INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

CITIZENSHIP AND URBAN SPACES IN THE AMERICAS AND EUROPE

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CALL FOR PAPERS

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Citizenship and urban spaces between the Americas and Europe

Goals and Scientific Research Concepts

The question of citizenship is making a strong comeback both in the reality of the American and European city and metropolis and in social science research.

The growing disaffiliation of groups and individuals from political parties and the disappearance of traditional allegiances is not so much proof of a crisis in politics but rather of a restructuration of the political domain that promotes new forms of citizenship.

On both sides of the Atlantic citizenship has become the dominant paradigm in urban planning.
It is a prominent feature of public action in poor neighbourhoods as well as in urban development. It influences debates on local power systems, whether it be implicitly within the operation and the *challenging* of existing power systems, or explicitly by presenting new identities and new political themes.

The issue of citizenship leads to that of territorial status. In Western countries, the nation-state has for centuries been everyman's reference in the definition of his citizenship and identity. Yet for twenty years now globalization and the speeding-up of migration movements have been weakening this conception of citizenship, at the same time bringing it back into force in urban *life (way of life)*(Germain, 2006, Cortès, Faret, 2009).

This movement back to the local by way of exercise of citizenship, is the sign of a double fracture: ideological on one hand, involving the way the citizen can be seen as a figure belonging to a nation-state, and political on the other, involving the representation of the citizen as the exemplary symbol of public action and local development. The meaning of being a citizen is changing. It is shedding its traditional role as refuge of nationalisms. Citizenship is also losing some of the assurance of its relationship with the living space.

New ways of being a citizen are emerging (eco-citizenship, cultural citizenship, bi-citizenship…), finding new modes of action, and becoming a hazily-defined ideal reference in our modern democracies. At the same time personal identities are becoming denser, because 'national' identity (all-embracing and unique) has been supplanted by a telescoping of new or old identities that had previously been repressed or ignored. And these identities are no longer exclusively defined by the historical past, but are fashioned by an uncertain and ever-changing present, within memories that are both fresh and firmly anchored to their urban environment.

An approach that compares urban citizenship in the Americas and Europe will contribute to filling the gap in this area underlined recently by Marion Carrel (2008). This conference intends and aims to show paths of research that are new or little explored by current work in Europe or the Americas; not only to make comparisons but also to find a perspective that enables us to show what processes are at work and what points of friction or changes can be seen.

As we see it, the theme of urban citizenship at this moment should not deal with the electoral issue but focus on questions such as religion, education, and security, but also more traditional areas such as city planning, housing, transport and jobs. Because of the restructuring going on in these areas, new forms of integration and assimilation in cities are coming to the fore in America and in Europe.

Using a comparative approach, we want to investigate these forms and the conditions of citizenship being expressed in the light of the cultural diversification of city and metropolitan environments.

Multiple national and economic contexts imply different forms of citizenship, which must seek solutions to the problems posed by the coexistence of various groups and the lack of formal recognition of population groups produced by recent immigration (in the north) and poor or marginalised population groups (in the south).

While many studies put forward the idea of cultural citizenship, we propose a hypothesis of plural citizenship borrowed from Catherine Neveu (1997), based on a triple foundation: social, political and spatial.

Analysis of this plural citizenship requires a better understanding of social and spatial interactions among a multitude of modes of belonging and involvement, according to diverse references. It also requires that we give sufficient importance to scale interaction (local, metropolitan, national, transnational including migration)and the way this affects citizen action, and also to where people feel they belong (socially, ethnically, geographically) and to categories of identity.

This conference is in line with the ongoing research being carried out by the CIEU by comparing and opposing viewpoints on urban planning in the Americas and Europe, which still represents a major part of the work of laboratory researchers. In addition, it is linked with the MAP project, a multi-disciplinary project which associates universities in south western France within the 'Institut des Amériques'. The Map project seeks to open new research paths and points of view on citizenship through the lens of how living-space is occupied.

References:

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- Gilbert.L, 2006, « Négocier la diversité : Tensions entre discours nationaux et pratiques urbaines en Amérique du Nord», in *Les métropoles au défi de la diversité culturelle*, Jouve.B et Gagnon A-G, Grenoble, PUG, p.177-192

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Central themes (work themes)

The conference will be divided into 4 theme workshops over 2 days, for each of which a president and a moderator will manage and encourage the debates.

The workshops are expected to be as follows, although they may change after submission proposals come in:

1. Citizenship, city life and grassroots activism

The space defined by institutions is no longer the one and only place where and by which political life is defined and where citizenship is in action in the city and metropolis. It is a reference among many others.
Urban and metropolitan political life is constructed within and by the complexity of interaction among various spatial references. In Western Europe and in most of the Americas, a redefinition of the boundaries of urban citizenship is occurring simultaneously with change in city life. Not only is the meaning of what it is to be a citizen changing (and is no longer limited to nationality and voting) but the places and spaces of citizenship are also evolving. Among these, public spaces continue to play an important part in the making of city life and citizenship, as well as in understanding the ever-changing relations between city life and citizenship.

Activism, a favourite channel of citizens' action, takes many original forms (e.g.Tam-tam in Montreal, occupation of the banks of the Seine in Paris by the Don Quichottes…).

Public spaces, in the heart of urban patterns and of citizens' actions, are witness to the unceasing renewal of modes of acculturation to otherness, but also see the standardising efforts of public policy.

However, other places and spaces are born beside them, combining urban and citizen action. Although these places are sometimes unexpected (or rather surprising), with vague and mobile boundaries and poorly-defined status (vestibules of buildings, community gardens, sports halls, shopping malls…), they are nonetheless active and innovative sites of urban citizenship both in the Americas and in Europe.
Public spaces and informal places play a part in the visibility and definition of these citizen groups and the urban ways deriving from them.
These new spaces for learning about urban life and citizenship (such as the Montreal street committees and the citizens' collectives in French suburbs) take fertile and often original paths which offer new challenges in urban planning and development.

Key words: **activism, city life, public spaces, learning, otherness**

2. City management and institutional framework of citizenship

In the Americas as in Europe, the institutional and administrative management of larger and larger urban spaces has been made complex by the growth of the metropolis and ethno-cultural diversity.

Claims on land for building or special uses imply permanent negotiation or conflict between local decision-makers, as well as between politicians and ordinary citizens, and between groups of inhabitants.

The NIMBY attitude or incorporation / disincorporation in North America, the migration of the landless poor and the growth of slums around large cities in Latin America are not just simple forms of land redistribution. These forms of confiscation highlight variable expectations concerning land management and show the different ways in which decision-making is influenced or coerced.

These are not the only forms of resistance or of the empowerment of urban and metropolitan citizens, and have no equivalent in Europe.

However, in the three spaces of interest here, anti-expulsion or anti-relocation movements and the arrival of new activities and architectural forms restructure the spaces and their functions. Sometimes interpreted as ways of asserting identity, sometimes included in the inventory of demonstrations of citizenship or of social groups, they challenge the expression of the balance of power and of negotiation that go together with metropolitan development. They also encourage renewed attention to the issue of urban power structures.

The structures and operation of elected representatives and leaders are thus affected by the instability of spatial and social relationships. The examples submitted should spotlight these land claims and activist demonstrations to introduce analysis of the way they affect the fashioning of the city.

The submissions are expected to question the tools, the boundaries, and the institutional frameworks that are (re)created, modified, overturned or circumnavigated. This should entail analysis of how local government adapts to metropolitan government, and of the forms of management of citizenship in the context of inter-city cooperation.

Key words: **management, grassroots activism, institutional regulations and procedures, conflicts, negotiation**

3. Citizenship and social change

The process of globalisation that affects European and American cities, as they are examined through the redistribution of their economic activities and their urban hierarchies, also affects the infra-metropolitan space.

Along with the concentration and the extension of urbanisation, which internationally follows similar patterns, the consequences of globalisation are also examined in terms of differentiation and socio-spatial fragmentation on the intra-urban scale.

Integration in the economic world, access to jobs and work are made complex by mixing of national and professional identities and by the ongoing transformation of economic, material and social aspects of employment. The replacement and/or disappearance of industries and sectors of activity go hand in hand with the birth of new forms which are not only those of the informal sector. At the highest and the lowest levels of competence and salary new activities imply new relationships with the workplace, new mobilities in the urban space and new ways of considering social involvement.

Hence, the construction of social identity and identification with groups through jobs and incomes have to be be reinvestigated as elements of citizenship.

In these conditions, more flexible professional relationships facilitate the process of permanent recomposition of social and professional groups, and the issue of urban social cohesion must be studied other than just in terms of the gaps between the extremes of socioprofessional and income hierarchies.

Situations where employment is sporadic and temporary, the accumulation and the diversity of different forms of work leads us to rethink the conditions of citizenship. Are we seeing the birth of partial and flexible forms of citizenship, or on the contrary the search for new means of building and asserting that citizenship? Along with the different categories of public bodies that lend structure to urban and employment policy, the workplace and economic activity have always been and remain decisive in the reactions of civil society (the tissue of local action groups, groups of residents, minorities…). Are these reactions to the world of work to be linked only to an individual search for

revenue and socio-spatial belonging, or are they to be associated with other forms of demands for identity and better citizenship?

On these issues, the comparison between the Americas and Europe seems all the more relevant as attitudes to employment are not steeped in the same social values and forms of citizenship. Based on transformations in attitudes to work, citizenship will be analysed through examples of the local and national public bodies that define urban policy but also illustrated by the reactions of people at work. This constitutes a way of investigating the links between the current employment and urban space restructuring caused by economic globalisation.

Key words: **citizenship, economic globalisation, work/employment, social categories**

4. <u>Building citizenship from migration and mobility</u>

The double process of globalisation and urban polarisation of international migration, and, more broadly, the intensifying and diversifying of forms of mobility, call for a renewed investigation of the way migrant/mobile people build their citizenship in larger spaces. As they participate in the dialectics of dispersion and concentration, of movement and fixation, the social and geographical habits of mobility become more complex (general traffic, back-and-forth commuting, multi-residence, etc…) and often give rise to transnational migratory territories that articulate country of destination and of origin, places of settlement and of origin, city and rural. The blurring of territorial and identity allegiances raises questions about the making of 'flexible' citizenship, well adapted to routines of mobility and changing roots produced by complexity and migratory traffic. The problem is to be able to manage, on an individual and/or collective basis, the 'in-betweens' of mobility, this *hereabouts* and/or that *thereabouts*. What are the effects of uni-polarity, of multi-polarity, but also of the multi-polarity of trans-national and even diasporic constructions, when they are socio-spatial resources for the construction of citizenship? Will we see the birth of new forms of citizens' expression whose vector is mobility? Between places of destination and of origin, where should citizenship be preserved and defended? Can dispersed, multi-localised, demultiplied forms of citizenship be distinguished? How can migrants find their place and make their voices heard in these systems? Using what means and at what level?

Europe and the Americas, strong focus points in the global system of international mobility and traffic, are suitable spaces where views from different angles can apprehend the making of a new citizenship of the 'in-between'. Based on the different types of mobile groups (immigrant communities, double residents, voyagers, etc….) , submissions will seek to decode the configuration of the broader spaces of citizenship between 'here' and 'over there', individual or collective strategies of activism (formal or informal, of a political, social or cultural nature) or else the plurality of social demands: entitlement (or not) to civil rights, to housing, to education, to health care, to material and immaterial resources.

It will also be important to measure the part played by public bodies (national governments, local bodies etc..) in enabling or hindering the construction of these new forms of citizenship, or else the new, original modes of organisation into networks of mutual aid 'from the grassroots' (migrant clubs for example)

Key words: **flexible citizenship, migrations, mobilities, trans-national, multi-polarity**

Contacts and informations

David Giband : giband@univ-perp.fr

Corinne Siino : siino@univ-tlse2.fr

Deadline for submission : January, 15th 2010.
A small summary is aked in english, french or spanish