italy, United Kingdom or even in some cases Germany. Others have created regions gradually, such as Belgium, France, Greece and Poland. Regions have a high political capacity in federal States like Germany, Austria or Belgium, where they have legislative

power in several areas (education, land use planning, economic development, culture ...). Regional capacity is low in centralised States where the region is only a level to decentralise State departments or agencies like in Slovakia or Portugal. Intermediate situations exist:

- Combination of State decentralised departments and autonomous regional authorities (France, Poland);
- So called “regionalised” States, which are not federal States but in which the regions enjoy very deep institutional and legislative prerogatives, sometimes related to regional cultural and geohistorical specificities (Spain, Italy, UK).

Moreover the “regional question” is constantly evolving. In 1997, the Devolution Acts in the United Kingdom transferred substantial capacity to Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland without changing their boundaries. The UK devolution pattern is likely to change, especially since the referendum on Scottish independence in 2014 and the one on the Brexit in 2016. France merged some of its regions and modified their attributions in 2015-16, while creating new forms of intercommunal bodies: the metropolises (Bourdin & Torre 2015, Brennetot & Ruffray 2015, Némery 2015). The practice of German federalism is evolving with some changes in the shared responsibilities between the Federation and the *Länder* since the reunification (Behnke & Kropp, 2016). Romania does not yet have autonomous regions but has considered to group some local authorities (*Județ*) to form regions like for instance in the French pattern.

Furthermore, the regional question in Europe is sometimes linked to identity claims as shown by the debates on independence in Catalonia, Scotland or Flanders. Although these discussions often have an important economic or fiscal dimension, they are part of a claiming process that advocates cultural, historical and linguistic specificities and promotes the multinational profile of Nation-States (Keating, Loughlin & Deschouwer 2003). Moreover, these debates can sometimes result in strong socio-political tensions – classically named centre-periphery tensions – which can weaken the national unity of some States, particularly in the context of the “polycrisis” that the European Union currently faces (Davezies 2015). In some ways, and in a relative point of view, the dismantling of Yugoslavia illustrated the ultimate case - and the break point – of this tension between the State and its sub-state components (Glenn & Hudson, 2012).

Yet the process of European integration introduces a paradoxical rescaling. On the one hand, the rationale of inter-States integration “from above” seems to be *a priori* incompatible with a fragmentation of these States “from below”, on the other hand some observers consider the European Union to be the multi-level territorial and socio-political framework *par excellence*, capable of articulating while regulating the prerogatives and capacities of States, nations, regions, cities, local authorities and civil society. Finally, the proposal of a Europe of the regions, although still lacking an operative definition in terms of political action and territorial organisation, could in certain aspects respond to the crisis of representativeness and governability that currently affects the European Union.

The Lille Jean Monnet Conference is the key event of the project EURÉGIO, led by the University of Lille 1 since September 2015 in the framework of the European programme Erasmus + Jean Monnet, with the objective to appraise the knowledge, foster the debate and consider the evolutions of regions and regionalism in the context of the European construction: <http://euregio.univ-lille1.fr>

The conference is opened to theoretical contributions, comparative and factual case studies or fieldworks that will address issues related to this theme. The two lines that structure the call for papers are intentionally broad and interdisciplinary to address the regional question in Europe in all its diversity:

Line 1: Regions and regional governance in Europe

- Why create regions, what added value of the regional level/scale?
- What are the different regional entities in Europe?
- What “makes” a region? How to build regional capacity and what transition from a territorial unit to an autonomous authority?
- What are the links between the emergence of identity politics and the actual mappings and capacity-patterns of regions Europe?
- Historical, geographical, political regions: what interactions? From region to nation, or even to State?
- What role for the regions in the European multi-level governance system?
- How do regional authorities “work” with other authorities or agencies at different levels: States, cities, other local authorities, the EU institutions?
- The new French regions: towards a renewed role of the region? How to (re)build legitimacy, identity, capacity?

Line 2: Regions in the European Union, the European Union in the regions

- What are the European issues for the regions? How to integrate the European issues in regional development strategies? And why?
- Why is the Europe Union interested in the development of regions?
- What are the issues of territorial cooperation for the European regions: interregional networks, cross-border cooperation, regional representations, euroregions?
- What is the added value of external action and cooperation, or even paradplomacy, for the development of regions and regionalism?
- Can we talk of a Europeanisation of regionalism and of the “regional question” in the context of the European Union?
- What perspectives for the regions within the European Union, and for the European Union with the regions?

Some of the papers will be published following the conference, according to the publication programme of the project EURÉGIO.

Modalities of paper submission

The paper proposals, in French or English, will indicate the thematic line and will include:

- an abstract of the paper (around 20 lines to the maximum)
- five to ten bibliographical references
- five key words
- the contact details and professional information

The proposals can be sent to thomas.perrin@univ-lille1.fr until **March 31st 2017**.

Scientific Committee

Gabriele Abels, professor of political science, University of Tübingen
Anne-Laure Amilhat-Szary, professor of geography, University Grenoble-Alpes
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Anssi Paasi, professor of geography, University of Oulu
Didier Paris, professor of planning and urbanism, University of Lille
Thomas Perrin, senior lecturer in planning and European studies, University of Lille
Patrick Picouet, professor of geography, University of Lille
Carlo Salone, professor of economic and political geography, University of Turin
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Elsa Delfort, academic and scientific communication officer
Thomas Heckly, European and international project officer
Thomas Perrin, senior lecturer in planning and European studies
François-Olivier Seys, professor of geography and demography

Contacts and information

Mail: elsa.delfort@univ-lille1.fr
Internet site: <http://euregio.univ-lille1.fr>
Twitter: http://twitter.com/EU_REGIO

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