

Call for Papers

Training programs and geographical mobilities: models, tools and strategies

France and its colonial Empire, 18th – 21st centuries

Bordeaux, 13-14 June 2019

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The development of French education can be viewed as the progressive conquest of a territory, at the crossroad between a state-led policy and the combined or competing initiatives of non-state actors – city councils, congregations, companies, etc. -, in conjunction with the sociological and economic changes of the last three centuries. At the beginning of the 21st century, the territorial grid of universities and schools would then be the result of the logical geographical deployment of teaching offer as close as possible to the targeted population. If this proximity is indeed a decisive element, it is nevertheless not the only organizational principle to be considered. In particular, one must not overlook the role played by different geographical mobilities in defining training programs, that is to say, as mobilities which are desired and organized by the State to broaden the recruitment for a specific course so as to ensure the quality of the future ruling elite, or as individual mobilities that defeat the projects of a rational occupation of the territory.

This conference aims at shedding light on the many ways in which mobility participates, alongside the deployment of a geographically organized offer, in the social and territorial structuration of the educational system and, more generally, of a society in which Paris competes with the “province”, big cities with medium-sized ones, and urban areas with rural ones. The purpose is therefore to question the specific logic that undermines, on the one hand, the way educational offer is deployed, and, on the other hand, the organization of individual and collective mobilities. We can also wonder how both are linked and whether they are complementary or competing.

The starting point of our study will be the 18th century. It does not mean that education-based mobilities did not exist before, but the Age of Enlightenment is characterized by an intense reflection on the organization of a national education system and, at the same time, by the creation of public teaching institutions required by the expansion of modern State (the *École royale des Ponts et Chaussées* in 1747, the *École des Mines* of Paris in 1783, etc.). We can trace back to this century the beginning of this tension between the rational deployment of an educational offer and individual logics of mobility, that this conference aims at further questioning. Our ambition is to follow this path up to today, so as to identify, in the long run, continuities and breaking points, and therefore to sketch a periodisation enabling us to renew our understanding of how educational spaces are structured.

To that end, the conference will cover, *a priori*, all teaching institutions – should it offer an elementary, secondary, higher or vocational teaching. It will consider public schooling as well as private institutions. We welcome papers dealing with mobilities on different scales within the French space (inside a city, as well as within the colonial Empire), as well as on movements of French students abroad. However, the arrival of foreign students to France – a form of mobility that constitutes an extremely rich field of research – will not be included in our study, unless it sheds a direct light on our primary question.

Leading up to the present time, this conference wants to encourage a dialogue between history and social sciences that study mobilities, their motivation and their impact on our contemporary society. Geographers, sociologists, political scientists, and so on, are thus welcome to submit papers, alongside historians: through the hypothesis formulated and the originality of the empirical material collected, we are looking to enrich our collective reflection on former or recent transformations that have affected the French social and political model. However, while choosing between papers on the most recent period, priority will not be given by the organizers to those that sharpen the analysis of already well documented phenomena – for example, the avoidance of some *collèges* by the middle and upper class – but rather to those that highlight dynamics that are often neglected by researchers up to now. By focusing on the French situation, we wish to create favorable conditions for a real work of periodization, knowing that the phenomena studied are closely

dependent on the specificities of a certain State, territory or population. Yet, presentations on other national spaces might find their place in the conference if they actively contribute to the formulation of hypothesis relevant to the French situation.

Papers will consider one of the following topics:

1. Models

The planned development of educational offer – from the creation of the first *lycées* to the “Université 2000” plan – deals with models, understood as guiding principles – “republican meritocracy”, “spatial planning”, “equal access to education supply”, etc. – which intertwine axiological considerations and organizational principles. In a more or less explicit way, those models assume certain mobilities – to drain the “best” students towards Paris – and exclude others – so as to, for example, root rural population in the countryside – and our purpose is to understand those implications.

Within this topic, we will focus on the content of these models, but also on their origin, their diffusion, or their abandonment, while being particularly attentive to the actors by whom they are conveyed. We will also examine the convergences and divergences noticed between the master schemes of public teaching and those of private institutions, that – for some – are confronted, in similar terms, to problems of catchment areas and network structuration.

2. Instruments

Beyond the symbols and myths that foster our political imagination, the papers can question the different types of instruments used to accompany, encourage, or frame these mobilities. Here are some examples: the ranking framework of the *lycées* that endorses the superiority of the Parisian *lycées* during the 19th century, the way school transportation is organized during the second half of the 20th century, or the assignment system of students in secondary of higher institutions (APB).

We will try to assess the structuring effects of those instruments that must not be understood as mere technical translations – therefore neutral- of the models mentioned above. We will especially pay attention to the way in which those instruments structure the financing flows generated by the different mobilities, whether they be taken in charge by the families, by the State, or by local communities, etc. We will include in our study the management instruments dealing with the mobility of personnel, as long as it contributes to the understanding of the educational system. Finally, we can question the practical consequences of the grid put in place by the decentralized State services, its changes, and the distribution of competencies between the State and the different local communities.

3. Strategies

This last topic will focus on the strategies developed by families and individuals confronted, depending on the period and the educational sector, to an opened and competitive market, or to a sectorized supply within which choice was constrained or even inexistent. In this last configuration, we can study the collective mobilization that intends to weight on the political decision – the fight against the closing of rural school – as well as the individual strategies that try to counteract them – the bypass of the “school map.”

This conference thus aims at enriching the reflection on the contemporary evolution of the social link in France. What role does school play in the social and geographical stratification of French society? In the long run, does the evolution of geographical mobilities induced by schooling path express a narrowing or a widening of individuals’ horizons? Have these mobilities contributed to a better coordination of the territories nested in the national space or, on the contrary, to an exacerbation of the competition?

Terms of submission

This conference is conceived as a moment of collective work and will function more like a workshop than a succession of individual presentations. Participants will agree to provide a working copy of their presentation before March 1st 2019, and allow its transmission to the other speakers. Everyone should read at least the papers of the sessions he/she will attend. During each session, a rapporteur will offer a synthesis of the papers in question and lead the discussion that will follow. Every session must therefore be considered as an opportunity to discuss hypothesis formulated through empirical surveys.

Paper proposal will focus on sources and methods. The proposal must not exceed 2500 characters. It may be presented in French or in English.

- Link to submission form : <https://formation-mobil.sciencesconf.org/>
- Proposals are due by June 1, 2018.
- Accepted papers will be notified by September 30, 2018.
- Invited participants will provide a written draft paper for pre-circulation by March 1, 2019. These 'work-in-progress' papers will be the starting point for discussions at the conference.
- 13-14 juin 2019 : conference, Bordeaux

Short bibliography

This short bibliography draws from the various fields of the social sciences; it merely points out the plurality of methodologies and approaches which can contribute to this conference, and thus prepares the conditions for a genuine interdisciplinary dialogue. It includes both old references, already "classics", and more recent works.

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