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Volume 3

Collective Dynamics and Territories

9 Issues for Competitive, Innovative and Sustainable Territories

Edited by
Anne Albert-Cromarias
Thérèse Albertini
Patrice Terramorsi

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Territorial Entrepreneurship and Innovation Set

coordinated by
Didier Chabaud, Florent Pratlong and Carlos Moreno

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Introduction

Managing Territorial Dynamics: Why? How?

I.1. People and territories: an unquantifiable harmony

From time immemorial, people and territories have maintained a relationship that combines measure and excess. It is in this dialectical relationship that the living theater of human societies is formed, with its share of hubris, conflict and predation.

Originally nomads, seeking the resources necessary for their subsistence in ever-changing environments, humankind gradually became sedentary. This occupation of progressively domesticated spaces went hand in hand with the development of agriculture and animal husbandry, as well as the beginning of modern social organization (Cauvin 1977). This period also corresponds, according to a number of researchers (Ruddiman 2003), to the beginning of the Anthropocene era (Crutzen and Stoermer 2000), characterized by the fact that "Human activities have become so pervasive and profound that they rival the great forces of Nature and are pushing the Earth into planetary *terra incognita*" (authors' translation, Steffen et al. 2007)[1]. Indeed, over time, the burden of human activities on the planet has led to profound disruptions that are now affecting both physical (e.g. global warming, extreme weather events) and ecological (e.g. reduced biodiversity) balances (Crutzen 2006).

Introduction written by Thérèse ALBERTINI, Anne ALBERT-CROMARIAS and Patrice TERRAMORSI.

1 Cited by Federau (2017).

In this movement linking people and territories, the industrial revolutions represent a significant break. The technical, scientific and social developments of the 18th and 19th centuries opened up new horizons, while at the same time increased humans' insatiable appetite. The territory, dominated as it has perhaps never been, is now the site of ever larger and more efficient factories (see, for example, Ford's giant factories on the Red River site in Michigan, built between 1917 and 1928)[2], and also of the unbridled exploitation of the natural resources necessary for modern society, be they coal, copper or oil.

Globalization marks another turning point. The scope of human activity then changes scale, bringing with it an unprecedented increase in the production of wealth, and also in the impact of human activities on the planet. The grounding of the *Ever Given*, a container ship that blocked the Suez Canal for several days in March 2021[3], and the shortage of medical devices and basic pharmaceutical substances in many countries as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic show better than any words how often profit optimization is the only variable of choice, and how illusory this *limitless* world can be. Consumed by the economic and financial activities, the "world territory" needs to be populated.

In this context, from ecological transition to innovation, competitiveness, employment, training, solidarity and the creation of the Commons, the territorial dimension is now everywhere. It expresses the urgent need for humankind to rediscover its bearings, so that it can take measure of its actions and face up to the unprecedented challenges it faces.

I.2. Management Sciences and further better relations between people and territories

Isolated responses are not enough to tackle the consequences of the Anthropocene. Only a global mobilization that cuts across societies and questions the relationship between humankind and the Earth is likely to enable us to develop responses that are both acceptable and relevant. In order to achieve this, all scientific disciplines, from education to engineering, to geography and biology, need to be mobilized.

2 See, for example: https://www.thehenryford.org/visit/ford-rouge-factory-tour/history-and-timeline/fords-rouge/.

3 See, for example: https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2021/03/26/canal-de-suez-bloque-ce-que-l-on-sait-de-l-echouage-du-cargo-ever-given_6074575_3212.html.

How do the Management Sciences fit into this? How can they, often accused of being an extension of ultra-liberal thinking, shed light on the paths to harmonious development of human activities within territories? Before outlining these answers, which will be further developed in this book, we need to look back at the very concept of territory and its gradual appropriation by the Management Sciences.

Initially considered to be negligible, the territory, conceived solely as a geographical space, was gradually integrated by standard economic theory as a variable enabling companies to benefit from comparative advantages. The aim is to optimize the location of activity in order to "locate where it will be most profitable" (Porter 1990). Despite Marshall's pioneering work in 1890 on the location of industry and the effects of industrial concentration, it was not until the 1970s that the territory became the focus of renewed interest.

With the oil shocks putting a stop to the growth of *Les Trente Glorieuses*[4], and thus to the development of ever larger and more international companies, the virtues of "small is beautiful" were (re)discovered (Piore and Sabel 1984). Beyond location, it became clear that the competitiveness of organizations could be based on their ability to forge links between themselves and within a given territory. The work carried out by researchers on the industrial districts of the "Third Italy", under the impetus of Arnaldo Bagnasco and his "disciples", sought to explain the success of clusters of small, often family-run, companies. The concept of the Marshallian industrial atmosphere was revived. They emphasized that cooperation and noneconomic ties in the local community (Becattini 1991) were fostered by the cultural, social and political homogeneity observable in these districts (Garofoli 1992).

Subsequently, the work of the "French proximity school[5]" demonstrated the relevance of addressing the question of relationships between organizations in a given territory. Indeed, while the territory can facilitate or hinder the coordination of actors (Zimmermann 2008), other factors come into play in this complex interaction: socio-economic proximity (Bouba-Olga and Grossetti 2008), organized proximity (Rallet and Torre 2004), institutional proximity (Kirat and Lung 1995), cognitive proximity (Boschma 2005) and political proximity (Talbot 2010). This is followed by the search for the ideal

4 *Les Trente Glorieuses* was a 30-year period of economic growth in France between 1945 and 1975, following the end of World War II.

5 L'école française de la proximité.

territorial structure (technopoles, competitiveness clusters and other local production systems) to optimally coordinate the various agents according to preestablished objectives. However, in the face of prescriptive approaches, accused of being disconnected from the reality of the actors, a so-called "problem-solving" logic has emerged (Landel and Pecqueur 2016). From then on, it was no longer a question of applying a standard response to a given territory, but of accompanying stakeholders in the development of collective territorial dynamics, from the analysis of the situation to the definition of the problem, via the generation of ideas, their selection, implementation and evaluation. From this perspective, Management Science, as a set of disciplines dedicated to "analyzing and designing the steering mechanisms of organized action" (authors' translation, David 2000), seems to be the most appropriate field of study. Bringing together 22 researchers in strategic management, human resources management and marketing, this book offers a synthetic, systemic and operational vision for better understanding, and acting upon, collective territorial dynamics. For each of the nine territorial challenges identified, theoretical and conceptual benchmarks, as well as analysis and action tools, derived from problems encountered in different territories, are presented in Table I.1.

	Territorial challenges
Chapter 1	Setting Up in a Rural Environment: A Sustainable Strategic Management Approach
Chapter 2	Organizing a Network of Actors to Preserve and/or Enhance the Common Resource
Chapter 3	Building Collective Environmental Action Within Territories
Chapter 4	Innovating and Regenerating Territories Through the Development of Ecosystems
Chapter 5	Reconciling Individual and Collective Territorial Dynamics
Chapter 6	Supporting Social Innovation Within Territories
Chapter 7	Tackling Medical Deserts in Rural Territories
Chapter 8	Identifying and Valorizing Human Resources Within Territories
Chapter 9	Attracting and Retaining Talents in Organizations and Territories

Table I.1. *Nine territorial challenges*

I.2.1. *Challenge 1: setting up in a rural environment: a sustainable strategic management approach*

The first challenge is to read the territory, in the rural sense of the term, as a strategic asset for a company. Alexandre Asselineau's starting point is the observation that setting up in rural territories is an option that is all too often neglected, even though it can be a strategic choice with high economic, social and environmental value. Setting up in a rural environment can align resources, culture and local actors around a coherent vision, reducing production costs, enhancing differentiation and attracting talent. Through the example of the *Institut de Tramayes*, located near Cluny, the author demonstrates that it is possible to revive a territory's dynamism, even when it does not appear to have major assets and resources, by enabling the company setting up there to draw upon the territory's resources to generate a highly coherent and adapted value proposition.

I.2.2. *Challenge 2: organizing a network of actors to preserve and/or enhance the common resource*

The second challenge, taken up by Christophe Assens and François Coléno, is that of developing (or sustaining) a competitive advantage linked to the territory, combining the economic imperative of greater competitiveness with respect for the common good that is the territory. Two examples from the agri-food sector, corn production in Alsace and potatoes from Noirmoutier, illustrate the need for a network strategy that reconciles the individual interests of each partner within the cooperative with the collective interests of the territory. Two conditions are essential: first, cultural proximity and identity, which creates a climate of trust sufficient to facilitate collaboration despite rivalries; and second, industrial collaboration, which brings together the different actors within a genuine network strategy for the territory.

I.2.3. *Challenge 3: building collective environmental action within territories*

The third territorial challenge, addressed by Solange Hernandez and Camille Fiore, is linked to environmental issues, and more specifically to the problem of air pollution, responsible for several thousand deaths every year in France. In this public health context, territorial organizations can, through

collaborative management, act to improve air quality by drawing on two types of strategic management: *collaborative strategic management and the "On-The-Way Strategy"*. A multiple case study was carried out on three territories (Greater Paris, Grenoble-Alpes-Métropole and the Eurometropole of Strasbourg), showing that, when faced with a complex problem such as improving air quality, the implementation of collaborative strategic management and *"On-The-Way Strategy"* by the territory's stakeholders is not easy.

I.2.4. *Challenge 4: innovating and regenerating territories through the development of ecosystems*

The fourth challenge deals with collective and open innovation within a given territory, where proximity facilitates exchanges between actors. Innovating within an ecosystem with partners enables us to offer greater value than would have been created individually by each member of the ecosystem. In fact, the complementarities that develop between ecosystem members are just as many opportunities for business development. Thomas Loilier, Magali Malherbe and Guillaume Detchenique offer a fresh perspective on ecosystems, discussing the role played by the territory in the dynamics of an ecosystem, which in turn can contribute to its development or regeneration. Using two examples – the Norman cider ecosystem and the NFC technology ecosystem, also in Normandy – they demonstrate, through the notion of proximity, the mechanisms that enable a territory to unblock or renew an ecosystem: development of shared projects, sharing of values and representations by actors in the territory concerned, writing or rewriting a common history, without minimizing the risk of "territorial myopia".

I.2.5. *Challenge 5: reconciling individual and collective territorial dynamics*

The fifth challenge facing territories is how to reconcile individual and collective entrepreneurial outlook logics. Colette Fourcade, Christophe Leyronas and Stéphanie Loup propose an analysis that combines these two dimensions. For these authors, territorial development is definitely linked to available resources, and also to the ability of actors to perceive, integrate and exploit them. In order to achieve this, the individual and collective levels must maintain a fruitful relationship. This observation has led to the proposal of a diagnostic grid, cross-referencing, on the one hand, the perception

associated with the value of a resource and, on the other hand, the level of convergence or divergence of this appreciation. For each of the four positions identified by the authors, perspectives for action are outlined, based on an analysis of the Pézenas commune, internationally renowned for its crafts.

I.2.6. *Challenge 6: supporting social innovation within territories*

The sixth challenge, addressed by Yamina Vierge and Nathalie Raulet-Croset, has a more direct societal dimension. The authors show how, thanks to a dedicated process, it is possible to coordinate the plurality of actors involved in the creation and appropriation of social innovations within territories. In this chapter, the reader will find both theoretical reference points for understanding the process of institutionalizing social innovation, notably through the concept of the middleground, and a concrete illustration based on an analysis of the various support mechanisms set up by the Occitanie Region and the City of Toulouse. We will then identify the factors that have fostered the dynamic development of social innovation initiatives in this territory.

I.2.7. *Challenge 7: tackling medical deserts in rural territories*

The seventh challenge is that of tackling territorial inequalities regarding access to healthcare, and the health, social and economic consequences that accompany them. Questioning this major issue, Corinne Rochette first shows that, when faced with the complexity of the problem posed by medical deserts, instrumental logic alone will not suffice. She argues that, if we are to find a solution, we need to move away from a highly centralized mode of operation to a collaborative model that is more in tune with territorial singularities. She bases her argument on a study of two schemes designed to provide a collective response to the problems of access to healthcare and medical deserts within a given territory: *CPTS (Communautés Professionnelles Territoriales de Santé)* “territorial professional health communities”, and *CLS (Contrat Local de Santé)* “local health contracts”. The author emphasizes that the cognitive, social, institutional and organizational proximities that accompany these mechanisms contribute to the durability and relevance of these collective responses.

I.2.8. *Challenge 8: identifying and valorizing human resources within territories*

The eighth challenge, addressed by Ingrid Mazzilli, Isabelle Bories-Azeau and Truong Giang Pham, is that of identifying and making the most of the competencies present in local territories/areas. The authors emphasize that, beyond isolated initiatives, we need to initiate collaboration between territorial authorities, socio-economic actors and local residents. The authors first present a summary of research carried out in the field of Territorial Human Resources Management (T-HRM), and then, based on this work, they propose a framework for studying T-HRM projects. The dimensions thus identified (territorial context; purpose of the project and of the methodology adopted; collective and partnership properties) make it possible to adapt the institutional work essential to the project's success. This proposed analysis is then applied to two cases from research-actions carried out in north-western and southern France.

I.2.9. *Challenge 9: attracting and retaining talents in organizations and territories*

Ève Saint-Germes and Christophe Alaux tackle the final challenge in this book. This concerns the attraction and retainment of talent. Beyond focusing solely on job vacancies, some territories/regions are moving towards promoting a quality of life that combines professional opportunities and well-being. This perspective has led to the development of tools such as the *QVT (Qualité de Vie Territoriale²)* "quality of territorial life", which combines quality of life at work and quality of life in a given territory. Its assessment is based on multiple indicators (human development, socio-economic conditions, quality of life, etc.), and its mobilization can encourage new marketing approaches based on *MET (Marques Employeurs Territoriales)* "territorial employer brands". Based on the case study of Attitude Manche, the authors show that the attention paid to territorial quality of life enables the development of a double-entry approach that simultaneously questions the organizational and territorial levels.

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1

Setting Up in a Rural Environment: A Sustainable Strategic Management Approach

1.1. Introduction

This contribution is taken partly from work carried out over the last 10 years in collaboration with Anne Albert-Cromarias (co-author of the present book); and, more broadly, from a reflection on the essential role that we believe the strategic management of organizations and territories should play, as a teaching and research discipline, and as a practice, in the current and future mutations of our societies (see Asselineau 2021; Albert-Cromarias et al. 2022).

On the one hand, there are important issues to be addressed in terms of territorial dynamics and planning. In France, public policies over the last few decades have confirmed the trend towards the creation of imposing metropolises that attract activity, employment and inhabitants. However, while they enjoy a marked economic dynamism, many of these large cities have probably reached their critical size, and now accumulate numerous disadvantages in environmental terms (air and water pollution, insalubrity, congested transport) and social terms (housing costs, distance between work and home, insecurity, quality of life). All of this is happening at a time when large swathes of the territory feel abandoned, suffering from a lack of economic prospects, and paying dearly for the phenomena of deindustrialization, demographic devitalization, and the impoverishment of

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