

# CALL FOR SESSIONS

Learning from territories / Teaching territories

6th CIST international conference  
Paris-Condorcet, 15-17 November 2023

*Apprendre des territoires / Enseigner les territoires (fr)*  
*Aprender de los territorios / Enseñar los territorios (es)*  
*Lernen von den Territorien \ Lehren die Territorien (de)*  
*Aprender com os territórios / Territórios que ensinam (pt)*  
*تَعَلُّمُ الْمَجَالِ / تَعْلِيمُ الْمَجَالِ (ar)*

In German (*lehren / lernen*) as in Arabic (تعليم / تعلم), a single letter distinguishes the concept of teaching from the concept of learning. Whether defined as a theoretical object of scientific knowledge that can be taught or as a body of practices that can be passed on, there is no escaping the need to address the issue of the relationship between the apparent universality of the concept of territory, on the one hand, and the variety of uses to which the term is put and the range of practices associated with it, on the other. The 6th CIST conference will focus on two questions: how to teach about territories (academic knowledge, empirical methods, disciplinary approaches, etc.) and how to learn from territories (observing, exploring, describing, experiencing, etc.). At the intersection of these two questions lie a number of issues, both theoretical and practical, not the least of which is whether territory is above all an object or a subject of knowledge.

Session proposals may focus either on the general topics for discussion at the conference or on the specific topics related to CIST research areas.

## General topics

### Building a lexicon

The translation of the "terms" used in the territorial sciences, whether between languages or between disciplines, constitutes a litmus test for judging the degree of universality and relativity of these concepts as well as the variety of applications and practices involved. The 6th international CIST conference will be an opportunity to relaunch the ambitious project of creating a multilingual and interdisciplinary lexicon for the territorial sciences. This project will entail examining the issue of "territorialised knowledge" in relation to local or global transitions, and more generally to the knowledge involved in territorial learning, whether it be academic or practical in nature. Special sessions aimed at sharing instructional approaches are particularly welcome.

### Learning territories

The idea that territories can be, under certain conditions, considered as collective subjects capable of developing strategies of competitiveness or cooperation has long been postulated.<sup>1</sup> From "learning regions"<sup>2</sup> to "best practices",<sup>3</sup> a vast body of knowledge has been built up, some of which stems from technocratic practices, some from scientific debates. A forum for discussion and dialogue between practitioners and theoreticians, the 6th CIST conference will provide an opportunity to revisit these debates, which remain as relevant as ever.

<sup>1</sup> Camagni R., 2002, "On the Concept of Territorial Competitiveness: Sound or Misleading?," *Urban Studies*, 39(13), p. 2395-2412; Jambes J.-P., 2001, *Territoires apprenants. Esquisses pour le développement local du XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle* [[hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-02320259](http://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-02320259)].

<sup>2</sup> Asheim B.T., 1996, "Industrial Districts as 'Learning Regions': A Condition for Prosperity," *European Planning Studies*, 4(4), p. 379-400.

<sup>3</sup> Stead D., 2012, "Best Practices and Policy Transfer in Spatial Planning," *Planning Practice and Research*, 27(1), p. 103-116.

## Transitions, crises and upheavals

Against the backdrop of growing individualism, does the concept of territory constitute a new collective approach to thinking about processes that relate to time and space; past, present and future; local and global? To what extent do the territorial sciences provide a critique of the resurgence of nationalism or of insularity based on the exploitation of imaginary origins? The local impact of the multiple crises (ecology, health, economy, etc.) that are affecting our societies inevitably raises questions about the contribution of the territorial sciences to this debate, arguing as they do in favour of the circulation of models, while maintaining a critical stance towards the problems of symbolic and political domination that these models entail. The territorial sciences also raise the question of the "transitional capacity" of territories as well as their role in the process of moving from niche (local) innovations to structural transformations. In the Anthropocene era, risks can no longer be approached or managed in the same way as they were in the 20th century.<sup>4</sup>

## Digital territories

Given the growing prominence of virtual digital universes and of algorithms used to optimise the dissemination of information and knowledge, the issue of the rootedness of territorial knowledge in specific settings, places or situations is an important one. The role of large technological firms in reshaping territories and how they are perceived should not be overlooked, both in terms of mapping (Google Maps/OSM) and of efforts to refashion social networks (Facebook/Meta).

## Specific topics

### A&T (Actions & territorialisations)

The conference will address territorial dynamics and the structure of systems aimed at capitalising on past experimentation, as well as the design of instruments of regulation and reflexivity which enable action to be taken. Sessions may focus on:

- the impact of local debates over public policy choices in the context of participatory processes, conflicts or controversies, or planning;
- the issue of territorial innovation and processes of localised change.

### INFTER (Local territorial information)

What learning challenges arise from the increasing diversity of local data sources (whether caused by the digital revolution, by the increased sensitivity of technical indicators, by the trend towards open data, etc.)

Possible session topics:

- the relationship between territorialised information and the capacity of individuals to learn from it;
- the growing involvement of citizens in scientific research.

### MEDIA (Media and territories)

Media and cultural representations of territories are both the result of a learning process and contributors to the process of constructing or reconstructing physical and imaginary spaces. Possible session topics might include:

- heritage policies and the symbolic enhancement of sites;
- the role of traditional or social media in the construction of collective territorial representations.

### MIT (Mobilities, identities and territories)

The various local and regional bodies in charge of mobility are currently developing measures and offerings that aim to bring about changes in the way people move about. Against this backdrop, possible topics for discussion include:

- education about mobility and the "instructional" methods used in these types of initiatives;
- territorial inequalities in terms of access to education and training in a context where more and more training is taking place online.

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<sup>4</sup> Cutter S.L., 2021, "The Changing Nature of Hazard and Disaster Risk in the Anthropocene," *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 111(3), p. 819-827.

## PAST (Territories in the long run)

How should we teach or analyse the socio-environmental trends affecting territories over the long term? And what weight should be attached to each of the different factors involved in the construction of these territories? Possible session topics:

- the reaction of particular environments and societies in specific contexts (phases of transition, crises or upheavals);
- the limits and challenges of the methods used to study these territories and their development over the long term, with respect to the various spatio-temporal scales in question.

## REMOC (Regionalisation, globalisation, circulation)

The interplay between flows, networks and circulation at the global level can be addressed through the concepts of regionalisation and globalisation, both of which are academic, scientific and ideological constructions. Possible session topics:

- the variability of geographical perceptions that govern the way the world is divided up;
- a bottom-up approach to representations of globalisation from the perspective of those affected by the process.

## HEALTH (Territories and health)

Even before the global lesson in epidemiology imparted by the Covid-19 crisis, the issue of territorial inequalities in terms of health and access to health care was increasingly to the forefront of public opinion. Possible session topics:

- Local processes of learning about or resisting the health regulations put in place by public authorities;
- health and medico-social systems for the collection and reporting of information on health issues at various territorial levels.

## Mobilising the CIST's expertise

The foregoing topics will involve (re)examining the research conducted by the CIST over the past twelve years and the groundwork laid by its five international conferences.

- Inasmuch as they constitute a kind of **societal memory**, territories act as repositories for the individual and collective experiences for which they have acted as a venue. This accumulated information constitutes a pool of models or experiences that may be disseminated, merged or combined over time. The resulting spatial structures exhibit a high degree of inertia that is sometimes out of step with the needs of the present. The past, present and future of territories are inseparable (5th CIST conference, "Population, time, territories,"<sup>5</sup> Paris-Aubervilliers, 2020).
- As both **objects and subjects of representation**, the material and imaginary characteristics of territories vary depending on the perspective of the actors who produce and/or observe them. In certain instances, irreconcilable visions of territories have practical implications that can lead to (scientific, political and legal) conflicts, resulting in legal proceedings brought on behalf of territories (4th CIST conference, "Representing territories,"<sup>6</sup> Rouen, 2018).
- The interface between territorial theory and practice is frequently problematic, and this raises the question of how to go about teaching and studying the territorial sciences. Establishing a dialogue between teachers, researchers and practitioners in this area is one of the key aims of the CIST (3rd CIST conference, "In search of territory(ies)?," Grenoble, 2016).<sup>7</sup>, Grenoble, 2016).
- The wide range of **disciplines** interested in the subject of territories complicates the process of establishing the territorial sciences both from a research and teaching point of view. Compounding this difficulty are challenges related to translation, which are inevitable in an international setting, and which highlight conceptual differences that are often intractable (2nd CIST conference, "Frontiers and boundaries of territorial sciences,"<sup>8</sup> Paris Rive Gauche, 2014).

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<sup>5</sup> [cist.cnrs.fr/colloques-internationaux/cist2020-population-temps-territoires](http://cist.cnrs.fr/colloques-internationaux/cist2020-population-temps-territoires) & [cist2020.sciencesconf.org](http://cist2020.sciencesconf.org)

<sup>6</sup> [cist.cnrs.fr/colloques-internationaux/cist2018-representer-les-territoires](http://cist.cnrs.fr/colloques-internationaux/cist2018-representer-les-territoires) & [cist2018.sciencesconf.org](http://cist2018.sciencesconf.org)

<sup>7</sup> [cist.cnrs.fr/colloques-internationaux/cist2016-en-quete-de-territoires](http://cist.cnrs.fr/colloques-internationaux/cist2016-en-quete-de-territoires) & [cist2016.sciencesconf.org](http://cist2016.sciencesconf.org)

<sup>8</sup> [cist.cnrs.fr/colloques-internationaux/cist2014-fronts-et-frontieres-des-sciences-du-territoire](http://cist.cnrs.fr/colloques-internationaux/cist2014-fronts-et-frontieres-des-sciences-du-territoire) & [cist2014.sciencesconf.org](http://cist2014.sciencesconf.org)

- Finally, the distinction between **territorial science(s) and metascience(s)**, which was discussed at the first CIST conference ("Founding territorial sciences,"<sup>9</sup> Paris, 2011), remains more topical than ever. Raising the question of whether we should be teaching one (or several distinct) territorial science(s) involves once again addressing the issue of whether we should be creating a new discipline/meta-discipline or, more modestly, whether we should simply be sharing and comparing different bodies of knowledge or types of expertise.

## Provisional Calendar

- **May 31st, 2022:** Deadline for submitting session proposals, to be sent by email only to [cist2023@sciencesconf.org](mailto:cist2023@sciencesconf.org)
- **During July 2022:** Responses from the Scientific Committee
- **October-December 2022:** Call for papers, exclusively *via* the website dedicated to the conference [cist2023.sciencesconf.org](http://cist2023.sciencesconf.org)
- **March-April 2023:** Final selection and preparation of the programme
- **November 15th-17th, 2023:** 6th CIST conference at campus Condorcet

## Session Proposal Guidelines

The languages of the conference are **French, English and Spanish**.

Researchers, teaching researchers and doctoral students can propose sessions.

Proposals should include:

- Title, and subtitle when appropriate,
- Presentation of the issue to be explored (between 180 and 250 words),
- Indicative bibliography on the subject of the session (5 to 10 references).

These first three items should be written **in French and in one of the other two languages of the conference** (English or Spanish). They will be used to draft the call for papers of the selected sessions.

The following items may be written in any of the three languages:

- The potential opportunities envisaged (publications, partnerships, network expansion),
- The individuals, research teams or laboratories targeted (within or outside CIST),
- A short CV of the session co-facilitators (1/2 page).

## Procedure for Evaluating the Session Proposals

The proposed sessions will be evaluated by the conference's Scientific Committee, which includes members from the CIST Scientific Committee and various external individuals. Session proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Consistency with the *general theme* of the conference,
- Openness to a *multidisciplinary approach*.

Credit will also be given to:

- Sessions co-facilitated by individuals from different research teams or organisations,
- Sessions that are open to *international contributions*.

## Joint Scientific Directors of the Conference

- **Claude Grasland**, UP/Géographie-cités – [claude.grasland@parisgeo.cnrs.fr](mailto:claude.grasland@parisgeo.cnrs.fr)
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<sup>9</sup> [cist.cnrs.fr/colloques-internationaux/cist2011-fonder-les-sciences-du-territoire](http://cist.cnrs.fr/colloques-internationaux/cist2011-fonder-les-sciences-du-territoire)