

THE LOGICS AND LIMITS OF ‘COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE’ IN NANTES: MYTH, IDEOLOGY AND THE POLITICS OF NEW URBAN REGIMES.

AUTHORS

Professor Steven Griggs, De Montfort University
Professor David Howarth, University of Essex
Dr. Andrés Feandeiro, University of Southern Brittany

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Zachary Neal and three anonymous reviewers for their constructive engagement with our work and for their helpful suggestions on how we might refine our argument. Jonathan Davies kindly offered valuable comments on early drafts of the article. The research informing our argument and assessment of Nantes was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council as part of the *Collaborative Governance Under Austerity* project (ES/L012898/1).

ABSTRACT

This article characterizes and evaluates a paradigm case of urban collaborative governance: the so-called ‘Nantes model’. Stressing its positioning in the particular tradition of French politics, and drawing on poststructuralist discourse theory, this article demonstrates how the myth of the ‘*jeu à la Nantaise*’ (the “Nantes game”) informs a discourse of urban collaborative governance with a distinctive triad of policy goals. In the context of fiscal tightening and multiple crises, this governance practice involves various strategies designed to incorporate neighbourhoods and communities in the co-production of public policies in a pragmatic way. Analyzing the grammar and forms of these practices reveals that ‘co-governance’ in Nantes functions as a ‘doctrinal abridgement’, leading to a growing managerialization in an increasingly codified system of community participation. We thus conclude that one line of flight in the ‘Nantes model’ signifies a movement away from an image of collaborative pragmatism as a complex *praxis* of governing to an ideology that conceals the complications and messiness of governing in a collaborative manner.

KEY WORDS

Collaborative governance; discourse; pragmatism; co-production; community participation

CONTACT AUTHOR

Professor Steven Griggs, Department of Politics, People and Place, Leicester Castle Business School, De Montfort University, The Gateway, Leicester UK LE1 9BH. Email: sgriggs@dmu.ac.uk

Inquiries into the recent transformations of urban governance highlight the variegated nature of urban regimes, as well as the pluralization and hybridization of urban space (Davies & Blanco, 2017; Gross, 2017; Parés, Boada, Canal, Hernando & Martínez, 2017; Skelcher, Sullivan & Jeffares, 2013). Indeed, it is often argued that cities and urban spaces are increasingly constructed and reproduced as political objects, which are best viewed as complex assemblages of diverse technologies, governance practices, and chains of institutional and economic resources; such objects reflect plural histories and understandings that bring into being multiple identities and modes of agency (Cole & Payre, 2016). However, in recognizing the heterogeneity and relational dynamics of cities, these insights also raise questions about the nature of urban governance and governing coalitions in different cities (Dormois, 2006; Pinson, 2006). How are coalitions and governance regimes constituted and reproduced over time? How are they transformed? What are the different tendencies and forces at play in each context? What is the “glue” that holds such complex arrays of different logics, mechanisms and actors together? And how are emerging modes of collaboration best understood?

One response to these questions has been to investigate the role of ideas and discourse in the constitution and reproduction of practices of urban governance systems. Existing studies in this field explore how particular rhetorical tropes, symbols and images reproduce partial and temporary forms of order across urban spaces (Bradford, 2015; Barbehön et al., 2016). Such accounts draw attention to the ways in which the articulation and repetition of “storylines” forge and legitimize shared “histories” across the multiple arenas of urban governance; through their shared actions and practices actors come to recognize the interdependencies, common norms and interests that bind them together (Pinson, 2006, pp. 643-4). Indeed, storylines serve to embody the city and its origins, while forging appeals to the particular

social, economic and political norms and aspirations that define the city and distinguish it from others (Dormois, 2006, p. 360). From this perspective, it thus follows that the effectiveness of local political leaders rests in part on their positioning as nodal actors within local networks who are capable of diffusing, and indeed embodying, such storylines across multiple arenas (Dormois, 2006; Epstein, 2013; Pinson, 2006).

In exploring such avenues, we *characterize* and *evaluate* a paradigm case of decentralized collaborative governance - the so-called “Nantes model” – which is explicitly understood by its proponents and practitioners as a form of pragmatic-collaborative governance (Cloutour, 2016). We argue that the narratives and self-images of the Nantes model are underpinned by a dominant myth - the “*jeu à la Nantaise*” - which in turn helps to shape a discourse of urban collaborative governance with a distinctive triad of policy goals. In our view, myths are not by definition just a false representation of reality, nor are they simply a coordinating slogan or brand, or an irrational emotional investment in a mythical past. Instead, they are a *constitutive dimension* of social relations, which have the potential to shape a complex ensemble of institutions, practices and policy. We thus suggest that studies of urban governance should endeavour to disentangle the components of myths and their various instantiations, while assessing the complex relations between their elements. They should thus evaluate the way in which myths and social imaginaries can serve to structure terrains of argumentation across cities, while generating alternative engagements and forms of resistance.

In the case of Nantes, our evaluation shows how the emergence and operation of its distinctive governance practice fosters various forms of citizen engagement, coupled with a pragmatic desire to incorporate neighborhoods and communities in the co-production of

strategies and public policies. But we also indicate a number of fractures in the model, especially in the context of fiscal tightening and a generalized political reordering of French society in the face of multiple crises. Here we show how actors and groups raised questions about the degree and character of democratic participation, as well as the choice and legitimacy of the collaborating actors in the governance regime. We also note anxieties about the growing recourse to a form of “techno-politics” that marks a break with the initially more pragmatic ethos of governing. The rise of various counter-discourses, although often intermittent, fleeting and inchoate, also signifies the limits and emergent contestations in the system. An important consequence of such tendencies is, on the one hand, a foregrounding of what we term the ideological dimension of the Nantes myth and, on the other, a withering of the logic of democratic participation.

The structure of our article reflects these concerns. We begin by setting out our basic theoretical approach and the overall research strategy we have followed in our empirical investigations. The second section depicts the basic elements of the governance regime in Nantes, focusing on the pivotal role of Jean-Marc Ayrault, who was the city’s Mayor from 1989 to 2012. The third presents the self-understandings of the Nantes model, as refracted and condensed in the statements and discourses of key social actors. Here we analyze the myth of the “*jeu à la Nantaise*”, where we show how it constructs a particular discourse of place and an ethos of collaboration. The next part explores the limits and contradictions of the regime, thus underlining some of the visible and hidden barriers to citizen engagement and the rise of techno-politics. The fifth section of the article sets out our characterization and evaluation of the Nantes model. Here we gather together the different elements of our analysis, while connecting the case to current debates and comparative instances.

1. DISCOURSE, STATEMENTS AND POLICY

Our initial framing of our research questions problematizes the emergence, character and logics of collaborative governance in Nantes. How can such puzzles be addressed? Recent years have brought into play a range of new positivist, critical and radical approaches to the analysis of urban governance (see McCann, 2017). Our research is broadly situated within the interpretivist tradition, though we acknowledge and draw upon the contribution of other post-positivist and radical accounts. We also accept that the interpretivist tradition itself embraces a number of different styles and research strategies (see Fischer and Gottweis, 2012). More precisely, our particular style of interpretivism draws principally upon the resources of poststructuralist discourse theory, linking together insights from Laclau and Mouffe, Foucault and other proponents of the Essex School of discourse analysis (Foucault, 1972; Laclau & Mouffe, 2014).

Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis

In our approach, the concept of discourse is both a general category that embraces all forms of social practice, and a particular sort of practice that is focused more on the symbolic and representational dimension of social practice. As a general category, we use discourse to emphasize that all social relations are symbolic and articulatory. This is because they involve the linking together of elements of many sorts (linguistic, physical, cultural, and so on), where such elements are contingent entities that can be constructed and connected together in different ways. In its more narrow sense, we take discourse to refer to those forms of language and symbolization (e.g. texts, documents, speeches, and so on) that represent and constitute social objectivity in various ways. However, the distinction between the general and narrow conceptions of discourse should not be hypostatized, because in practice even

apparently linguistic forms of representation (such as making a speech or writing a blog or a newspaper article) are still social practices, and so also constitutive of social relations.

More precisely, discourse is primarily an articulatory practice that works on elements to yield particular discursive sequences or orders, where both the elements and the orders are radically contingent. The unity and identity of such formations arises from the (political) exclusion of certain elements, which in turn renders such order precarious and contingent. Such exclusions involve the construction of antagonisms between different identities and subjectivities, as well as the installation and management of political frontiers that divide social spaces in various ways. The logic of competing hegemonic practices – combining demands and identities into chains of equivalence or the decoupling of demands into separate and individual elements that can be managed within systems of power – provides a grammar of related concepts with which to map the play of governance practices and politics in a given domain.

Of critical importance in our analysis of the Nantes case is the role of myth – the “*jeu à la Nantaise*” - and its relationship to policy discourses and practices. Like discourse, the concept of myth admits of numerous definitions and interpretations. Situated within our discursive approach, we adopt a neutral starting point that can be articulated and developed in different ways. Mythical thinking is often portrayed as a regression to pre-modern or primitive forms of representation, or as a form of false consciousness; in short, myths are irrational, regressive and dangerous (e.g. Adorno & Horkheimer, 1973; Habermas, 1987). By contrast, for structuralists and poststructuralists like Roland Barthes and Ernesto Laclau, the role of myth is not an irrational, negative or primitive mode of apprehending the world (Barthes, 1973). Instead, for Laclau, “myth is constitutive of any possible society” (Laclau, 1990, p.

67). In this view, the production and acceptance of myths is intimately connected to the dislocation and unevenness of social orders. This is because they often emerge in times of crisis and social disruption, where they furnish creative ways for subjects to make sense of their situation, to act in novel ways, and to construct new imaginaries and discursive horizons (Laclau, 1990, pp. 60-84).

Myths can be elaborated and developed in different ways. To the extent that they serve to represent a growing and diverse range of demands and interests they may be developed into collective social imaginaries that come to serve as the discursive horizon with which to represent an entire community and its practices. By contrast, myths may just as easily degenerate into more atrophied systems of representation whose function is to conceal antagonisms and differences, and to provide ideological cover for dominant interests and forces. Myths in this latter sense become ideological discourses that cover over the contingency and pluralization of social processes and practices leading to top-down and potentially technocratic forms of rule and co-ordination.

Statements and Policy Discourse

We need to say a few words about our operationalization of these general ideas in the conduct of empirical research. Here we use a number of methodological strategies to generate and analyze a range of disparate empirical data. With respect to our more specific conception of discourse, we develop some of the ideas put forward by Michel Foucault in his archaeological writings, which provides, we argue, a useful vehicle for discerning and describing statements and discourses in particular contexts. In his *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) Foucault develops a method of discourse analysis that focusses on the description and analysis of statements, mainly in the scientific domain, where the aim is to uncover the

historical rules and regularities that serve as the conditions of existence for the emergence and functioning of statements. Statements are the product of discursive practices and are defined in terms of their candidacy to be treated as true or false within a specific order of discourse (e.g. a discipline or field of science). Foucault specified the various sorts of rules that came into play in determining whether a statement was legitimate candidate for scientific knowledge, and whether or not they were to be judged true or false within a given discursive formation. These include rules for the formation of the objects of discourse; the subjects qualified to speak, write and act; the concepts and notions of a science; and the theoretical themes and strategies in operation in a given discourse.

Although Foucault's archaeological method has been criticized on a number of fronts, we believe that the analysis of statements offers a profitable technique of discourse analysis, especially when it is articulated within our theoretical framework. Nonetheless, there is one important issue that we do need to address concerning the specificity of policy discourse. Although Foucault's archaeological project is not restricted to the analysis of scientific statements, his "panoply of concepts" were certainly focused in this domain. At the same time, while policy discourse does contain reference to scientific statements, it is by no means restricted to - or exhausted by - them. Many statements in policy discourse are not scientific descriptions and propositions, which can then be related to other bodies of scientific statements in an associative domain. Instead, they relate to other uses and functions, including the making of decisions, articulating broader visions and imaginaries that point out future directions of travel or elaborate aspirations, encouraging certain styles of public interaction and work, elaborating strategies and tactics to achieve goals and programs, forcing agents or groups to act in certain prescribed ways, and so on.

At the same time, statements in the policy arena often exude an explicitly performative dimension, as they seek to bring into existence certain goals, subjects, strategies and objects. To put this in the language of speech act theory, policy statements are not necessarily assertoric propositions that purport to describe a state of affairs, and nor are they simply causal statements that set out the conditions that bring about a given event or set of circumstances, though they may contain such elements (Austin, 1975). Instead, the words, phrases and expressions used in policy statements are often deeds that lead to – or simply *are* – actions and practices. In addition to reflecting aspects of the policy process, including the ideas and programs of politicians and the logic of governance systems, policy discourse is also productive of objects and relations.

Put differently, the logic of the production, distribution and circulation of statements in the worlds of science and policy often operate at different levels of abstraction, though these worlds may overlap and intersect in important ways at particular times. What this means is that the criteria and the rules for selecting and analyzing statements are quite different. In guiding our choice of statements, we have classified statements into distinct, if at times connected modalities. More precisely, our selection rules are tied to the problems of characterizing and evaluating the Nantes model as an instance of decentralized collaborative governance, which in our view was organized around the myth of the “*jeu à la Nantaise*”. Our specific criteria for selecting statements and their “modalities” are set out in Table 1.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Yet this still begs questions about the discernment of statements in an empirical case, as well as their further analysis and characterization. Our empirical analysis draws principally on a

large number of interviews with key social actors involved in the governance of Nantes, as well as the textual analysis of documents and various forms of participant-observation. We thus endeavored to triangulate our findings by using a variety of qualitative methods and empirical sources. Fieldwork for the study started in November 2015 and ended in May 2017. It involved 39 semi-structured interviews, with public officials from the city, metropolitan and departmental councils (9), local politicians (7), neighborhood workers (5), members of community associations, including housing and tenant associations (6), trade unionists (3) and citizen representatives and campaigners (9). Interviewees were initially identified through an analysis of publicly available organizational websites, organigrams, press releases, newspaper reports and campaigning material. We then undertook a process of ‘snowballing’ after making initial contacts through publicly available email addresses. Interviews lasted between 1 and 2 hours and were recorded and fully transcribed in French.

To construct the official discourse of the city and metropolitan authorities, we assembled and analyzed an archive of policy reports, position papers, briefings and media statements from the city and metropolitan authorities, institutional partners and public associations. We also undertook a systematic discursive analysis of statements in Nantes city council’s monthly magazine, *Nantes Passion*, from January 2012 to September 2017. Finally, we supplemented this analysis with observations of neighborhood and public meetings. All translations from the original French were undertaken by the research team.

All texts and transcripts were “manually processed” through iterated readings (Keller, 2013, p. 97). Identifying the genre and historico-social context of texts, we first explored different problematizations and framings of collaboration, paying particular attention to the construction and articulation of demands through the logics of equivalence and difference.

Using our situated judgements as researchers, this enabled us to isolate the myth of the “*jeu à la Nantaise*” in the texts and contexts we analyzed. We then applied Foucault’s criteria for identifying a statement so as to discern the core statements that populated different contexts (see Griggs & Howarth, 2017). Here we plotted the repetition of statements across different forums and spaces.

However, our analysis of these recursive patterns was not primarily concerned with weighting or measuring the number of times statements were reproduced in different contexts by different actors. Rather, we focused upon two defining criteria or characteristics of statements, which we suggest are intrinsically linked to the maintenance of collaborative practices in systems of urban governance. On the one hand, we assessed how statements exercised an “enunciative function”, which brings into being a domain of related objects and subjects, while configuring practices of debate and contestation. On the other hand, our analysis evaluated the extent to which statements were connected to a network of other statements, in which case they would resonate with other practices and objects of governance. The final step of our analysis was the careful selection of statements, which we judged to exemplify the dominant discourses and logics of collaborative governance in Nantes, and which enabled us to construct and test the limits of the Nantes system of governance.

2. THE NANTES MODEL

Situated on the Loire river estuary, some 50 kilometers from the Atlantic coast, Nantes is France’s sixth largest city and is traditionally viewed as the gateway or crossroads to the “Great West”. Since the closure of its shipyards at the end of the 1980s, it has in recent years undergone significant transformations. In the 1990s and 2000s, its economic performance has

outstripped most other French cities, with strong population growth and job creation, notably in information technology and banking (Fraisie & Bia Zafinikamia, 2012; INSEE, 2014; Nantes City Council, Nantes Métropole & AURAN, 2013). Its economy has remained reasonably resilient since the 2008 crisis, when measured in terms of average incomes, employment growth and the gap between the richest and poorest ten per cent in the city and city-region. Unemployment in September 2016 stood at 7.9 per cent, comparing favorably with the national average, which stood at 9.7 per cent (AURAN, 2017a, 2017b).

The political leadership of Nantes has advanced an agenda of economic boosterism and internationalization, which has sought to brand Nantes as a sustainable, European city (Devisme, Barthel, Dèbre, Dumont & Roy, 2009; Luneau, 2003; Masson, Cartier, Le Saout, Retière & Suteau, 2013; Renard, 2008). In 2004, *Time* magazine named it the “most liveable city in Europe”, while the European Union awarded it European Green Capital status in 2013. Large-scale urban regeneration of its neighborhoods has thus accompanied the re-introduction of electric tramways and sustainable mobility policies, the promotion of the city’s cultural fabric, and the engagement of the city in European programs and international city networks on climate change (Béal, 2015). Its flagship project, the on-going regeneration of the former shipyards on the Île-de-Nantes as an “eco-district”, has embraced social mix housing, planning the construction of 10,000 homes and 160 hectares of new or renovated public spaces, and the development of a “creative quarter” and medical research “*pôle*” around a new university hospital (Barthel, 2009).

This process of regeneration across the city and the region was largely steered by an urban growth coalition under the leadership of Jean-Marc Ayrault - a leading figure in the French socialist party - who was Mayor of Nantes from 1989 to 2012, before becoming Prime

Minister under the presidency of François Hollande (Béal, 2015; Cloutour, 2016; Renard, 2000, 2010). His tenure at the head of the city council signaled a period of political stability and the building of collaborative capacity after the political twists and turns of the 1980s (Dumois, 2006; Pinson, 2005; 2009). Following his election in 1989, Ayrault launched a program of community participation and territorialization of urban policymaking, committing the municipal team to “work in the neighborhoods... to know what is going on there and then, to act in the neighborhoods” (Interview with Former Councillor). Such policies offered the political means to re-engage residents on the large social housing estates in Nantes, who had defected to the right in the 1983 local elections (Cloutour, 2016). Engaging communities thus went hand in hand with the fostering of highly visible redevelopment projects, notably the renovation of the tram system (Interview with Senior Officer; Dormois, 2006; Pinson, 2005, 2009). Nantes was subsequently divided into 11 neighbourhoods, and neighbourhood councils and proximity governance were also put in place (including the creation of seven “proximity poles” for the local delivery of services within Nantes Métropole (see below)). In 2010, the council adopted a charter for participation and citizen dialogue, while launching a city-wide visioning exercise on Nantes 2030 (Devisme, 2014). Over time, therefore, the commitment to participatory governance and a “culture of proximity” came to characterize the “recognized Nantes know-how” (Interview with Senior Officer).

As his hold over office strengthened during the 1990s, Ayrault’s political project spread beyond the city to encompass the development of cross-authority collaboration and the positioning of Nantes at the head of the city-region (Cloutour, 2016). Inter-municipal collaboration in Nantes cannot be divorced from state sponsored initiatives that go as far back as the 1960s when Nantes and Saint-Nazaire were designated one of eleven metropolitan zones to counter regional inequalities in France (Pinson, 2005; Renard, 2000). The rise of

city-regions was also enhanced by the rescaling of the French state after decentralization in the early 1980s and the accelerated growth of intercommunal collaboration from the late 1990s (Cole & Payre, 2016; Ghorra-Gobin, 2015; Pinson & Le Galès, 2005). Nantes came relatively late to inter-municipal collaboration, limiting itself to a series of “functional collaborations” around the likes of transport and waste, with inter-authority leadership exercised by the regional council rather than the city. But, in 2001, under the leadership of Ayrault, working alongside Olivier Guichard, the right-wing former Gaullist chair of the regional council, 21 municipalities in the Nantes area were brought together to create the Urban Community of Nantes. The outcome was the cementing of collaboration around what had been called a “district” authority for the conglomeration from 1992 onwards (Pinson, 2005, p.129). The Urban Community morphed into Nantes Métropole in 2004, with shared planning schemas for Nantes and Saint-Nazaire in place from 2003.

Occupying a nodal position within a series of disjointed and pluralized local networks, Ayrault thus came to symbolize a “Nantes model” of urban governance. Hence over time he came to preside over a partial and temporary order, which owed much to his personal political capital and capacity as a “middleman” or “broker” who could distance himself from traditional right or left-wing politics (Dumois, 2006, p. 852; Interview with Councillor; Pinson, 2005, 2006, 2009). Indeed, the so-called “Nantes model”, often characterized as the “system Ayrault”, exemplified a consensual and pragmatic logic of decision-making that privileged the marshalling of resources to meet common problems over party ideology in a set of practices best described as “pragmatism the Nantes way” (Cloutour, 2016, pp.175-9; Dormois, 2006, p. 858; Pinson 2005, p.129). At the same time, it depended on the reproduction of a set of rules and norms that “oiled” collaboration: the maintenance of a central role for mayors across the conurbation; negotiated outcomes, often between mayors;

multicenter urban development not solely concentrated on Nantes; the multiplication of spaces of dialogue and engagement; and, significantly, the investment in the “urban project” as a primary site for, and instrument of, urban governance (Dormois, 2006; Pinson, 2005, 2006, 2009).

In short, the emergence of collaborative governance in Nantes and the city-region was not driven by the creation of new coordinating institutions or externally imposed central directives. Rather, it was founded upon a pragmatic, problem and action-centered logic and political practice in which shared dependencies and interests were forged and recognized through “collective work on concrete issues” (Pinson, 2005). At the same time, such collective norms, rules and practices were constantly reproduced in discursive appeals and storylines that foregrounded how urban development in Nantes was driven by economic rather than political logics (Dormois, 2006, p. 860). The “Nantes model” thus appealed to the complementary resources of private developers working in collaboration with public actors; a practice which was facilitated by the “supple” institutional framework of “urban projects”. In fact, such collaborative practices were reproduced through discursive appeals to the somewhat contradictory historical traditions of the city and its development: its trading and merchant city origins which legitimized collaboration with the private sector; and its anarcho-syndicalist legacy which was deployed to contest French statism and marginalize central state actors from the emerging urban regime in the city and the region (Dormois, 2006, p. 850).

More recently, however, the conditions and representations that underpin the practices of collaboration in Nantes have come under increasing pressure and strain. First, following the 2008 crisis, poverty has increased in Nantes. Hardest hit are those with the lowest incomes, notably those living on social housing estates, as well as young single people under 30,

including those in employment and living in the city centre (AURAN, 2017a; INSEE, 2014; Nantes Métropole, COMPAS & AURAN, 2015; Préfet de la Loire-Atlantique & Nantes Métropole, 2015). Secondly, following national austerity plans in 2014, cuts to central funding to Nantes city council of “an amplitude and speed not experienced before” (Nantes City Council, 2016, p. 5) have led to increases in local taxation and the delivery of efficiencies (Nantes City Council, 2016; Nantes Métropole, 2016). Thirdly, in 2012, Ayrault left office to become Prime Minister. He was initially replaced as Mayor by his long-time collaborator Patrick Rimbart, but Rimbart himself stood down in the run-up to the 2014 municipal elections, and Johanna Rolland, the socialist collaborator of Ayrault, was elected Mayor.

Finally, from the early 2000s onwards, renewed plans to build an international airport to the northwest of the city at Notre-Dame-des-Landes generated strident opposition to the political leadership of Nantes; questions were asked about its embracing of collaboration and sustainable development. In 2012, following the expulsion of protesters from the proposed site of the new airport by riot police, the campaign against the airport increasingly became a symbolic testbed for the environmental credentials of the city and, indeed, the French government. The city council and Nantes Métropole defended the proposed airport as a strategic pillar of its policy against urban sprawl. They argued that its construction would reduce noise pollution over the center of the city, thereby enabling the development of new homes on the Île de Nantes. However, after much local and national dissent, the French government ultimately cancelled the project in January 2018.

Yet, in many ways, the response to these challenges has been to reinforce the rules and practices of collaboration associated with the “Nantes model”. In 2014, Nantes Métropole

was designated a metropolitan authority, with the French state conferring further tax-raising and policymaking capabilities upon it. At the same time, Rolland publicly aligned herself with the development of collaborative governance. Indeed, in the words of one policy officer, she made “the question of dialogue with citizens and other actors a mark of her political practice” (Interview with Senior Officer). In January 2015, the city council thus published a position paper, which defined its specific method of policy-making and principles of engagement. The title of the paper was “citizen dialogue and co-construction”, and was peppered with references to co-production, shared governance, citizen dialogue and “open and participatory governance” (Nantes City Council, 2015). In response to emerging tensions and pressures, the city leadership has thus sought to revise and re-invest in the collaborative practices of the “Nantes model”. It is to this particular framing of its governance practices, as well as the effectiveness of its public discourse of the “*jeu à la nantaise*”, that we now turn.

3. CONTEMPORARY REPRESENTATIONS OF “NANTES, CITIZEN CITY”: THE MYTH OF “*JEU À LA NANTAISE*”

The public discourse of Nantes city council is articulated around the myth of the “*jeu à la Nantaise*”, where the latter functions as a “surface of inscription” for registering the multiple demands and dislocations affecting the city. Originating in the passing game of the famous Nantes football team of the 1970s and 1980s, “the Nantes game” was first injected into public political discourse by Jean-Joseph Régent, who was center-right chair of the local chamber of commerce in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In 1996, he was appointed as the first president of what was to become the consultative Council of Development for Nantes Métropole (Pinson, 2002, pp. 367-93, 2009). In his book, *Democracy the Nantes Way*, Régent (2002, p.

13) appealed to the success of the passing game of the football team to evoke the aspirations of new models of local democracy across the city. As such, the myth of “the Nantes game” helps to construct a particular discourse of place, while embodying a distinctive ethos of public collaboration across the city, which frames its visions and policy objectives. Not only does it help to account for the resilience of these practices, but it also attributes distinct forms of agency to the “people” of Nantes and its political leadership (Table 2, Statements 1 and 5). For example, after winning the 2013 European Green Capital competition, Patrick Rimbart, who was the successor to Jean-Marc Ayrault as Mayor of Nantes, declared the prize to be an international recognition “of the value of the ‘collective game’ *à la Nantaise*” (Statement 1).

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Conceptualized under the “brand” of the “citizen city” and predicated on the myth of “the Nantes game”, the leadership of Nantes city council has thus consistently advocated three policy objectives: attractiveness, participation, and sustainability (Statement 7). But, importantly, in the public discourse of Nantes council, attractiveness and sustainability are rhetorically placed at the service of social cohesion and the quality of life of those living in Nantes, which comes to dominate the objectives of policies programs (Statements 8 and 9). Indeed, for Rimbart, the responsibility of the Mayor, and by definition the city council, is to “ensure that the dynamic of the territory leaves no one on the side of the road: this is our strength, it is the development that I defend as Mayor” (*Nantes Passion* (NP), no. 230, January 2013). The commitment to social cohesion is thus repeatedly enunciated to distinguish “community engagement practices across the city” from narrow managerialism or economic boosterism. As one officer in the city council declared: “Here we use a lot the term ‘inclusive city’, an ‘inclusive territory’ [...] we are not here to have, on one side, a territory

that will develop, that will be very attractive, and on the other side, a territory marginalized, falling off the economic motor of the city” (Interview with Senior Officer).

At its heart, the myth thus crystallizes the norms of interactive collaboration, as well as the aspirational values of collective and participatory decision-making. Statements about “the strength of collective work” (Statement 2), the belief in the “collective game ‘à la nantaise’” (NP, no. 256, October 2015), and the city’s “sense of the collective” (NP, no. 249, January 2015) are sprinkled throughout the public discourse of the city council and that of Johanna Rolland. The particular collocation – “citizen dialogue” – foregrounds the participation of local citizens as the “fundamental” value of the Rolland administration. Indeed, it is declared to be a core belief in Nantes, “not something in addition, but [...] at the heart of [its] projects” (NP, no. 272, April 2017). Citizen dialogue is thus defined “as a culture of public service, an integrated managerial practice... a posture that inscribes itself as well at the heart of a virtuous triptych: citizen dynamic, political legitimacy and an administrative force of proposition” (Pavageau, 2014, p. 3).

Citizen Dialogue

Framed in this way, “citizen dialogue” is seen as a way of dealing with the limits of the French model of public service delivery, while drawing upon the expertise of local people to lead co-produced projects and services that are responsive to clients (Statement 3). But it is also presented as a necessary response to the crisis of politics and the emerging political dissatisfaction across France (Statement 4), especially in a context when “the time of the imposed decision has gone” (NP, no. 272, April 2017). Indeed, in the policy briefing on its new form of collaborative governance that was launched in 2015, Nantes council reiterated this crisis of politics, which it connected to the “weakening of the social contract”. It

fashioned a new mode of citizen dialogue and co-construction, as an “opportunity” to address “the challenges posed by democracy, to prepare the future of territories, to find useful solutions for the daily life of everyone, which necessitates to lean on the invention and initiatives of all” (Nantes City Council, 2015, p. 6) It is thus argued that exercises in participation offer numerous ways for residents to engage, where “particular attention” is paid “to those who expressed themselves rarely” in order to “share the taste for the public with those women and men who are distanced from it” (NP, no. 272, April 2017). Importantly, this is projected as a new form of collaboration, in which principles of co-production mean that “there is also now this way of saying, ‘we do with’, there is a lot more listening” (Interview with Senior Officer).

Generally speaking, then, participatory collaboration is said to respond to multiple dislocations and demands, where the crisis in Nantes originates in a crisis of politics, the failure of traditional models of service delivery, and the social crisis of exclusion in France: “that citizens speak among themselves, get to know each other; that reinforces social cohesion... That is what makes for a rich debate... because we manage to ensure that citizens... who have different stories speak about the same issue” (Interview with Councillor). But, in doing so, this “*jeu à la nantaise*” puts in place shared or collaborative responsibilities that are attributed to multiple actors. Resonating with appeals to citizen participation, the citizens of Nantes are specifically and consistently named as a source of “talent” or “collective intelligence and citizen expertise”; one of the competitive advantages of Nantes (Statement 10).

Political Leadership

Appeals to the collective history and traditions of Nantes, coupled with the commitment towards greater participation, also offer a new role for political leadership. Politics is not negated in the public discourse of Nantes. On the contrary, it is positioned as an agent of change, as is the city or the urban space, so that the success of Nantes is linked in part to the capacity of the municipal leadership, especially “by its engagement, to meet challenges, this promise” (NP, no. 245, September 2014). The public discourse of participation thus engenders new forms of political leadership, which relate to the mobilization of coalitions across the city and the region so as to facilitate change and new projects (Statement 2). But, at the same time, the limits of collective agency in terms of the responsibilities of politicians and the primacy of representative politics are clearly articulated. Rolland, in particular, reiterates the need to operate “in the respect of the role of elected politicians”. And she recognizes that politicians “set the frameworks of discussions [...] assume decisions, even when it is not easy” (NP, no. 243, May 2014). Indeed, while contesting views are recognized as a key element in responding to complex policy issues, Rolland also acknowledges that on some issues there is a need for the proper “pedagogy” (NP, no. 272, April 2017).

In short, then, references to the “Nantes game” serve to crystallize a series of aspirational demands and incitements of the “people” of Nantes to work constructively with political leaders to “imagine and construct a new form of the City” (NP, no. 260, February 2016). In fact, there is a collective agency embedded in the discourse of Rimbart and Rolland, who both justify participation and collaboration through the elaboration of a beatific narrative of “choos[ing] and act[ing] together so as to never be subjected” to the future (Statement 11; NP, no. 227, October 2012; no. 249, January 2015). Yet these beatific appeals are also tied to pragmatic forms of policy-making and the privileging of the everyday concerns of the people of Nantes. The interventions of Rolland are thus littered with equivalences between the

outcomes of large urban infrastructure projects or “grands projets”, “attention to the everyday” and “concrete actions that will change daily lives” (NP, no. 252, April 2015; no. 245, September 2014).

4. THE LIMITS AND EMERGENT TENSIONS OF “*LE JEU A LA NANTAISE*”

So far our analysis has not focused on those elements and tendencies that might contest the dominant images and self-understandings of the Nantes model, or at least point to the limits and tensions in its systems and practices. So how are we to begin to interpret and evaluate the “Nantes game” and how it is played? One critical issue in this regard revolves around the character and actual degree of democratic involvement and participation of citizens in the governance process, while another concerns a perception that there is a growing “techno-cization” of politics and decision-making. A third area of contestation is focused on the legitimacy of those civil society actors who do participate and collaborate in the governance practices. We deal with each in turn.

Barriers to Citizen Engagement and Democratic Participation

At the outset, it is worth noting that in recent times some of the foundational claims about citizen participation in Nantes have come under scrutiny. For one thing, in the act of naming its style and practices “co-governance” in 2015, and in the definition and development of its specific methodology of citizen participation, the Rolland administration and its predecessors have created the conditions for the articulation of rival understandings and challenges of key terms and phrases. The Development Council, a consultative body of Nantes Métropole, admitted that “the definition of ‘co’ [in co-governance] could be seen differently, depending on whether you were on the side of the decider or the resident” (2015, p. 14). Indeed,

demands for further engagement have been directed at the very definition of the Nantes model. For example, one trade unionist argued that “we cannot highlight a participatory democracy which does not exist and for the moment ...it does not exist despite the statements [that are made]” (Interview with Trade Unionist). Such criticism resonated with accusations that participation was a new mode of incorporation, or little more than top-down information giving. Others saw it as an exercise in failed representation, which was better understood as “a matter of (intelligent) communication (public relations) than a real will to associate the citizen” (Interview with Trade Unionist).

In fact, neighborhood forums were characterized as an “inconsistent [form of] democracy”, which “do not change fundamental decisions”, or which “too often... put [communities] in front of things” that have already been decided (Interview with Community Campaigner). When quizzed about the “*jeu à la nantaise*”, one local politician posed and answered the following question: “Who do you look for when building a team, and when [do] you pass the ball? [...] You may pass the ball, but in the final instance you are obliged to follow [...] because the project is too advanced” (Interview with Councillor). The upshot is that practices of engagement often remained far too concerned with information-giving, so that they became little more than “pedagogical exercises”, which “attempt[ed] to explain the project” (Interview with Community Campaigner). Indeed, the outcomes of participatory processes were challenged, with one civil society association, which participated in the first “great debate” on the Loire River dismissing the process with the expression “the mountain brought forth a mouse”, suggesting that “the so-called participatory democracy is in fact a technique to attempt to manipulate public opinion. We call that a ‘smokescreen’” (Interview with Community Campaigner).

A Question of Legitimacy

Perhaps more importantly, it was argued that such forums did not engage with those people most in need, a view which challenged the stated desire of officials and policymakers to combat social exclusion. Community campaigners outside the council's participatory arenas commonly posed questions about the *legitimacy* of those civil society actors who were involved in participatory forums, as well as their capacity to represent communities across Nantes. In the words of one community campaigner, "people who are truly in vulnerable positions are not in the know, or do not keep themselves in the know, or are not free, for these types of things... they do not go to these meetings" (Interview with Community Campaigner). Interviews with neighborhood associations, for example, revealed that neighborhood meetings were often dominated by owners of property and that social housing tenants were largely unrepresented by weak and ill-performing associations (Interview with Social Housing Campaigner). Civil society associations were repeatedly described by community campaigners as "apolitical", non-contestatory and deeply embedded in practices of "top-down" urban governance, such that they were in many ways the "usual suspects" (Interview with Community Campaigner). In fact, with the growing use of one-off "great debates" and consultations, practices of engagement across the city have increasingly come to privilege the role of "citizen experts" or the "citizen-user", thus running the risk of depoliticizing the different spaces of collaboration.

The Rise of Techno-Politics

Criticisms focused on the perceived democratic and legitimacy deficits of the Nantes model are intertwined with the highly technocratic method of engagement that has been rolled out across the city. In simple terms, the method of participation has four steps: firstly, the creation of a mandate or terms of reference; secondly, the holding of citizen workshops and the

“production of a point of view”; thirdly, 2-6 months of internal work where departments and politicians analyze the proposals advanced by citizen engagement; and finally, the delivery of an informed response to citizens, which is “always argumentative, and written” (Rataud, 2014a, p. 8). It is the final stage of the process, when councillors return to citizens so as to explain the decisions taken, which is characterized as an “important and original” step in the approach, for it is here in which “the fact of coming to explain public decisions allows a dialogue, in all its transparency with a real confidence and a true togetherness” (cf. Rataud, 2014b).

Yet, over time, this method has been increasingly characterized as highly engineered and orchestrated. Citizen dialogue in the neighborhoods was often flagged up to be “top-down”, while participation was often depicted as “highly managed”. For example, when referring to neighborhood councils and meetings, one neighborhood officer described it as a “system well-supervised for 20 years and integrated into general public action” (Interview with Neighborhood Officer). Another officer alluded to the heavy, technocratic participatory machinery, which was described as “very standardized, very precise, quite intelligent”, but one that “stifles” and runs the risk “of a drying up of the [participatory] dynamic” (Interview with Neighborhood Officer). Developing this theme, a senior officer thus spoke of the installation of “a big engineering [system] so that citizens can, collectively, produce a point of view and recommendations in terms of the questioning that we propose to them or which they propose to us” (Interview with Senior Officer). In short, in keeping with its design principles, the so-called Nantes method maintains political dominance over decision-making, thus ensuring at the deliberative and legislative levels that it is “the elected politician who has the final decision” (Interview with Senior Officer).

The (Im)possibility of Counter-Narratives? Civil Society, Protest and Sporadic Resistance

Of course, it should also be noted that a number of key actors also argued that there are no neat readings of such participatory initiatives in Nantes, for “each time that you put a debate into the public arena, there are always those people who seize it and manage to construct some counter-power”. Forms of resistance were thus deemed to be part and parcel of the governance of participatory forums across the city. Yet such forms of resistance and demands have not become a counter-power or counter-project, as they represent fleeting and sporadic forms of mobilization that have not gelled into a viable counter-hegemonic discourse (Interview with Trade Unionist).

It is also clear that those civil society actors who do advance anti-austerity projects of a counter-hegemonic kind, focusing for example on social housing, have chosen not to engage in the formal structures of citizen dialogue across the city. Actors in this domain often see little strategic value in investing in such arenas, because “they (the city council) do not want to hear certain things. So (the dialogue) becomes completely stuck in these meetings” (Interview with Community Activist). More militant citizens thus question the legitimacy of participating in neighborhood meetings, both because of their own potential complicity and because of the nature of the structures themselves. Or, as one city councillor put it, those who resist or protest are often seen to reflect “a political party or a political opinion or ideologies” (Interview with Councillor). Indeed, one official admitted that conflict is frequently mobilized out of such participatory arenas “exactly because these spaces are spaces of dialogue” (Interview with Senior Officer). In short, then, it is argued that at least in particular forums practices of urban regeneration in Nantes do not come up against “counter-powers” (Devisme *et al.*, 2013, p. 192).

Against this background, it is difficult to ignore the fact that much of the resistance and opposition to socio-economic crisis and austerity within civil society tends to exist outside the formal participatory apparatus of urban governance. Parallel forms of “dialogue” appear to be one of the defining contradictions of the Nantes model of participation and these idiosyncrasies of urban governance “the Nantes way”. Consider, for example, the plan to build an international airport at Notre-Dame-des-Landes to the north-west of Nantes. In many ways, this issue became a nodal issue for linking together a number of demands against both national and local policies, so that protesters against the airport also contested the dominant narrative of urban boosterism, which has underpinned the official public discourses of the Nantes regime.

Articulations of this sort were captured in a statement from Christine Poupin, one of the national leaders of the New AntiCapitalist Party. Participating in an anti-airport protest in Nantes in February 2016, she claimed that “there is a moment when it becomes necessary to say ‘STOP’ ... STOP to the airport obviously, but also STOP to its world, and its world is the same as that as the state of emergency as that of the destruction of the employment law...”¹ Similarly, students protesting in Nantes against the reform of labor rights also made equivalences between a series of different struggles. Indeed, the regional newspaper, *Ouest-France* (28 April 2016) reported that “they shout against police violence, the airport, capitalism, government, bosses.” For one local councillor, this opposition, which crystallized “outside” the formal machinery of co-governance, was the “only structured and efficient opposition” he had seen in Nantes, “because it is an opposition which comes from...a civil society which exudes expertise” (Interview with Councillor). In short, the contestation of the project at Notre-Dame-des-Landes came to represent an “ideological battle”, in which there

was a challenge to the entire growth model - a key motif of the Nantes myth - and to the very legitimacy of the French state itself.

5. CHARACTERIZING AND EVALUATING GOVERNANCE IN NANTES

We return now to our overall characterization and evaluation of the evolving governance practices in Nantes. At first glance, the “*jeu à la Nantaise*” can be read through narratives of urban governance - the “shift from government to governance” - and decentered policy-making in collaborative networks of interdependent actors. Such narratives “grip” public actors in Nantes, especially as the city council increasingly describes itself in its public communication as the “collaborative city”. On top of this, its method of engagement seeks to embody a “deliberative ideal”, in which its lead councillor for citizen dialogue aspires publicly to create a “republic of participation”.² It openly espouses an educative function, whereby citizens are provided with a “foundation document” that sets out the context of decision-making; it is a document that “aims to be pedagogic”. Yet, in its own self-assessment of its participatory governance, which was penned in 2016, the city council recognizes the relatively inconsistent application of its method of citizen dialogue. In particular, it suggests that the practices of giving an account or reporting back to citizens through an argumentative position remain “very disparate” (Nantes City Council, 2016, p. 11). In short, the Nantes model often lends itself to a type of therapeutic consultation (Griggs & Howarth, 2013), which endeavors to placate local communities, while failing to escape the broad criticisms of French participatory policies (Blondiaux and Fourniau, 2011).

A Shift to Neoliberal Governance...

Critical assessments of this sort chime with certain neoliberal critiques of urban regimes and network governance, which detect the emergence and consolidation of new forms of hierarchy (Davies, 2011). More precisely, our analysis suggests that new forms of urban participation and collaboration have more often than not led to new technologies of urban governance, which privilege the search for consensus and self-regulation, thus ensuring the depoliticization of much urban policy-making (Swyngedouw, 2005). The presence of different practices of what might be termed “consensus decision-making” are becoming visible in Nantes, leading to a parallel system of policy co-ordination and implementation. Indeed, there has been an increasing technocratisation of governance across Nantes. This logic is mainly driven by specialists in participation, governance and dialogue, notably the Evaluation and Citizen Dialogue service, which has promoted a method of engagement, as well as specific pathways, guides and frameworks to inform the action of local stakeholders as citizen experts (Dèbre, 2013). Indeed, our argument maintains that local democracy in Nantes is becoming less about citizen mobilization and neighborhood renewal, and more about the engineering of a novel form of depoliticized management, which negates potential opposition across the city and makes an “ideal-type of citizen [into] an essential category of public action” (Devisme *et al.*, 2013, p. 192; see also Devisme, 2014, p. 47).

... Or a Novel Form of Republican Governmentality?

Yet, as it has developed in the Nantes context, this is not necessarily a classic form of neoliberal governmentality. On the contrary, given the traditions of the French state, we would argue that it is better characterized as a distinctive form of republican governmentality. More precisely, the “*jeu à la nantaise*” embraces and advances republican traditions of popular sovereignty and the role of the state to advance equality and social justice. The French Republican tradition demands that individuals occupy the subject-position of

“citizens”, thereby relegating any private interests or cultural differences below the advancement of the public good, while in return the state advances practices of social solidarity and support (Dikeç, 2006; Laborde, 2001). This foregrounding of the universal demands of the public good reproduces a logic in which public officials and politicians claim to embody the general interest, while negating opposition from groups who are deemed to promote merely sectional interests. In so doing, it lends itself to the belief in the exercise of political reason by “good citizens”, who are to be educated in the desirability of constructing rational political orders and “good law”. Yet the state retains the sole responsibility to construct, albeit pragmatically, the common good, and endeavors mainly to engage directly with its individual citizens over and beyond the sectional interests of mobilized groups (Donzelot & Epstein, 2006).

Nonetheless, this republican logic of governmentality is not without forms of resistance. Our research shows that opposition is evident in the spaces and boundaries between different policy and participatory arenas, which have mushroomed and work according to a plurality of rules, despite attempts to impose a Nantes method of participatory and collaborative joined-up governance (Dèbre 2013; Devisme, 2013). Here, for example, the introduction of citizen councils in priority neighborhoods, with a membership based on a lottery of local residents in social housing, has introduced a potentially destabilizing counter-logic into the arena of co-governance. Yet such opposition remains intermittent, as a counter-hegemonic project that couples emerging demands within the context of collaborative urban governance to those contesting forces outside this machinery has not emerged.

Of course, for much of the evolution and development of the “Nantes model”, the political leadership of Ayrault and the political to-ings and fro-ings of the so-called “system Ayrault”

held or imposed a form of coherence upon these competing pressures. Stable forms of political leadership opened up the possibility for experimentation (Interview with Senior Officer), as Ayrault and others put in place “an efficient system with a core of dedicated, competent, and convinced professionals” (Cloutour, 2016, p.175). Nonetheless, in his last term of office, Ayrault’s political leadership gave way to a more officer-dominated project, as he positioned himself at the head of Nantes Métropole (Cloutour, 2016). This was evident in the inexorable rise of a complex technostructure, which has in part increasingly codified a particular method of public action. In this evolution, pragmatism as a particular praxis of governing has increasingly given way to a different form of pragmatism, which functions more as a governing ideology. Indeed, when functioning as an ideology (rather than a contingent bundle of practices) co-governance and the application of the “Nantes method” has become one of the central planks in an increasing managerialization of public engagement. Moreover, this has become increasingly embodied in the “*jeu à la nantaise*”, which more often than not performs the role of an “ideological cover” for the failure of the municipality to address the rising inequality in its neighborhoods. Its new function, therefore, is to render invisible or displace dislocations, frustrations and demands by operating as a dominant discourse of integration and community cohesion.

6. CONCLUSION

Our assessment and explanation of Nantes’ distinctive governance regime has focused on the city’s affirmation of collaboration and participation in its governing practices and institutions, which is organized around the “*jeu à la Nantaise*”. Here our analysis of the “Nantes model” has demonstrated that it contains at least three mutually interlocking aspects: a particular embodiment of what we have named *republican governmentality*; a commitment to a

pragmatic form of governance, with a distinctive ethos and practice that is focused on the achievement of outcomes; and a nexus of *self-understandings* and images of attractiveness, participation and sustainability that provide the ideological underpinning of the governance regime. What is more, in the stable political order provided by the “system Ayrault”, which in turn was supported by a more or less continuous logic of socio-economic growth and development, these elements were able to cohere, thus securing legitimacy and popular consent for the resulting policies and practices. However, as the continuity of the political system has begun to corrode, reflecting its endeavors to confront the eruption of various dislocations and crises in the city and the country, and as the fiscal tightening begins to have some impact on the regime, so the component parts have begun to creak and groan as they rub against one another. Instead of cohering in a reasonably stable way, they have begun to exhibit signs of tension and contradiction.

In fact, in response to such pressures and misalignments, coupled with the shifting priorities of Ayrault, there has been a growing technocratisation of participatory practices since 2008, which is especially visible in efforts to “roll out” the Nantes model of participation. Indeed, these efforts have intensified following the election of Johanna Rolland, as she has made co-governance the defining characteristic of her political mandate. However, in these changing conditions co-governance has come to serve more as an ideology, or what Michael Oakeshott would call a “doctrinal abridgement”, which is “abstracted from the particulars of place, time and circumstance” (Corey, 2014, p. 267). Such “abridgements” serve as frames or short-cut guides for political practice. In so doing, politicians, officials and decision-makers come to rely more and more on desiccated forms of “technical” knowledge that can be codified and institutionalized, but which are increasingly severed from the practical know-how or experiential knowledge of habits, feel, knacks or intuition (Corey, 2014).

The upshot of our reading in terms of this interpretive matrix is thus that “co-governance” in Nantes is beginning to exhibit signs of an “ideological abridgement”, which is manifested in the growing technocratisation and rationalization of an increasingly codified system of managerial practice. While it remains dependent upon the pragmatic and open-textured traditions of the “*jeu à la Nantaise*”, it also runs the risk of delegitimizing its supporting governance narratives, failing to harness the practical knowledge that served to ensure the effective working of the Nantes “model” of governance. At the same time, political instability and the dramatic decline of the local Socialist Party, as well as the increasing pressures of fiscal tightening, carry the danger of undermining the freedom of maneuver open to local actors. In short, in our perspective, one line of flight inscribed in the Nantes model of governance is in the process of moving from an image of *collaborative pragmatism as a complex praxis of governing* to the idea of *collaborative pragmatism as an ideology* that conceals and smooths over the complications and messiness of governing. Indeed, in our view, if (or the degree to which) this trajectory becomes even more dominant, then there is a very real possibility that the foundations and grammar of the “*jeu à la Nantaise*” could be jeopardized.

REFERENCES

- Adorno, T., & Horkheimer, M. (1973). *Dialectic of enlightenment*. London: Allen Lane.
- AURAN (Agence d’urbanisme de la région nantaise) (2017a). *En quoi, le territoire nantais est-il solidaire?*. Nantes: AURAN.
- AURAN (2017b). A l’image de 2016, la métropole nantaise bénéficie d’une économie florissante au dernier trimestre. *Les Synthèses de l’AURAN*, 12. Retrieved from <https://auran.org/publications/limage-de-2016-la-metropole-nantaise-beneficie-dune-economie-florissante-au-dernier>.
- Austin, J. L. (1975). *How to do things with words*. Oxford: OUP.
- Barbehön, S., Münch, S., Gehring, P., Grossmann, A., Haus, M., & Heinelt, H. (2016). Urban problem discourses. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 38(2), 236-51.

- Barthel, P. (2009). Faire la preuve de l'urbanisme durable. *Vertigo*, 9(2). Retrieved from <https://journals.openedition.org/vertigo/8699>.
- Barthes, R. (1973). *Mythologies*. London: Paladin.
- Béal, V. (2015). Selective public policies: Sustainability and neoliberal urban restructuring. *Environment & Urbanization*, 27(1), 303-16.
- Blondiaux, L., & Fourniau, J-M. (2011). Un bilan des recherches sur la participation du public en démocratie. *Participations*, 1, 8-35.
- Bradford, N. (2016). Ideas and collaborative governance. *Urban Affairs Review*, 52(5), 659-84.
- Cloutour, P. (2016). *Mon voyage dans les institutions nantaises, 1989-2014*. Bruges (France): Aquiprint.
- Cole, A., & Payre, R. (2016). Cities as political objects. In A. Cole & R. Payre (Eds.), *Cities as political objects* (pp. 1-30). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Conseil de développement de Nantes Métropole (Development Council) (2015). *Plan local d'urbanisme métropolitain*. Nantes: Conseil de développement de Nantes Métropole.
- Corey, D. (2014). Oakeshott's concept of ideology. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 19(3), 261-82.
- Davies, J.S. (2011). *Challenging governance theory*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Davies, J.S., & Blanco, I. (2017). Austerity urbanism. *Environment and Planning A*, 49(7), 1517-36.
- Dèbre, C. (2013). Echelle métropolitaine de l'aménagement urbain et renouvellement des cadres de la production de la règle du jeu urbain. In A. Bossé, C. Dèbre, L. Devisme, I. Garat, A. Nicolas, P. Ouvrard & E. Roy, *POPSU²-Nantes. Rapport final #2* (pp. 123-46). Nantes: POPSU.
- Devisme, L. (2013). Les cadrages 'dur-mou' du projet de l'île de Nantes. In A. Bossé, C. Dèbre, L. Devisme, I. Garat, A. Nicolas, P. Ouvrard and E. Roy, *POPSU²-Nantes. Rapport final #2* (pp. 15-42). Nantes: POPSU.
- Devisme, L. (2014). Co-produire la ville? *Urbanisme*, 50, 47-9.
- Devisme, L., Barthel, P-A., Dèbre, C., Dumont, M. & Roy, E. (2009). *Nantes*. Marseille: Parenthèses.
- Devisme, L. with Bossé, A., Dèbre, C., Garat, I. Nicolas, A., Ouvrard, P. & Roy, E. (2013). Conclusion générale. In A. Bossé, C. Dèbre, L. Devisme, I. Garat, A. Nicolas, P. Ouvrard & E. Roy, *POPSU²-Nantes. Rapport final #2* (pp. 191-6). Nantes: POPSU.
- Dikeç, M. (2006). Two decades of French urban policy. *Antipode*, 38(1): 59-18.
- Donzelot, J., & Epstein, R. (2006). Démocratie et participation. *Esprit*, 326, 5-34.
- Dormois, R. (2006). Structurer une capacité politique à l'échelle urbaine. *Revue française de science politique*, 56(5), 837-67.
- Epstein, R. (2013). *La rénovation urbaine*. Paris: FNSP.
- Fischer, F., & Gottweis, H. (Eds.). (2012). *The argumentative turn revisited*. Durham, NC: Duke UP.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge*. London: Tavistock.

- Fraisse, L., & Bia Zafinikamia, M-L. (2012). *City report: Nantes*. Retrieved from <https://www.wilcoproject.eu/>.
- Ghorra-Gobin, C. (2015). *La métropolisation en question*. Paris: PUF.
- Griggs, S., & Howarth, D. (2017). Discourse, policy and the environment, *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1080/1523908X.2016.1266930.
- Griggs S., & Howarth, D. (2013). *The politics of airport expansion in the United Kingdom*. Manchester: MUP.
- Gross, J.S. (2017). Hybridization and urban governance. *Urban Affairs Review*, 53(3), 559-77.
- Habermas, J. (1987). *The philosophical discourse of modernity*. Cambridge: Polity.
- INSEE (2014). L'aire urbaine de Nantes: un profil métropolitain singulier. *Insée Analyses*, 7.
- Keller, R. (2013). *Doing discourse research*. London: Sage.
- Laborde, C. (2001). The culture(s) of the Republic. *Political Theory*, 29(5), 716-35.
- Laclau, E. (1990). *New reflections on the revolution of our time*. London: Verso.
- Laclau, E., & Mouffe, C. (2014). *Hegemony and socialist strategy* (2nd Ed.). London: Verso.
- Luneau, D. (2003). *Nantes, l'avenir d'une ville*. La Tour d'Aigues: Éditions de l'Aube.
- Masson, P., Cartier, M., Le Saout, R., Retière, J-N. & Suteau, M. (2013). *Sociologie de Nantes*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Nantes City Council (2015). *Dialogue citoyen et co-construction*. Nantes: Ville de Nantes.
- Nantes City Council (2016). *Budget primitif. Rapport de présentation. P. Bolo*. Nantes: Ville de Nantes.
- Nantes City Council, Nantes Métropole, & AURAN (2013). *Nantes et ses quartiers*. Nantes: Ville de Nantes, Nantes Métropole & AURAN.
- Nantes Métropole (2016). *Le Budget 2016*. Nantes: Nantes Métropole.
- Nantes Métropole, COMPAS, AURAN (2015). *Repérage et analyse des territoires en déchrochage de Nantes Métropole, Rapport 2014*. Nantes: Nantes Métropole.
- Parés, M., Boada, J., Canal, R., Hernando, E., & Martínez, R. (2017). Challenging collaborative urban governance under austerity. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 39(8), 1066-84.
- Pavageau, B. (2014). Edito. *Cahiers de connaissance sur dialogue citoyen*, 4, 3.
- Pinson, G. (2002). *Projets et pouvoirs dans les villes européennes*. Political Science Thesis. Université de Rennes 1.
- Pinson, G. (2005). Problem and project driven cooperation in the French context. In F. Hendriks, V. van Stipdonk & P. Tops (Eds.), *Urban-regional cooperation in the European Union* (pp. 119-41). London: Frank Cass. Retrieved from https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/file/index/docid/736728/filename/Pinson_Problem_and_project_driven_cooperation_in_the_French_context._Nantes_and_Pays_de_la_Loire_regional_governance.pdf

- Pinson, G. (2006). Projets de ville et gouvernance urbaine. *Revue française de science politique*, 56(4), 619-57.
- Pinson, G. (2009). *Gouverner la ville par projets*. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.
- Pinson, G., & Le Galès, P. (2005). *State restructuring and decentralisation dynamics in France*. *Cahiers Européens, CEEP Paris*, 07/05.
- Préfet de la Loire-Atlantique, & Nantes Métropole (2015). *Contrat de ville de l'agglomération nantaise, 2015-2020*. Nantes: Préfet de Loire & Nantes Métropole.
- Rataud, S. (2014a). Les Ateliers Citoyens, une démarche en quatre étapes. *Cahiers de connaissance sur dialogue citoyen*, 4, 8.
- Rataud, S. (2014b). Ré-argumenter le dialogue citoyen. *Cahiers de connaissance sur dialogue citoyen*, 4, 36-42.
- Régent, J-J. (2002). *Démocratie à la Nantaise*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Renard, J. (2000). Nantes, métropole inachevée? *L'information géographique*, 62(2), 117-33.
- Renard, J. (2008). *Nantes à la croisée des chemins*. Rennes: PUR.
- Renard, J. (2010). L'expérience du conseil de développement de la communauté urbaine de Nantes dans la construction d'une démocratie participative locale. *L'Espace Politique*, 10(1). Retrieved from <https://journals.openedition.org/espacepolitique/1573>.
- Skelcher, C., Sullivan, H. & Jeffares, S. (2013). *Hybrid governance in European cities*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Swyngedouw, E. (2005). Governance innovation and the citizen. *Urban Studies*, 42(11), 1991-2006.

Table 1: Modalities of Policy Statements

Category	Characteristics
Aspirational	Appeals to the objectives and outcomes of policy
Causal	Specifies the conditions that bring about current state of affairs
Diagnostic	Defines problems to be addressed in policy process
Strategic	Sets out strategies and tactics to achieve goals
Stakeholder	Identifies actors and patterns of inclusion and exclusion
Agency	Ascribes agents (individual or collective; human or non-human)
Attributional	Delineates roles, responsibilities and competences
Ethical	Captures ethos and values of governance practices
Design	Stipulates policy instruments and tools
Justificatory	Legitimizes ends (choice) and means (strategies) of policy

Table 2: Statements – The Nantes Model

Statements – Nantes Passion (NP)
<p>1: “It gives deep satisfaction to see recognized this way the value of the ‘collective game’ which gives us our strength and which we hold so close to our heart” (NP, 232, March 2013).</p>
<p>2: “Yes, I believe in the strength of collective work. That’s my conception of the role of a mayor: federate, bring together diverse energies and talents in the service of a project, in the service of Nantes, the women and men of Nantes” (NP, 234, May 2014).</p>
<p>3: Citizen participation “allows, in the first place, to realize projects that respond precisely to the expectations and needs, thanks to the ‘citizen expertise’ of the women and men of Nantes, which enriches and completes the proposals of council services to produce the best adapted solutions” (NP, 272, April 2017).</p>
<p>4: “It is a question here of a democratic imperative. It is necessary to respond to the crisis of republican values and the democratic crisis with always more democracy” (NP, 266, October 2017).</p>
<p>5: “If [...] Nantes resists [economic crisis] better than others, it is thanks to our collective dynamism, thanks to the engagement and energy of our economic, social, associative, cultural, sporting actors, [...] its strength of innovation, its sense of the collective, its capacity to invent new solidarities and to make them live concretely” (NP, 249, Jan 2015).</p>
<p>6: “We must continue to have big projects, to be in movement, because yes the 6th town in France must be in movement. We will not be happy managing what we have, we should invent, we must imagine” (NP, 243, May 2014).</p>
<p>7: “An open and active city, an easy and just city, a sober and sustainable city, a city that is a reference point for energy transition” (NP, 243, May 2014).</p>
<p>8: “This recognition will allow us to attract here the knowledge, the investments, the talents, [to work] in the service of employment and the quality of life of the people of Nantes” (NP, 247, November 2014).</p>
<p>9: “Constructing this city of tomorrow, that only has meaning if it profits all, women and men, if it is at the same time, an easy city and a city of the commons” (NP, 260, February 2016)</p>
<p>10: “Having confidence in the vision of the people of Nantes, working together on the future, the strength of Nantes is there: our capacity to come together to think through the future and to be less subjected [to it]” (NP, 227, October 2012).</p>
<p>11: “We choose to act [so we] never have to be subjected’ to change” (NP, 256, October 2015).</p>

NOTES

¹ <https://npa44.org/2016/02/28/video-a-nddl-christine-poupin-porte-parole-du-npa-interrogee-par-telenantes/> accessed 27 September 2017.

² <http://www.nantes-citoyennete.com/video-audio/le-dialogue-citoyen-nantes-nouveaux-moyens-nouvelles-approches/> accessed 27 September 2017.