

**The geographical logic of public policies:  
Trends and comprehensive pattern from the South African &  
French experiences<sup>1</sup>**

**Les logiques des politiques d’aménagement du territoire :  
un modèle d’après les expériences sud africaines et françaises**

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To present an International comparison in an academic conference is always dangerous, especially if the comparison is based on two different continents and hemispheres and if the specialists in both cases are attending!

Maybe this is the reason why this paper will not really be a comparison but more a confrontation through a general pattern.

Initially, I would like to pinpoint three original and innovative aspects of the South African territorial restructuring from a French point of view. Two of them have already been published:

- the innovative ways to deal with borderlands in the demarcation process and
- the choice or non choice of the administrative headquarters and capitals in the new local government dispensation.

Because of this, I would prefer to focus on the third aspect, which is an analysis of the public policies related to spatial definition and goals through a pattern, previously made for the French case study.

As you know, the French background in the field of public policies and territorial restructuring is quite unique. For instance, there is an official French expression used for the set of public policies of regional and national development and planning, it is « l’aménagement du territoire » (development and planning of the Territory). The singular form is important.

While many countries have or have had a strong tradition of public policies at national level dealing with spatial planning and development, and sometimes elaborated as a whole and

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<sup>1</sup> Paper presented at the Durban conference of International Geographical Union; «Geography & Public Policy Commission»

coordinated, as in the UK for instance, only France still considers its national space as one unique territory in terms of development and improvement.

Regionalisation from the fifties, devolution from the eighties and then Europeanisation of the policies of area based development and spatial equity have steadily introduced a complexity in that field, however the expression still exists, but is now quite anachronistic.

Anyway, the more complex the issue, the greater the need to understand the dynamics and the logics of the different policies as a whole in a systemic way.

### **The pattern**

The Pattern or Grid of Reference that I am presenting is based on a simple typology of approaches, which drive public policies dealing with spaces, places and territories. These public policies make geographical sense in three main ways (or approaches) associated to geographical models.

#### **The first one is the sectoral approach.**

It is generally based on the development of infrastructures in particular fields (Housing, Harbor, Roads, Tourism...) at national level. For the spatial distribution of those infrastructures, it requires a scheme deciding the location of selected strategic places, axis or corridors.

#### **The second one is the spatial approach.**

The main goal of this approach is spatial equity addressing to special areas considered as poor, disadvantaged or threatened.

In colonial context this type of approach could also support and organize spatial inequity, for instance between native reserves and colonial land. The main tools in order to reduce spatial inequity are a zoning associated with a policy of cross subsidies for supporting service delivery and equipment, or a policy of fiscal exemption for supporting existing activities and trying to attract new ones.

#### **The third one is the territorial approach.**

Associated with a policy of systematic promotion of area based development, this type of policy requires a process of demarcation of territories for development. It means a territory defined by a common project involving (or supposed to) various stakeholders from civil society, public and private sectors. Resulting in a wall to wall demarcation when planning for

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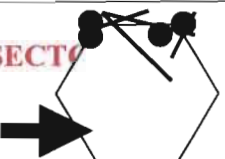
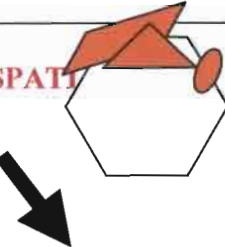
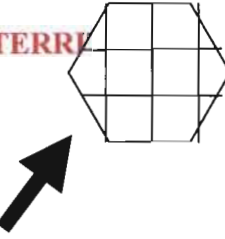
## “Rencontres de l’innovation territoriale”

local development is required in each local government area, and the delineation of selected areas would be required when it is a policy of pilot sites.

Associated with mobilization and projects shared by various stakeholders, the local government areas or the selected areas are called «territories» in the French literature.

## The geographical logic of public policies: a comprehensive pattern

F. Giraut (IRD): IGU, Durban, 7/08/02

Approach & Associated geographical model	Tools	Relevant Level	Goals Orientation	Dynam ic	References & Policies associated
<b>SECTOR</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National program</li> <li>Roads</li> <li>Touristic Infrastructure</li> <li>Housing...</li> </ul> <p>➤ <b>SCHEME</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National</li> <li>- Provincial</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Infrastructure, Equipment</li> <li>- Supporting growth at national level (Adaptation to international economical challenge)</li> <li>- Development of strategic places, locations and corridors</li> <li>- Answering basic needs</li> </ul>		<p>New Deal</p> <p>Vast Public Works</p> <p>Public Choice</p> <p>Public interventionism or Public/private partnership</p>
<b>SPATIAL</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cross subsidies, exemption policy or protection for special areas consider as poor, disadvantaged or threatened</li> </ul> <p>➤ <b>ZONING</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National</li> <li>- Provincial</li> <li>- International</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spatial equity (or inequity)</li> <li>- Supporting Service delivery</li> <li>- Supporting growth and basic needs in poor, remote or disadvantaged areas</li> <li>- Economic specialisation</li> <li>- Conservation</li> </ul>		<p>Welfare State</p> <p>Policies of redistribution</p> <p>Supporting service deliveries for unprofitable areas (low densities) or unaffordable (poor area)</p>
<b>TERRITORY</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conditional funding</li> <li>- Contractual allocation</li> <li>- Agenda and method for area based development</li> </ul> <p>➤ <b>DEMARICATION</b></p> <p>Wall to wall (local gvt) or Selected areas and Pilot sites (International agencies, NGO's, Civil Society)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local</li> <li>- Provincial</li> </ul>	<p>Promoting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Area based development</li> <li>- Integrated development</li> <li>- Organizing service delivery</li> </ul>		<p>State disengagement (Structural adjustment)</p> <p>Community based dvpt</p> <p>Civil society mobilization</p> <p>Devolution</p> <p>Decentralisation</p>

## **Combination and complexity**

If some public policies are clearly relevant to one of these logics, some are linked to two of them.

For instance in post apartheid South Africa: the strategy of implementing an Integrated Development Plan in each new municipality, clearly belonged to the territorial way, while the scheme of Industrial Development Zones linked to major infrastructures falls into the sectoral approach.

At the same time, Spatial Development Initiatives or the National Agency for Development must be linked to two approaches.

SDIs constitute mainly a policy of development (with public/private partnership) in two sectoral fields: transportation and tourism, which is addressed to coastal areas or borderlands previously landlocked but now potential corridors or sites for international development. It deals at national level with the sectoral approach, but at local level each SDI is defined as an integrated project in a typical territorial approach.

Another example is the National Development Agency, created in 2000, which is funded by the government and the EU. It is defined as the South African key funding agency that focuses on strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations in combating poverty. It claims a «Proactive funding approach» with a few key words: integrated focus, community participation, poor areas, poorest (destitute?) communities, clustering of projects, targeted areas.

This policy deals simultaneously with spatial and territorial approaches. It requires a process of zoning to delineate the perimeters of the targeted poor zone and a process of selection of area based projects of development, which constitute local territories of development within a large disadvantaged area or zone.

Environmental conservation policy deals simultaneously with the three approaches. It equips the country in places of environmental and touristic resources, it protects some threatened areas and it builds new territories of local development with the involvement and association of bordering communities in the management of the parks and reserves.

### **The shift from the spatial to the territorial approach**

So the proposed pattern can assess a public policy in terms of geographical meaning, but it is also a tool to attempt to assess the equilibrium and the dynamic of the entire set of public policies in the field of development and planning.

For instance the French policy of «aménagement du territoire» was a priority in the sixties. It was dominated by both sectoral and spatial approaches. At this time priorities were on the one hand equipment programs (Highway, Hydroelectrical and nuclear power, Mountain resorts...); on the other hand the deconcentration of activities in a center/periphery pattern, this meant to promote relocation and creation of activities outside Paris. The territorial way was only an extra or cosmetic namely for planning both above orientations at regional level, and to support a few local and experimental initiatives.

The evolution of the last thirty years has been a shift from the sectoral/spatial association to the sectoral/territorial coupling. It means that spatial approach and the associated goal of reducing spatial inequity has been dramatically decreased at national level, while the spatial equity orientation has been gradually transferred to the European Union, and at the same time the area based approach of development has been associated with the Decentralization.

Empowering local government had rapidly dealt not only with service delivery but also with that area based development orientation now promoted by regional, national and European levels. Even the policies of equipment are now methodologically implemented in a territorial way.

In a very different context, this shift has happened in South Africa over the last decades.

The spatial approach dominated the apartheid era and its spatial inequality project: native reserve then homeland policy,

secondly a sectoral approach in the industrial sector targeted to exploit simultaneously both metropolitan and homelands resources in terms of labour forces and strategic location (Growth development points), and lastly an attempt to create regional planning in a wall to wall demarcation was only a complement or a cosmetic during the last decade of the apartheid era.

By now, after the implementation of the new local government dispensation, the territorial approach is associated with the sectoral approach in the public policies already mentioned as SDI, IDZ and IDP.

Because of the apartheid background and state disengagement, the spatial approach seems to be reduced now to a few experimental pilot sites of rural development and urban renewal which were officially announced as a major public policy in the State of the Nation presidential speech .

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, one statement and two questions possibly suitable for both French and South African situations.

It must now be a priority to articulate the three spheres of territories for development:

- Integrated development plan of local government;
- Area based development project promoted in their own perimeters by international agencies, NGO's, associations and private sector;
- Territorial dispensation of national programs of infrastructures or conservation

Last and broadly two naive questions:

Is the transfer of spatial or zonal public policies to the international level (hypothetical NEPAD and real EU regional policy) possible, efficient and sufficient?

In terms of spatial equity, could the State retreat or disengagement be compensated by the empowerment of new stakeholders?



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Giraut Frédéric (2003)

The geographical logic of public policies : trends and comprehensive pattern from the South African and French experience

In : Antheaume Benoît (ed.), Giraut Frédéric (ed.), Maharaj B. (ed.) Recompositions territoriales, confronter et innover : actes des rencontres scientifiques franco-sud africaines de l'innovation territoriale = Territorial restructurings, comparisons and innovations : proceedings of the french-south african meeting on territorial innovation

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