Introduction
Territorial Governance: A New Take on Development

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The question of territorial governance has been dealt with extensively over the last decade, both in America and in Europe (Chaskin 1997, 1998, 2001, 2005; Fontan et al 2006; Glaser et al 1996; Glaser 1997; Khakee 2005; Leblanc 2006; Magnusson 2005; Moulaert and Nussbaumer 2005; Mcguire 2001; Norton 2005; Offner 2007; Proulx 2004; Reese 1993a, 1993b, 1994; Reese and Rosenfeld 2001, 2004; Reese and Fasenfest 2003; Sanyal 2006; Selsky 1991, 2005; Shaffer and Marcouiller 2006; Thomas 2006; Visser 2002, 2004; Wrigley and Lewis 2002). Despite this, and the obvious popularity of the topic, as an area of research it has not yet been covered in a special issue of the Canadian Journal of Regional Science. This special issue is innovative in that it presents –mainly in French – the results of research undertaken by Canadian researchers. The research profiles a number of different questions that have recently emerged as governance has been plied to territorial development processes. The synthesis we provide will allow the

1. For references, see the select bibliography.
reader to appreciate whether this ‘governance of proximity’ is – or is not – a unique and original approach to thinking about and living in a territory.

Without having the pretension of examining the issues thoroughly in a single special issue, given current circumstances we felt it more pertinent than ever to present an intersecting perspective, through a series of articles, on innovative practices in territorial governance, particularly in relation to issues of education, natural resources, aboriginal peoples, the approaches to local development and the multiple initiatives of civil society.

Territorial development and the concepts generally associated with it (such as local development, regional development, community development, endogenous development, bottom-up development) comprise a similar range of multidisciplinary domains that cannot be dealt with from scratch. The same thing can be said for the extremely broad question of governance, a term with multiple ramifications and meanings. As Paiement puts it (2006: 9): governance ‘can mean the definition of an efficient bureaucracy, measures to fight against corruption, citizen participation, and even the promotion of political and social rights’ (translation). This is why it is important for us to situate governance in its historic context and to illustrate how it has come to be seen as an indispensable building-block for understanding local development. In short, our aim here is to better understand the scientific and ideological trajectory that has led us from governance to territorial governance.

**Territorial Governance: What Is It All About?**

Based on the historical synthesis produced by Patrick Le Galès (2004), the concept of governance was initially used in management sciences to designate complex forms of management in private organisations – commonly known as ‘corporate governance’ or ‘business governance’ as popularised by Williamson (1979) – and which was then picked up again at the beginning of the 1990s in order to study the renewal of different forms of collective action. In the latter case, social sciences called upon governance to better understand how collective action is organized in a context where public institutions are both in the process of losing their legitimacy (Juliet and Andrew 1999; Jouve 2004) and are no longer capable of responding on their own to contemporary social issues (Pal 2001; Paquet 2001; Andrew and Goldsmith 1998; Duchastel 2004).

This concept of governance attracted more and more attention from researchers and practitioners in the development field (Osmont 1998), particularly from those involved in regional development (Lafontaine and Jean 2005). The loss of legitimacy, and even efficiency, of broad public policies in relation to regional redistribution (Jean 1989; Chiasson 1997) that coincided with the crisis of the Welfare State (Rosanvallon 1981, 1995), gave way in regional science to a new perspective with more emphasis on local territories as a driving force for the development of regions (Jambes 2000). This new perspective provided by territorial development has brought regional science into the field of governance. Indeed, the regional approach based on the notion of territory considers that the capacity
of local milieus to generate development depends upon the density of relationships or institutional thickness to borrow from Amin and Thrift’s (1995) well-known term. It involves an essential contribution from local actors, whose origins are multiple: involved citizens, civil society, private corporations, public institutions (Le Galès 1998). Researchers have thus shifted their attention to the forms of collaboration and partnership that overlap the frontiers of private and public systems. The terminology associated with governance has been used by several researchers (Helmsing 2007; Carrier and Jean 2000; Simard and Mercier 2005; Gagnon 1999; Jeannier 2006) to refer to the different forms of collaboration.

From this perspective, territorial governance clearly designates the breadth of local public policies and the implementation of the projects that stem from them; but, in addition and perhaps above all else, it relates to the capacity of different local actors to exert a real influence on this same process of development. As Rhodes (1986) notes, this process can be part of a very time-delimited process – a special project developed for a particular occasion – or can relate to an intent to engage in action over the long term, by drawing together a set of actors with convergent development interests. As Kooiman (1993) expresses it, these practices are generally associated with social innovations in its broadest as Taylor (1970) defines it: innovative social practices responding to new social needs. In relation to this, Guillemot, Plante et Boisjoly demonstrate with a rare case study of insular governance how the territory ‘reflects the capacity of actors to add value to local resources, by exploiting their historical, natural, economic and social dimensions.’ (translation)

Furthermore, whether time-delimited or on-going, local governance underlies two theoretically antonymic, yet empirically hybrid, dynamics. To start with, it implies a consultative process, such as the paradigm of ‘rational comprehensive planning’ as Faludi (1996, c1973) calls it – a model of so-called concerted planning, but which in reality leads to a process of social persuasion, engineered by certain actors as a function of their own personal or corporatist interests. This is the social dynamic that is so brilliantly illustrated by Mercur Olson (1973) is his widely-acclaimed logic of collective action. From an epistemological point of view, this approach is in many respects different to the currently preponderant discourse on collaborative planning (Healey 2006) that proposes a form of planning resulting in a real and sincere willingness for mediation between civil society and the State. “Indeed, it is not only a question of asking actors for their views but rather – and more fundamentally – searching out their adhesion, participation and implication in an idea focussed on the collective construction of public action systems” (LeLoup et al 2005: 331) (translation). Joyal and El-Batal’s text on rural governance seen through the implementation of the national policy on rurality, gives us a very good empirical example of the appropriation by civil society of public policy emanating from the central State. However, one has to be careful not to idealize such a process. As Marc-Urbain Proulx points out eloquently in his contribution in this special issue:
“institutional constraints limit the appropriation within territories which structure space (…) particularly the diversity of the multiple boundaries, the actual means are accessible, the fragmentation of functions, the wearing down of democracy and the difficulties of holistic territorial planning. We thus have to put into perspective what the real potential is for the collective appropriation of public territorial responsibilities and conclude by focussing on operational solutions.” (translation)

The governance of territories (Carrier and Côté 2000) or, in other words, territorial governance (Pasquier et al 2007; Guesnier 2005) thus becomes more than ever a privileged focus of attention for researchers in the regional development domain. This is all the more so given that the broad public policies (of Québec) regarding regionalisation call more and more upon citizen participation and confers on the State a role of accompanying the process (Morin 2006). For Leloup et al (2005: 322)

“the question of territorial governance thus immediately raises the question of local development and can be placed in the historical context of the growing involvement of local actors – private, public and associative – in the dynamics of development, in their capacity to mobilize and to look after themselves. In this way, the virtues of the imagination, organization and coordination of these local actors are brought to the forefront” (translation).

Simard and Leclerc in their paper ground this way of looking at the world in Quebec’s historical experience with local development, by proposing an original account of the first decade of existence of Local Development Centres (Centres locaux de développement) (1998-2008).

**Territorial Governance:**  
**The Actor’s Indispensable Presence**

Strongly coloured first by a Durkheimian influence, then by a Marxist one and today, by an ecological tradition, the analysis of development was until recently mainly embedded in a macro approach to things social that did not take sufficient account of the interrelationships between individual leadership and structural leadership within a given community. In the domain of regional science, the process of development of collectivities is often presented in an anonymous and abstract manner, relegating the political function of a project’s proponent almost to a folkloric dimension to the point of being negligible. Fortunately, a new generation of researchers including Leroux (2006: 83) have shed

“light on the strategic content of territorial governance and on the challenges of negotiation that are an essential part of it. Indeed, in any project of territorial development, public, private or social actors are confronted
with conflictual situations (…). Territorial governance thus depends largely upon the nature of the conflicts at stake (…) and the capacity of the actors to end up with acceptable compromises through their negotiations.” (translation)

Not only is the actor – whether he or she is an individual, a business or an association – still relegated to a secondary position in development studies but our scientific discourse still insists all too often on conceptualizing (true) development as a process that operates outside of the central State, its apparatus and its political representatives, including at the municipal level.

In this search for an axiological neutrality, there is an oversimplification of reality which puts action above the ups and downs of everyday life, as if the implementation of a project can make abstraction of conflicts, questions of ethics, areas of uncertainty, the cumbersome nature of structures and the search for power. Most definitely, sometimes some models of scientific explanation place the system before man, and they do not do justice to the important question of personal involvement and of its importance in the management of social development. Furthermore, the literature is often silent on the question that stems from the analysis of a process of social development, i.e. “who possesses the power and authority in a community to decide and take important decisions relating to socio-economic development?” (translation) This is what Jean and Bisson try to respond to in their case study that focuses on ‘partnership-based governance’ in the context of rural communities.

This perspective focused on a re-enhancement of the actor’s role is what underlies the text presented by Chouinard, Plante and Martin. They present two participative research processes undertaken in two coastal communities in New Brunswick confronted by the effects of climatic change. At the same time, they show the limits of traditional municipal governance when confronted with the climate challenge and how the entrance of new actors – researcher-actors – onto the stage have facilitated a process of community governance and have modified the response to environmental turbulence.

The actor-centred perspective leads us also to question our understanding of territory and its role in driving territorial governance. The text presented by Chiasson, Andrew and Leclerc, based on two case studies of the governance of forest-based territories, shows how the approach that dominates the territorial paradigm tends to play down the role and the importance of actors implicated in different sectoral logics. The analysis of these two cases shows the omnipresence of sectoral dynamics in the construction of territorial governance. Guay and Martin in their text also aim to enrich our understanding of the relationship between actor and territory. In effect, their study of aboriginal practices provides for a better appreciation of the complex relationships between aboriginals and territory. If the territory for the aboriginal represents a space of sovereignty, as expressed for instance in their territorial land claims, at the same time it is a matrix, i.e. a symbolic space without materiality that ties the aboriginal actor to his community. A real understanding of aboriginal governance must take into account the relationship between these two conceptualisations of aboriginal territory.
Territorial development underlies a whole set of social transformations for which public powers more or less take direct responsibility. Having said this, regional development represents a set of complex social projects that are certainly driven by social movements, as represented by their leaders; but they are also institutionalised through organisations put in place by public authorities. Consequently, territorial governance can also be defined as the result of interactions that are produced within an ‘ecosystem’ of actors and organisations which function in the same territory. Following on from Stoker (1998) and Saint-Martin (2002: 87), we can postulate that territorial governance creates interactions within a whole set of institutions and actors who do not all belong to the governmental domain. Basically, the development of a ‘territorial system’ can be conceived here from the perspective of action space (Touraine 1984).

**Territorial Governance: Decentralisation Is Indispensable**

Territorial governance is facing an uphill battle to become integrated into the practices of public administration (including Quebec’s public administration). And there’s good reason for this! To start with, wanting to decentralise public policy is tantamount to wanting to decentralise the respublica, i.e. the essence of ‘public’. To some extent, it involves wanting to take away ‘something’ from ‘public’, ‘something’ that by definition belongs to the social collectivity, even the national collectivity, in order to put it in the hands of a regional collectivity. It really is quite a revolutionary project, because it puts into question a political order that has been established over the centuries. In effect, the idea of decentralisation goes against the historical current of the classical conception of the Nation-State, because the latter was constructed slowly over time at the expense of regional powers and city-states (Gaudin 2002: 28). As Courtemanche (2006: 62) reminds us, paradoxically it has been the most progressive social movements that have been systematically opposed to the concept of decentralisation:

“As Marxists, they believed in a centralised democratic system and in global planning. They believed that, since all human beings are equal, all their desires are similar. As socialists, they believed in the Jacobean principles that are not that far removed from the Marxists’ suspicion regarding diversities, often taken as synonymous with inequality” (translation).

Now, as Elander (2002) has already argued, territorial governance – and its metropolitan corollary, urban governance – presupposes de facto a movement towards decentralisation of public policies.

Political scientists, sociologists and jurists have spent a great deal of time defining decentralisation. The objective of this article is not to undertake an exhaustive inventory, but rather to draw the reader’s attention to the subversive function of the ideology of political decentralisation. Indeed, tackled from the
perspective of territorial governance, the question of decentralisation – which moreover is part and parcel of the paradigm of subsidiarity – poses the search for better administrative efficiency, through bringing the power over decisions closer to the action. Thus, as an essential component of its discourse, decentralisation has a systematic opposition to the totalitarian expression of the State. Decentralisation is based on learning to live together and on a process of political socialisation that values the horizontal approaches represented by ‘territory’ rather than sectoral approaches and the procedural logics of the State (Teisserenc 1994). From this perspective, Robitaille and Régimbald provide us with a remarkable case study that deals with ‘educational governance’ and the small amount of power accorded to regions in the management of the supply of training required in order to respond to the economic, social and cultural needs of their territory.

Thus, the logic of territorial governance postulates a participative democracy whose proponents see in this an antidote to the so-called democratic deficit that prevails in the West (Bruckner 1992). Fung and Wright (2003: 1) identify a number of civic virtues in the reinforcement of participative governance:

“[the] mechanism of political representation seems ineffective in accomplishing the central ideals of democratic politics: facilitating active political involvement of the citizenry, forging political consensus through dialogue, devising and implement public policies that ground a productive economy and healthy society, and more radical egalitarian version of the democratic ideal, assuring that all citizens benefit from the nation’s wealth”.

This Athenian vision of democracy is directly opposed to the centralising logic of the Nation-State. Essentially, this is because the latter is based upon another democratic culture, representative democracy, of which one of the major cornerstones is imputability, which is at the origin of the English term accountability. Since the American Revolution, as incarnated in the slogan ‘No taxation without representation’, the central question has been universally the same: to whom are we accountable for the management of public funds? It is no longer possible to conceptualise the question of decentralisation without taking account of the modes of political regulation of local governance that integrate accountability functions.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, not only did the relationship to territory as our economic living-space refer principally to national space, but the ‘region’ was associated with a pejorative perception in relation to its potential for economic development. The ‘local’ in the collective imagination of public decision makers was associated with a bygone time, that had fallen behind the imperatives of modern administration and a source of resistance to social change (Dumont 1966). Two far-reaching expressions of centralised state planning, conceived independently of the regional phenomenon, have attracted attention from many researchers. First, there was the (mis)adventure of the Bureau d’Aménagement de l’Est du Québec (1963-1966), which gradually left the development officers sent by Quebec with the responsibility of telling the residents of the Gaspé – whereas they were initially supposed to have consulted the residents – how they should
conceive of their future. Second, there was the famous Higgins, Martin and Reynaud Report that, without any discussion, relegated Quebec’s regions to a simple, passive role as satellites poles on the periphery of the principal metropolitan region of Montreal. The remaining story had to await the emergence of the ‘Economy and Humanism’ movement, incarnated by Father Louis-Joseph Lebret and the economist François Perroux, in order to renew the legitimacy of the regional territory as an economic action space.

In this way, therefore, the dynamic of decentralisation implies going beyond the negation of the ‘local’ that we find in the Keynesian model of economic development. The rise of the discourse on decentralisation rests upon the double postulate that local development has become more important in the new economic environment compared to the earlier one (Jacobs 1969) and that the ‘local’ as we understand it today has been renewed from the point of view of the originality and the social relationships that structure it (Lévesque 1999). In relation to this, we should also note that in terms of its operational dimension, decentralisation is often characterised by an increased value attached to the basic social basis of economic activity – the social economy. The economist Hirschman (1958) clearly showed that the logic of development often defies conventional economic analysis; he emphasized the importance of the effects of linkages and social mechanisms that generate and mobilise energy, capital and entrepreneurship. More recently, the ‘economy of proximity’ theoreticians have also sought to integrate the effects of territory into models of economic and econometric analysis. Through this, these economists at least have the merit of going beyond the classic perspective of spatial economy that only considered space in terms of distance, through integrating other non-market variables that yield a more consequential conception of territory as economic space (Ponsard 1988). In short, the ideology of decentralisation responds to a revolutionary conceptualisation of the ‘local’ as a space of planning and socio-economic regulation.

Decentralisation is also based on the idea that national space is comprised of sub-sets of territorial identities and belonging defined as a function of a certain number of indicators that social geography has helped identify for us (geomorphology, population density, local history, and so on). It is part of a political process, fed by a pluralist vision of society. While the Nation-State can be conceived of as a holistic social phenomenon, that is more than the sum of its constituent parts, of which territorial integrity and the authority of the Nation-State are not negotiable. The well-known manifesto of Abbey Sieyès (1748-1836) gives a good summary of this conceptualisation. For him, “the nation exists before everything else, it is the origin of everything. Its desires are always legal, it is the law itself” (translation). When we reflect on territorial governance, it is inevitable that we must think about how far the political and fiscal autonomy of a region can be taken without destroying the national spirit. In relation to this, the question of territorial governance lies at the heart of the current transformation of the concept of the Nation-State.
Not so long ago, there was a time when regional development was going through a period of scientific legitimisation. At that time, to suggest that territorial development had an ideological base – even partially so – was perceived as a negation of the capability of achieving a neutral axiology, seen as indispensable to ensure the credibility of what was in effect still a very young scientific discourse.

Unless one consciously turns a blind eye, it was difficult not to admit the ‘nihilist’ nature of territorial development and the governance practices it implied. Because in effect, in its acceptation à la Nietzsche, nihilism signifies not believing in anything. Transcendental values, the end of which were announced by Nietzsche, were invented by man to give sense to his social existence, to console him for his imperfections and his limitations, in short to reject that social existence – indeed to deny it – as it exists, in favour of what it should be, in terms of a political ideal. Local governance in the way we defined it earlier is undeniably grounded in an attempt to change market forces, demographic dynamics, geographic isolation and political logics. As Bob Jessop (1998) noted, the concept of governance finds its origins in an effort to think of ways of coordinating collective action as an alternative to the laws of the market and the conventional political hierarchy. Having said this, territorial governance also stands for an ideological challenge that has, among other things, been taken up by the proponents of the paradigm of post-development and more recently by the three major international organisations of the World Bank (WB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Daniel Tremblay devotes an interesting text to this question.

Territorial Governance: Beyond Good Governance

The literature review presented above shows that territorial governance is a scientific concept with wind in its sails! Indeed, over the last five years there has probably been more books and articles devoted to this subject than there was in the previous quarter century. Consequently, the manner of tackling territorial governance is fragmented and there is no agreement on its definition. On top of this epistemological fuzziness, the practices that are part of territorial governance are situated in a heterogeneous set of action fields. Despite this, we must recognise that this domain of study, with all its theoretical strengths and weaknesses, has gradually carved out a presence in the regional science domain, both in Quebec and throughout Canada.

For a long time, territorial governance, as a sub-field of regional studies, still had to cope with the use of the over-identified term, governance, or what Jean-Pierre Gaudin (2002) called a mot valise (i.e. meaning a catch-all term). In this context, our efforts at conceptualisation to try to distinguish (good) governance –
as defined by Stiglitz (2002) – from territorial governance must still be pursued. Territorial governance is not just a simple means for managing the ‘social’ dimension of our society. The contemporary origins of the term governance have an ideological dimension, the ethics of which are diametrically opposed to the social values upon which territorial governance is based. In relation to this, Hermet and Kazancigil (2005: 8) remind us that: “the imperative of good governance is that the way we manage public business should not differ materially from how we manage private business. To simplify matters, the bottom line is that it is aimed at eliminating the distinction between public and private (…).” (translation) Without denying the need for healthy and accountable business management, territorial governance possesses a public finality in the sense of not wanting to let market forces be the only mode of social regulation; by viewing the State not as an adversary, nor just as a supplier (of services), but rather as a partner in the development of local collectivities; by rehabilitating the ‘local’ as the site of economic action; and by valuing civic action as a source of social change.

Territorial Governance: An Empirical Approach

Through different methodologies inherent to social sciences (case study, interview, participant observer, content analysis, historiography), the objective of this special issue of the *Canadian Journal of Regional Science* is to enrich our understanding of territorial governance by confronting it with social realities and the accompanying scientific analysis. The editorial choice of the guest editors of the special issue is thus perfectly clear: we have focussed on empirical social analysis, without sacrificing efforts at conceptualisation. Thus, the ten texts in this special issue are grouped around the three broad dimensions of territorial governance as defined in the context of this introduction. The first set of texts deal with the question of the multiple ways in which the ‘actor’ is present in the dynamic of territorial governance. A second set of texts focus on decentralisation as the indispensable movement that underlies territorial governance. Finally, the last two texts describe different ideological trajectories that have contributed to the definition of territorial governance.

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