

## Geneva, from Car-euphoria to Opening of the Borders: Trajectory and Coordination of Transport and Urban Planning Policy

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Over the last two decades, urban planning has been reapplied in several European countries: common tendencies that underline the reform of planning procedures are the generalization of sustainable development and the reorganization of local government. Bringing an additional degree of complexity to planning procedures, the implementation of sustainable development appears to be strongly dependent of an effective and efficient inter-sectorial coordination between urban and transport policies. However, beyond these common evolutions, large differences appear in practice, depending on political cultures, planning traditions, and local contexts.

This recent need for coordination, commonly considered a condition for success within urban sustainable development strategies, leads us to question the role of urban planning procedures and its evolution by analysing a specific case study, the cross-border agglomeration of Geneva, Switzerland, and reconstituting its “trajectory” during the last forty decades.

The policy paths of the Genevan urban area have been described by considering the evolution of successive master plans, the implemented technical solutions and projects and the different means used in favour of an inter-sectorial coordination. For this analysis, factors of change or inertia in terms of have been identified by focusing on three main variables: ideas, institutions and interests.

The case of Geneva illustrates how planning procedures take an integral part in the policy-making process, with these procedures elaborated simultaneously with policies. Torn between the renewal of public policy goals and the outcome of new territories, the reform of urban planning presents several contradictions. Conversely, sustainable development particularly fails to be addressed as a true political issue, limited to a definition of norms or legitimizing local policies.

*Keywords:* coordination of transport and urbanism, history of planning policy, public action, cross-border planning, ideas, institutions, interests, sustainable development

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## 1. Introduction

If we consider the laws that define its framework and orientations, urban planning is a tool that aims to make public action more coherent. This coherence can first be understood at a spatial level. Urban planning documents are destined to be developed within broad perimeters, defined on the basis of functional criteria and outside the borders of local administrative organization. Subsequently, at an intersectorial level, the plan defines territorial objectives or orientations, with implementation based on the coordination of several sectorial policies. Finally, at a time level, proactive thinking allows to anticipate future needs and, more generally, incorporate long-term issues (Gallez and Maksim, 2007).

The renewal of urban planning procedures in European countries for the past 15 years shows the importance attached to proactive thinking by governments. This operates within a double context, consisting of objectives towards the renewal and change of urban and land use planning policy frameworks. The common concept of sustainable development is often utilized, which implies a range of tensions between short and long term issues at local and global scales, with a transversal approach of problems and solutions. Furthermore, other actors then benefit from the weakening of governmental power, like political (Europe, regions or municipalities) or economic actors (economic markets or large companies). Complex issues, the multiplication of intervention scales and the diversification of actor networks tend to assign sustainable objectives to urban planning objectives. This defines the orientations of sustainable and procedural urban development, providing a pretext, support or framework for the establishment of urban governance.

Despite a certain convergence of orientations and trends in planning renewal in Europe, differences appear in practice due to political culture, land use traditions and local contexts. In this article, we focus on the development of urban and transport planning and its role in the particular case of Geneva since the late 1960s. By considering this trajectory, we have been able to grasp elements of continuity or rupture in terms of inter-sectorial coordination, as a key aspect for sustainable development. This idea of coordination is largely supported by the observation that the only urban areas which have succeeded in containing automobile use like Basel, Bern, Zurich or Karlsruhe, amongst other examples, are those which combine public transport development with various kinds of automobile use restrictions as well as urban planning and development measures (proximity-based urbanism, urbanization and densification around public transport stations, etc.) (Kaufmann and al., 2006). We thus have gone from a vision where automobile travel had a hegemonic role in the city to one where values of urbanity, road surface sharing, and mixed-use public space serve as the basis for roadway design (Wachter, 2003).

The Genevan urban area presents a specific and, thus, interesting context through its urban planning tradition, due to a geographical situation at a national border, and political influences (Geneva, headquarters of many international organizations). The agglomeration also offers a particular situation in terms of urban development, economic growth and the organization of mobility.

An analysis of administrative, political and planning documents, including the use of academic or applied studies, and discussions or interviews with local actors, allows us to reconstruct the history and trajectory of urban and transport policies. By trajectory, we mean the path taken through changes in these sectors' issues and orientations, organizational mechanisms, procedures, and regulatory instruments, as well as the principle means employed at different spatial scales. Consequently, we will be able to compare processes rather than precise moments that frequently risk emphasizing structural variables like urban morphology, political systems or local institutional organization. The following analysis is made up of three phases. After a brief description of the Genevan planning trajectory, the constitutive factors of local dynamics are identified and characterized through the study of institutional aspects, the comprehension of

interactions among local actors and the representations that express urban and transport actions (Palier and Surel, 2005). Consequently, by analyzing the relative influence of these different factors, the last part of this paper consists of evaluating the role of urban planning in the incorporation of urban and transport policies in Geneva.

## 2. Evolution of transport and planning policies: Geneva, dense car city and cross-border outreach to France

Geneva has an old tradition in urban planning, due to the lack of space of the cantonal territory (283 km<sup>2</sup>), high pressure demographically and to the will to preserve the green agricultural belt, protected since 1952. The canton of Geneva, which has all prerogatives in urban planning and the organization of mobility<sup>2</sup>, has already realized several master plans before the legal obligation that emerged from the Federal law on land use planning (LAT) of 1979.

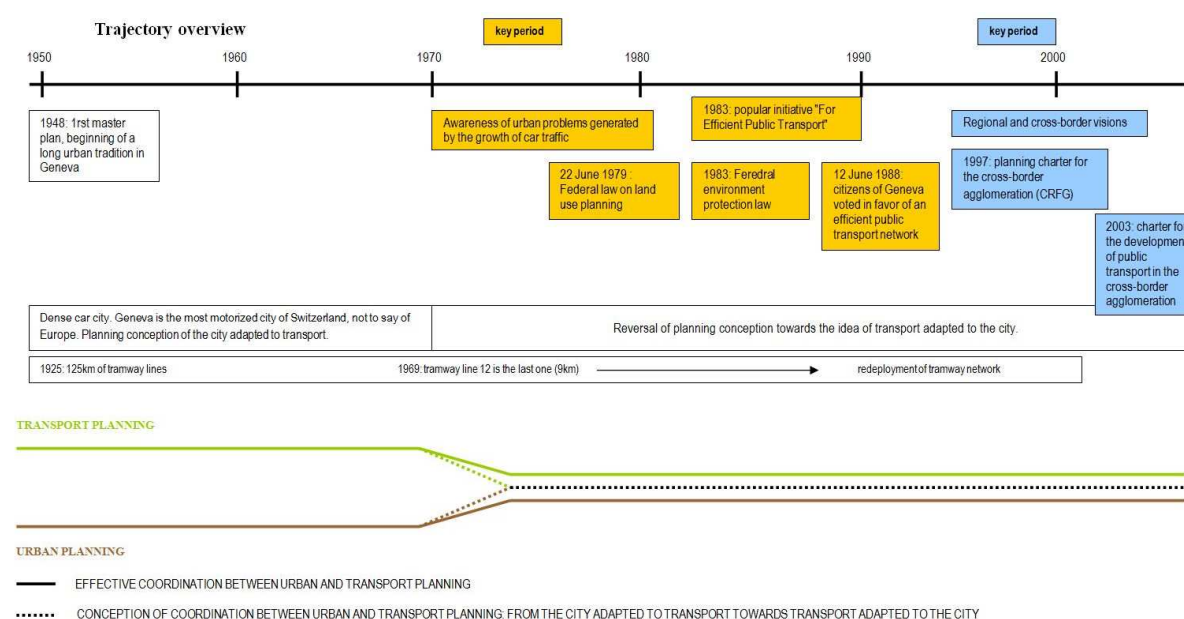


Figure 1. Trajectory of the coordination between urban and transport planning in Geneva

### 2.1. A modernist claimed heritage

During the 1960s and 1970s, Geneva varied little from the modernist city model, combining the densification of the city center to an important growth of car traffic (Gallez and al., 2010). The cantonal master plan of 1966 (République et Canton de Genève, 1966), marked by a technical ideology, insisted on the necessity to adapt the city to car mobility, based on Biermann's<sup>3</sup> recommendations in his general traffic study published in 1959 (Biermann, 1959). Expressways would structure the city in a circular pattern, organized in accordance with the principle of separation of functions like housing and activities (figure 2). The plan was to develop the urban area in a compact way and strengthen the principal poles in the periphery, in order to preserve the green belt and maintain the industrial areas outside the agglomeration. Even if the Biermann's project has been abandoned, it shows the dominant vision of urban and transport

<sup>2</sup> This is a particular situation. In other Swiss cantons, communes benefit from larger prerogatives, in particular in urban planning.

<sup>3</sup> The engineer Jean-Louis Biermann was appointed by the State Council to conduct this study (Biermann, 1959).

planning during this specific period in Geneva, and led to the dismantlement of the tramway network, which was one of the densest in Europe in 1925.

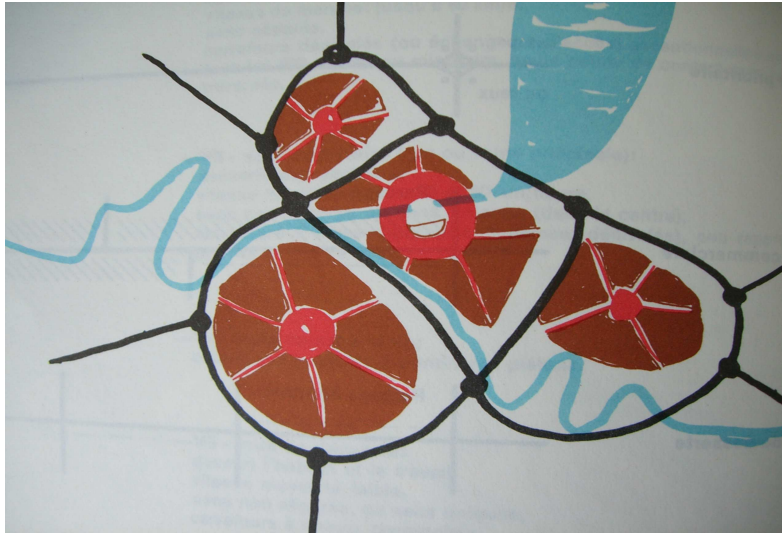


Figure 2. Functionalist urban planning approach according to Biermann, in 1959

Legend: Biermann's plan with circular pattern of expressways and separation of functions

Source : Biermann, 1959

## 2.2. Emphasis on environmental issues

The 1970s marked the awareness of urban problems generated by the growth of car traffic (pollution, congestion, deterioration of the quality of life). The master plan of 1975 ceased the car euphoria of the previous period, insisting on the necessity to build the city on the city and oppose urban sprawl (République et Canton de Genève, 1975). After the vote of the LAT, the canton began to develop a new master plan. However, the early 1980s experienced an increase of environmental concerns, which influenced federal legislation on environment protection (LPE) in 1983. The same year, a popular initiative called "For Efficient Public Transport" is presented to the canton of Geneva by five ecologist associations. This initiative inaugurated the reform of rail public transport development across the city and canton, in particular the massive redeployment of a tramway network (figure 3), which reminds us that Geneva has been a model pioneer in 1925 with one of densest network in Europe. This also the case with more recent precursor examples like its small circular expressway or its traffic lights system. The master plan of 1989 insists on these changes while reaffirming the principles of densification and protection of the green agricultural belt (République et Canton de Genève, 1989).

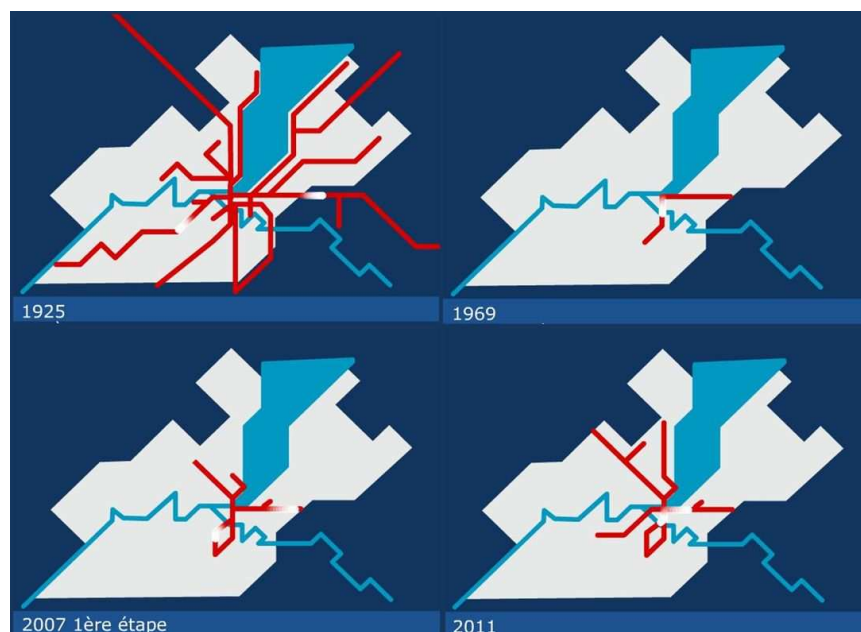


Figure 3. Demolition and redeployment of the tramway network in Geneva

Legend : Geneva possessed one of the densest tramway networks in Europe in 1925, which has been then almost entirely dismantled in the 1950s to make space for automobile and finally redeployed from the 1990s.

Source : République et Canton de Genève

### 2.3. The cross-border planning as subject of political negotiation

In the early 1990s, the increase of commuting travels between Switzerland and France also pressured urban planning to make cross-border apertures a priority. The development of the new plan, Project 2015, emphasized the principle of differentiated urbanization, recommending the diversification of activities in the green belt (République et Canton de Genève, 2001). It then provided flexibility of urbanization constraints in the agricultural area, causing a modification of the LAT in 1999. In areas that had high development potential (including four areas that require a cross border cooperation), perimeters of coordinated development benefited from strong planning efforts. In the field of transport, the major project became the CEVA rail line (Cornavin - Eaux-Vives - Annemasse) linking the right bank of Geneva to France (République et Canton de Genève, CFF, 2001). Launched once again in 2001 by a feasibility study published by the canton of Geneva and the CFF, this century-old project<sup>4</sup> was the subject of harsh financial negotiations between Geneva and French public authorities (figure 4). Several other planning documents, including a French-Vaud-Geneva agglomeration project, aimed to make this cross-border territory emerge and consolidate its international vocation.

<sup>4</sup> Since 1858, a rail line connects the Eaux-Vives station, on the left bank of the Geneva Lake, to Annemasse, in France. The connection of Geneva to France necessitates a line extension towards the Cornavin station, via the Praille station. In 1912, a 100 years valid agreement between the canton of Geneva, the CFF and the Swiss Confederation, where each partner would finance one-third of this connection line, is signed.

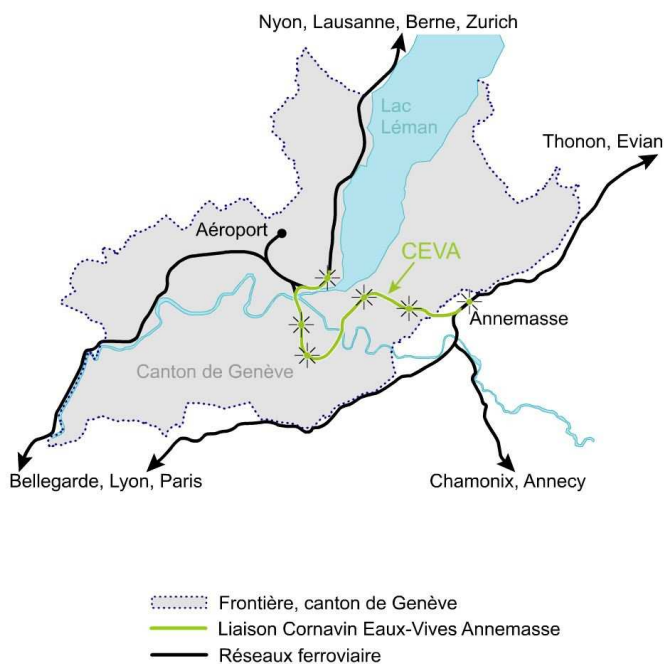


Figure 4. The CEVA rail line project

Source: République et Canton de Genève, CFF (2001)

### 3. Changes and continuities in the coordination of urban and transport planning

Over the past forty years, we have seen that the history of urban planning in the agglomeration of Geneva is characterized by an alternation of periods with contrasted dynamics.

This retrospective allows us to grasp the connotation of the modification in public policies and better identify this change (Fontaine and Hassenteufel, 2002), in particular the elements of continuity and rupture in the development of successive planning procedures. According to Fontaine and Hassenteufel, this historic distance allows us to better describe changes by bringing out the inertial and continuity factors characteristic of public action processes, as well as interaction between the different decisional echelons. This temporal perspective of analysis thus appears to be particularly appropriate for our problem, as the transport and urban planning coordination issue has persisted throughout the entire considered period in Geneva.

Moreover, recent studies of political science have shown the interest to combine, in analysis processes of public action over the long term, aspects that are often used in an exclusive way (Surel, 1998). This analytical framework, known as the three "i", consists in examining successively, without classifying them in a particular hierarchy, three categories of explanatory elements relating respectively to *institutions*, *interests* and *ideas*. This approach first gives a particular attention to institutional aspects, cumulative effects of systems and decisions. It refers to the manner in which formal action frameworks like laws, institutional organization or procedures, influence the decisions and actions. It then analyzes the strategic dimension of collective action, illustrating how local actors express their interests and negotiate their representation. Finally, this approach focuses on the intellectual dimension, through an analysis of values, beliefs or norms, which underlie the formulation of problems or the choice of political solutions (Palier and Surel, 2005). Reconstructing the trajectory of Geneva and its different phases thus allowed to show the role of these three dimensions over the considered period of time and



estimate the changes of urban planning, particularly focusing on the relationships between transportation and urban planning.

### 3.1. Institutional aspects: the importance of traditions and the legitimization system tool

The cantonal government (State Council) in Geneva is the main actor in the local political land use planning. Since the 1950s, five master plans were developed within a context that has gradually institutionalized the monitoring and the decennial revision of planning documents. The City of Geneva has very little influence to impose its preferences, including transport planning, since the roads stretch outside its communal borders. Moreover, the semi-direct democracy system confers a significant importance on the population and associations in the local actor relationships. The initiatives and referendums influence decisive orientation changes in the priorities of cantonal planning. Considering the occasional harsh opposition and the risk to challenge the cantonal policy, the role of the State Council is not simply to develop, coordinate and implement development projects. It also has to arbitrate the contradictory interests that can occur with the initiatives or referendums. The near non-modifiable cantonal law of 1952 protecting the green agricultural belt offers a first example of the continuity in the planning options of Geneva's territory. There are no master plans adopted that have questioned this decision, due to the risk of being exposed to an immediate appeal from environmental associations. Even if the land use planning federal law, amended in 1999, plans a liberalization of urbanization constraints in agricultural areas, enforcing this principle in the agglomeration of Geneva would foremost imply a reform of the cantonal law, which is not presently on the agenda.

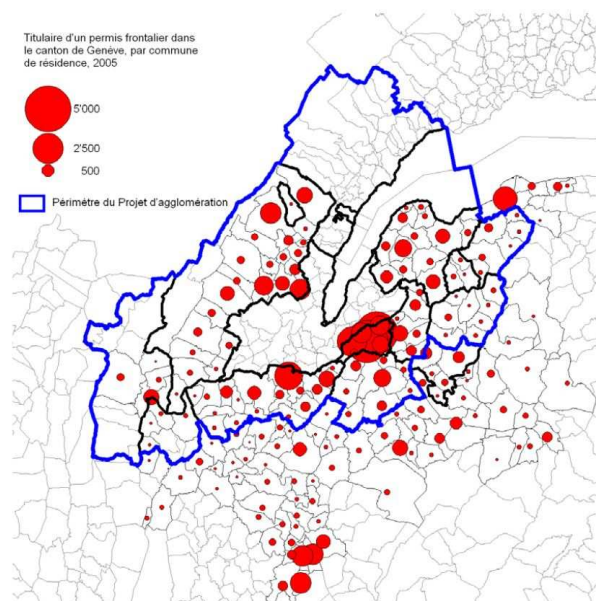


Figure 5. Cross-border commuters in the Genevan agglomeration, in 2000

Legend : repartition of cross-border commuters in 2005

Source : Projet d'agglomération, OCSTAT, 2005

More generally, the importance of oppositions relating to the successive plans has led the State Council to create, since the 1960s, tools that are designed to legitimize land use planning policy. This is especially the vocation of the sectorial consultative commissions, which groups together representatives of State Council, experts, operators and representatives of associations. The urban planning commission has been established in 1961 to follow up the master plan. It also gives

updates on development projects. In 1973, the French-Geneva Regional Committee (CRFG) is created to address issues relating, for example, to increasing cross-border commuters. In fact, the acceleration of urban sprawl has been accompanied by a strong increase in commuting flows between Switzerland and France, and pushed Geneva's access roadways to saturation (figure 5).

Currently incorporating issues on urban planning, the analyses of the CRFG are associated with those of the Land Use Planning Commission, established in 1994, at the time of the plan's revision of 1989. Finally, from 1990, the Consultative Traffic Commission Groups, the OCM, the TPG, representatives of the city of Geneva and associations are jointly active in the field of transport. In practice, the influence of these various commissions is rather limited. As a stated policy, the State Council particularly aims to prevent untimely demonstrations of diverging interests and contradictions neither emerge nor are solved through the discussions within the commissions. The role of these consultative commissions is then rather characterized by inertia than thematic or methodological innovation.

Finally, there is a strong sectorial division in actions relating to transport and urban planning. This segmentation is not associated to a geographic fragmentation of competences, since all the competences in both fields, including the management of parking, are concentrated at the cantonal level in Geneva. However, this concentration had not been enough to coordinate transport and urban planning policies. This is the case, for example, with the production in the early 1980s of specific planning documents for public transport and traffic (Kaufmann and al., 2003). The separation of competences within the Departments of the State Council also reflects the strong division of technical cultures, not only between urban planners and transport engineers, but also within the field of transport between road experts and public transport specialists. Consequently, until 2005, three Departments of the State Council were concerned by the urban and transport planning policies: the Department of Urban Planning, Facilities and Housing (DAEL), which developed the master plan, the Department of Justice, Police and Transport (DJPT), in charge of the road and rail transport policy (including parking) through the Cantonal Traffic and Transport Office (OCT) and the Department of Interior, Agriculture, Environment and Energy (DIAE), in charge of environmental protection policies (against air pollution, noise, waste and protection of the agricultural area). Furthermore, before the creation of the Traffic and Transport Office (OTC) in 1989, transport belonged to three different departments. Nevertheless, since 2005, the cantonal government has expressed the need to incorporate planning and transport issues to stop strictly technical approaches to mobility. The institutional implementation of this change is the recent merging of competences relative to urban and transport planning into a single department, the Department of Territorial Affairs, and the transformation of the OTC into the Cantonal Mobility Office (OCM).

### *3.2. Interests and relations between local actors: from the conciliation of internal interest to external negotiation*

In the middle of the 1960s, the recognition of problems caused by the automobile prompted the State Council to put on the agenda of the master plan the improvement of public transport. However, the car access to the center was not truly questioned and investments took a long time to materialize in the field of public transport. The popular initiative of 1983 for a renewal of public transport caused protests from motorist circles that feared the negative consequences of a redeployment of the tramway network on the traffic. Faced with this contradiction, the State Council appointed a research office to examine a counter-project, which led in 1988 to the cantonal law on public transport networks in Geneva. The success of this counter-project, adopted by 79% of voters, derived from compromise. While suggesting the expansion of the tramway network, the text reduced concerns of associations by proposing two possibilities: the creation of an express regional network, supported by the initiators, and the creation of an automatic subway, supported by the motorists.



At the end of the 1990s, the cross-border outreach demonstrated a significant change in the organization of local interests. Despite the traditional mobilization of the local associations on cross-border planning issues and the support of the European Commission via Interreg programs, bringing together public Swiss and French authorities had been continually limited to studies and intentions.

We should note, in this regard, that the configuration of the employment areas in Geneva is particular: the attraction of Geneva goes far beyond the cantonal limits on the French side. According to the INSEE definition of urban area, 70% of the population in the peri-urban ring of Geneva resides in France. Since the late 1980s, the aggravation of urban sprawl has led to an important increase of commuter flows between Switzerland and France, causing important congestion problems on the roads towards Geneva. The development of a public transport between Switzerland and France is therefore considered urgent. The French local communities demand a better employment distribution on their own territory, essentially focused at the moment on the cantonal perimeter. The scale change of the cantonal master plan concretizes around this negotiation between mutual interests of various partners. This is the case with the pressure that Geneva puts on the Departments of Ain and Haute-Savoie in France, so that they contribute to the financement of cross-border public transport with the fiscal retrocession paid by Geneva from the wages of cross border workers.

### *3.3. The link between city and transport: stratification of global doctrines and territorial implementation*

Considering values, representations and norms that underlie the action in the fields of urban and transport development, the evolution analysis of urban planning in Geneva reveals significant elements in terms of global doctrines, widely spread at an international scale.

These global doctrines are strongly linked with a general trend in European agglomerations in terms of urban and, in particular, transport planning, and a major paradox: on the one hand, automobile is anchored in our daily lives, and on the other hand, the political agendas focus on a significative reduction of its use (Kaufmann, 2003; Sheller and Urry, 2000). This objective is generally supported by the majority of the population in the city centres (Mermoud and al., 2001). Nevertheless, the reduction of automobile is not possible only by discouraging and restricting its use or by developing alternative transport modes (Banister and al., 2000). This specific European actual context leads us to consider the increasing importance of questioning automobile dominance in favor of environmental concerns and, in particular, sustainable development issues. Based on this statement, we can identify specific moments that mark the evolution of the public action doctrines, from a functionalist planning and the dense car city model to the concept of sustainable development. These moments affect the European agglomerations in different ways, depending on political cultures, planning traditions and local contexts, as shown in the following analysis of the Genevan case study.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the functionalist urban planning was the dominant model. This planning is based on principles of functional separation (housing, work, leisure, travel) and the importance attached to the travel function, both inspired by the Athens Charter of the early 1940s (Kaufmann and al., 2006). In Geneva, this vision corresponds to the image of modernity attributed to the car, in contrast with the obsolete image of the tramway, whose network has been almost entirely demolished in 1950-60s. Car accessibility therefore became the major issue of transport policies. Road engineering, which uses methods and models imported from the United States, was widely present within public institutions, such as private planning offices. In Geneva, the plan of 1966 was closely related to modernist approaches, with these modernist doctrines particularly present (Gallez et al, 2010). The densification of urban habitat was a major orientation in this plan. Locally, it corresponded to the double political issue of land use planning within a small territory and protection of the green agricultural belt.

A second doctrine emerged in the 1970s that questioned the car dominance characteristics of the previous period. The major concerns were about the congestion of road networks that prevented access to the city, and then necessitating a development of public transport. Other issues accompany the promotion of urban public transport other than the automobile, such a guarantee of an equal access to the city, a better quality of life in urban areas or the maintenance of the city centers attraction. In Geneva, the plan of 1975 is developed in a specific context: the downward trend of population growth predictions and concerns about the peripheral urban sprawl trend. The necessity to promote a compact development of the agglomeration that strictly respects the green belt, referred to the historical tradition of land use planning. The link between transport and urban planning was not specified: public transport development was only considered to limit the use of individual cars, with the idea of a balanced mobility distribution not incorporated in a global planning policy.

A third moment corresponds to the increase of environmental concerns and, more generally, the generalization of the concept of sustainable development. It is a new way to deal with urban and transport development issues, emphasizing the problems of non-renewable resources, extensive growth of urbanized areas and the increase of car traffic around the cities. Solutions are not only thought in terms of rebalancing the modal split in favor of pedestrian, bike and public transport, but also in terms of an urban development restructuring in areas that have a good access to public transport. This relationship between transport network development, urban growth, and economic development has been often evoked in terms of the "structuring effects" of transport (Offner, 1993). The concept of sustainable development consequently brought an additional degree of complexity by insisting on the simultaneous management of economic, environmental and social issues. Applied to the planning of urban territories, it increased the need for intersectorial coherence for all urban policies (mobility, habitat, housing, social policy, etc.). Nevertheless, despite a consensus that it is necessary to better coordinate mobility management with the development and organization of urbanized spaces, debate over the objectives and means behind this coordination remains relatively limited.

In Switzerland, the environmental issue had been institutionalized in the 1980s, at a national level. At the local level, in Geneva, the role of environmentalist associations is particularly important, both for the preservation of natural or agricultural spaces and the promotion of efficient public transport. However, the urban culture in Geneva, marked by the modernist heritage and favorable to individual cars, contrasts with this early and involved sensitivity for the environmental issue (Gallez et al, 2010). This limited the acceptance of a drastic car traffic reduction strategy, as it is the case in Bern. In the 1990s, the debate on land use at the federal level focused on urban issues, mixing ideas of liberal inspiration with sustainable development. Faced with demographic pressure and urban sprawl problems, the Swiss Confederation recommended both a liberation of construction constraints in the agricultural areas and a land policy that promotes densification. A federal law for the creation of a fund, intended to guarantee a contribution from the Confederation for the financing of transport infrastructure projects (rail and road) in the agglomerations, emerged in 2006. The Project 2015, for Geneva as well as for the French-Vaud-Geneva agglomeration project, expresses this double rhetoric of sustainable development and territorial attraction (République et Canton de Genève, 2001). The symbolic dimension of the cross border outreach towards European integration in Switzerland is also based on a strictly functional argument, legitimized by the necessity to manage travel flows, control urban sprawl or fight against socio-spatial disparities.

#### **4. Urban planning as an orientation or public action governance tool?**

The identification of change or continuity factors in urban planning allows us to identify some findings about the role and the scope of this instrument. In Geneva, urban planning is strongly

institutionalized. The negligible influence of political debate (limited to developing plan methods), the perpetuation of authority intervention, the development of procedures and monitoring of master plans, as well as the permanence of certain issues (moderated soil use and agricultural area protection), frame the content of master plans. The essential factor lies within the State Council – or, more specifically, the State councilor in charge of the file – and resident, environment or green areas protection associations, which are permanently, and sometimes harshly opposed to master plans, as well as transport plans. Therefore, the creation of multiple consultative commissions and the extension of their composition (territorial and thematic extension, and also to private actors) appear to legitimize land use public action and avoid hindering the direct democratic system (Kaufmann and Joye, 1998).

In this agglomeration, the development of the last master plan, Project 2015, attests a strong political involvement (République et Canton de Genève, 2001). The presence of the cross-border outreach in several recent documents (including the French-Vaud-Geneva agglomeration project) and the CEVA project show a change from good intentions into concrete implementation of an active partnership, bringing Swiss and French public administrations together (Maksim, 2008). In this context, urban planning in Geneva is no longer limited to a simple update of sectorial development projects and a control of territorial compatibility. It is then an element of a negotiation process between a large number of public and private actors at different scales.

Thus, urban planning is involved in a recomposition movement of public action spaces that favors the agglomeration scale. What are the consequences on the role and scope of urban planning and its ability to integrate urban and transport policies?

#### *4.1. Territorial coherence, between norms and the project*

In Switzerland, the Federal law on land use planning (LAT) of 1979 expresses the objectives of master plans, which are the coordination of all activities that have an impact on the territorial organization. The rapid evolution of urban development and planning issues since the 1960s leads us to question the way these spatial and intersectorial coherence issues have been considered (Kaufmann and al. 1998).

In Geneva, the plans from the late 1960s to the early 1970s have been developed on the basis of a strong demographic growth hypothesis, which explains the large perimeters that were considered. Territorial planning is then in search of “optimum dimensions”. The necessity to consider a larger analysis perimeter outside the cantonal territory is expressed, but not materialized, due to the institutional obstacle of the cross-border cooperation.

In the 1980s, the spatial coherence is inseparable of urban sprawl and its consequence, the increase of daily mobility, is related to increased travel time. The problem of the difference between institutional and functional perimeters becomes recurrent. The development of networks and the diversification of mobility brought political-administrative boundaries into question, threatening to dispossess political powers whose legitimacy was built on a delimited territory (Offner, 2000). If we consider a distinction made by Dupuy (1991), this leads us to grasp the problem of a coordination established between urban planning, whose approach remained fundamentally forged by an areolar vision of territories that privileges centrality, i.e. that defined by zones and borders, and transport planning, which refers to the reticular approach in which networks and flows constitute the urban.

The role of urban planning seems then to be torn between norm definition and local governance organization. Facing rapid and multiple changes of urban issues (trade globalization, urban sprawl, permanent growth of motorized mobility, etc.), it is more than ever in search of anticipation capacities and coordination criteria for public action, suspected to be hindered by a short term valorization search, local interests or sectorial aspects. Moreover, related to the local

power recomposition movement, it is a potentially strategic tool for many actors that are directly involved in the territorial improvement.

The presence of cross-border initiatives in the master plan marks the outcome of a long process, where the importance of political reason prevails over that of functional rationality. This outreach, which is based on the necessity to manage increasing cross-border flows, is not the subject of harsh oppositions within the canton. Most important local oppositions were related to liberal conceptions that promote a liberalization of urban constraints, like the green agricultural belt. The major role of the State Council is illustrated by launching once again the CEVA project. The urgent decision to create a rail connection, because of the imminent expiry of the convention of 1912, is made without consulting French authorities, which had invested since several years in studies on a light automatic metro construction. Moreover, changing transport mode causes a recomposition of decision makers' organization, in favor of the Rhône-Alpes Region (rail transport organizing authority), but to the detriment of communes (in particular Annemasse) and the Department of Ain, involved in urban transport organization. In this context, the master plan of Geneva, Project 2015, rather ratifies than creates political decisions, with the environmental argument around public transport development at a cross-border scale used rather to legitimize than guide public action (République et Canton de Genève, 2001). If the necessity to coordinate urban and transport issues is expressed several times in the document, its implementation, in a cross-border context, seems to be problematic. The creation of employment zones on the French side, which is the subject of negotiations between French and Geneva authorities, does not seem to be truly connected to mobility issues.

#### *4.2. Considering time issues*

Nevertheless, the proactive dimension, inherent in planning practice, does not seem to be present, to a large extent, in local actions. In Geneva, master plan developments do not result in patterns of possible or desirable evolution in the fields of urban and transport planning, which could be a base for debates. Planning approaches are strongly dependent on hypotheses of continuation of past trends (particularly the case of traffic forecasting that underlie the road infrastructure programming in the 1960s and 1970s), but also closely related to current planning projects or short-term planned projects. The proximity of project and master plan is traditional in Geneva, where the regular development of master plans first aims to update current planning operations or to make sure of its mutual compatibility. They also emphasize delicate and important planning options, like green belt protection.

The considered period of time also allow us to enlarge a little this evaluation of specific moments. We could first note that urban planning local practices sometimes anticipate the legislation at a national scale. In fact, the State Council of Geneva precedes the Federal law on land use planning of 1979 by developing and monitoring cantonal master plans since the 1960s. In addition, the way of developing the plan and its attribute of being a reference to local actors is just as important as its content (Offner, 2006). The time of action and reactions with its approval are part of the public action development process, like collective objectives present the plan.

Finally, it depends on the monitoring methods of master plan implementation. We could notice that the monitoring and revision of the plans in Geneva were institutionalized since 40 years. This is from functioning conditions of this monitoring involvement by authorities and their capacity to create a territorial expertise production. We are consequently able to estimate their capacity to maintain political orientations, defined with the consideration of long-term issues.

## 5. Conclusion

Over the last forty years, the content, practices and uses of urban planning in Geneva have considerably changed. Focusing on spatial issues in the 1960s and 1970s, the 1980s is characterized by ambition to coordinate different actors within larger perimeters. Furthermore, local dynamics are portrayed by the particular interests organization and institutional aspects. The analysis of concepts and representations that underlie policies shows a tendency to stratified dominant action, leading us to question a real change of ways of thinking and acting on the coordination of urbanism and transport as a key factor to guarantee a sustainable development. If forms and uses of urban planning have changed, why do doctrines change so little?

A first element consists in illustrating the technical nature and the strong institutionalized production mode of these procedures. Faced with complex challenges and actor organizations, these procedures rather tend to escape and find a solution, rather than formulate new issues. It would ignore the reflection process during document development, omitting potential useful debates (in particular in the field of studies). We rather assume that planning documents cannot present all current changes, because they refer to consensual challenges and action strategies in order to be legitimate.

A second element consists of questioning more precisely the consequences of current evolutions. On the one hand, the awareness about social costs of urban sprawl (in Geneva, increase of traffic flows between France and Switzerland, socio-spatial segregation - for example with a major concentration of employment in the central area on the swiss territory of the agglomeration, and environmental problems) and the rise of environmental challenges creates actions and reforms at a national level as well as at a local one, as seen with the case study of this cross-border agglomeration. Legal obligations and regulations accompany the need of planning. Conversely, the strengthening of the agglomeration scale as a criteria of priority action and its corollary, the recomposition of local political spaces, lead to the invention of new planning forms that have more of a strategic than normative scope. These changes are related to a trade globalization dynamic and the increase of territorial competitiveness, that logically lead new territories and its actors, to stress on attraction challenges and accessibility. In this context, transport is mobilized with the help of stronger territorial identities, both internal and external. The link between urbanism and transport is limited to challenges of habitat densification in surrounding areas of rail or public transport stations. The reshaping of territorial planning would then reduce a major contradiction; limiting sustainable development to the expression of norms and the legitimization of public policies, instead of establishing it as political problem.

Finally, if we consider back our main analytical framework based on three "i" theory of Palier and Surel (2005), we observed a strong interdependence between the dimensions of knowledge (ideas) and power (interests and institutions) in the elaboration and implementation of local policies: the manner in which an idea imposes itself in the political domain depends on the concrete conditions under which power is exercised.

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Maksim

Geneva, from Car-euphoria to Opening of the Borders: Trajectory and Coordination of Transport and Urban Planning Policy

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