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The army as a member of an urban development coalition ? Institutionalization and conflicts in urban governance

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## Résumé :

En tant que ressource rare l'espace urbain est souvent l'objet de conflits portant sur son affectation. A partir du cas des négociations autour du contrôle de l'espace entre l'armée et le gouvernement local à Toulon, ce papier s'interroge sur les limites (et les échecs) de la gouvernance urbaine. Nous montrerons en effet l'existence d'une contradiction entre la mobilisation de l'armée dans un projet de développement local et les divergentes priorités concernant l'usage de l'espace.

A ce titre, nous analyserons les stratégies de l'équipe municipale visant à institutionnaliser les relations avec la Marine Nationale. Nous montrerons qu'elles se fondent sur un nouveau *framing* de la présence militaire à Toulon, sur la mise en place de rencontres régulières et normées, et sur le recours à des négociateurs. Elles ont comme objectif la stabilisation des relations avec un acteur, l'armée, qui contrôle des ressources stratégiques pour le développement local. Pour autant, l'existence d'intérêts opposés sur l'utilisation de l'espace entraîne l'émergence de conflits invisibles et l'échec relatif des instances locales de négociation.

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## Abstract:

Urban space can be seen as a rare resource and is therefore likely to become the object of conflicting interests. This paper analyzes the relations between the army and the local government in Toulon, and their negotiations about the use and control of urban land. A contradiction between the inclusion of the army in a coalition for local development and diverging priorities about urban spaces is pointed out.

Different strategies are developed by local authorities, aimed at institutionalizing the relations with the army. Indeed, the latter is considered as an actor controlling strategic resources for Toulon's development. The strategies are based upon a new framing of the military presence in the city, the establishment of regular and ritualized meetings, and the use of middle-men. However, the existence of a main cleavage concerning the use and control of city land makes the army an urban veto player, rather than a member of an urban coalition for local development. As a consequence, newly created institutions fail.

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A large amount of literature is available regarding the relations between urban governments and groups along with the evolution of city governments in continental Europe. Classically, theories about urban politics have studied the relations between city officials and those actors who control relevant resources in cities. Most empirical research focuses on local governments and economic interests. The latter are considered to occupy a strategic place in the definition of urban policies priorities. Furthermore, similar patterns have been shown regarding the solutions elaborated by European local governments in response to economic, social and political changes. Here, the implication of private interests in locally elaborated development projects is one of the main changes of the last decades.

The aim of this article is to test patterns of change in cities whose development is historically linked to a state institution or more specifically, the army. The case study will be the French city of Toulon, the biggest military port on the Mediterranean Sea. In which terms has the military presence an effect on urban policies? And to what extent do we observe changes we can assimilate to those shown by other European cities?

After having discussed the existing literature (1), this article proves that the army controls relevant resources in the city, and shows that new relations between local governments and military institutions can be observed at the urban level (2). Different strategies are developed by local authorities, aimed at getting the army involved in a locally defined urban development project (3). However the existence of a main cleavage concerning the use and control of city land makes the army an urban veto player, rather than a member of an urban coalition for local development (4).

## **1. Groups and urban governments relations: theoretical perspectives**

Relations between the army and cities in democratic countries have been poorly studied. In political science, the existing research on the army (established in the United States) is mostly about the relations between the military hierarchy and civilian political power at the federal or central level. A second, more sociological, field of literature is about the consequences of army professionalization on the institution and its members in terms of values, behaviors and internal rules. In economic geography, some research in the United States focuses on regional effects of federal military expenditure, mostly in the Sunbelt region (Arizona, Nevada, California, etc). They argue that the economic remapping of the U.S. from the industrial areas to the Sunbelt is due to the relevant military programs which developed in that part of the country during the 1940s and overall (Lotchin, 1984; Markusen, 1991). They boosted local economies in this part of the U.S. and helped with the development of some hyper-specialized and highly technological research and development clusters.

Even if relations between urban governments and the army have not been addressed by theories about urban politics, the relations between urban governments and those actors who control relevant resources in cities (financial and material resources, human resources and organization, political and symbolic resources, knowledge and know-how) have been widely studied. Considering the army an actor external to urban government and having an authority upon significant resources, the main theories this article refers to are concerned with the relations between social groups, economic interests and local policies. Thus, some main fields of research, partially different for the question they address, should be pointed out.

The European sociological tradition in urban studies, stemming from a question about how social and political order are constructed, analyzes city governments and social regulation processes in cities specialized in some activities (one-company towns, city-ports...). Those researches start with a general analysis of the influence of particular activities to determine the social structure of the city (Bagnasco, 1986; David, 2006). Then, they focus on regulation, intended as *coordination* of different activities, *resource allocation* and *conflicts prevention and solving* (Boussaguet, 2006). Rescaling social analysis from national state to cities, this kind of research empirically demonstrates that different kinds of activities in cities entail different arrangements in urban policies and politics.

The political economy approach to urban policies elaborated theories in order to explain interactions between the urban political sphere and economic interests. A first group of scholars interprets urban policies as the result of class struggles and capitalist laws. They recognize a relative autonomy to urban governments, whose functions are similar to those provided by the state in a capitalist society. The first function is providing the productive system with the bases necessary to its own reproduction (property rights, planning laws, physical infrastructures). The second one is maintaining social order, through the provision of urban policies allowing the reproduction of urban labor force (Harvey, 1985). Their main question is how political decisions are taken, “who governs” and which classes are ensuring their own benefits. In a similar perspective, Logan and Molotch proposed a middle-range theory, more specific than the Marxist general framework, to understand urban policies. They focus on *urban growth coalitions*, defined as groups of private interests representatives oriented at local economic development (Logan & Molotch, 1987).

In Marxists approaches to local government *policy* plays a very little role. A stronger attention to the political sphere and to the wider city *polity* has been attributed to the tenants of the *regime theory*. Although they still focus on capitalist society, they take into account a wider range of actors than the economic interests, and they consider issues related to political competition. In fact, *regime theory* focuses on the relations between governmental and non-governmental actors in cities in order to determine stable ruling coalition. A regime is therefore an informal yet relatively stable group with access to institutional resources that enable it to have a sustained role in making governing decisions (Stone, 1989). The center of the empirical research are processes of coalition building, interactions among actors and bargaining contexts.

Since these mentioned theories share the U.S. as a common origin, their applicability in the European context has been strongly debated (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994; Harding, 1991). Indeed, considering European cities, some elements have to be taken into account in order to prevent a non-reflexive theory from being taken out of context. These elements are the weaker place of firms in local politics (mostly in endorsing elections candidates), the smaller relevance of tax incomes in local budgets because of public transfers from the center, the higher role of the central state in determining local policies and the presence of de-concentrated administrations of the central state within the cities, and the importance of public landownership which reduces the amount of urban land available in the market (Kazepov, 2005).

Finally, scholars have addressed the evolution of European city governments since the 1970s. They pointed out a process of *redistribution of political authority* between levels of governments and blurring boundaries between *private and public actors*. These changes are accounted to devolution followed by European centralized states and to the evolution of the role of the state in the globalized capitalism (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Le Galès, 2006; Pinson, 2009).

Many European countries have experienced reforms in their institutions of local governments by adding power of sub-national elected authorities and transferring responsibilities to sub-national political units (Bobbio, 2002). Further, a change in state policies addressing cities problems and local development has undermined the redistributive function of territorial policies in Western Europe. Until the 1970s the state was the main actor ruling economic and planning policies in cities. But, the shrinking of state resources and the limitation to its economic interventionism introduced by European Union entailed the displacement of urban policy production to cities themselves. Territorial policies became oriented at promoting local actors' mobilization rather than focused on redistributive issues or direct sustain to economic development. In a context of limited public resources, cities have to elaborate their own projects in order to compete for the allocation of central state resources (Béhar & Estèbe, 1999; Pinson, 2009). Furthermore, economic change has intensified pressures on municipalities (Scott, 2008). Large enterprises and public sector organizations that used to provide stable employment in many localities have been restructured. The shrinking of traditional industries and the increased mobility of capital and labor put city in competition in attracting "factors of production".

The needs of *locally elaborated development projects* to get financial transfers from the center went with the increase of number and type of actors implied in urban policies. As a consequence, increased complexity and fragmentation of urban systems is widely accepted by literature, and led some scholars to define cities "ungovernable" (Jouve & Lefèvre, 2004). Here, city officials have to mobilize actors controlling relevant resources in cities (firms, universities, local elites). This entails new construction processes of general and shared policy agendas, the research for new decision venues and for institutional thickness (Pinson, 2009). In turn, the diminished significance of nation-states has created new opportunities for urban policies, and political opportunities for local leaders. City officials have a role in aggregating interest and solving conflicts, which could reveals a manner to increase their political authority and enhance legitimacy and recognition (Borraz & John, 2004).

In this field, empirical research focused on the processes allowing actors' resource mobilization and paths leading to the emergence of bargaining venues for collective action in cities. Embedded in the more general debate about governance in Western society, these researches showed the emergence of new reflexive and procedural forms of political coordination (Bang, 2003). Urban governance can be defined as a process of coordinating actors, social groups, and institutions to attain particular goals, discussed and defined collectively in fragmented and uncertain environments (Le Galès, 1998). Thus, key elements are the densification of information exchange networks, the recognition of shared interests between actors and the consolidation of a common framing of policy problems (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994; DiGaetano & Strom, 2003; Kilburn, 2004; Pierre, 2005). Here, consent and commitment between actors are "criteria of success" (Jessop, 2003). However, several scholars have underlined that, beyond the rhetoric of governance used by political actors, even procedural and reflexive coordination can fail. In inter-organizational negotiation process, gridlocks and interruption are far from being rare. In other words, governance is not linear and it is often incomplete (Jessop, 2003).

Drawing on the discussed literature, this article stems from the hypothesis that cities with a longstanding military presence are characterized by specific patterns of resource allocation and conflict solving.

Moreover, changes toward the construction of local coalitions similar to those accounted for other European cities are expected.

This article takes its origins from a research carried in Toulon in 2010. It is based upon thirty semi-structured interviews with Toulon city officials (current and retired), military commanders (current and retired), and chiefs of Toulon and military administrations. Moreover, the main local newspaper (*Var Matin*), the Municipality official Report (*Toulon Méditerranée Magazine*) and the official city documents concerning urban public policies have been analyzed.

## **2. The army in Toulon: an exogenous power to involve in a urban project**

### *2.1. Toulon, the first military Mediterranean port*

How the army and Ministry of Defense controls resources in Toulon must be clarified in order to understand the way in which they are perceived by local civilian powers (the Mayor, deputy mayors and members of city council). Toulon was the first military port on the Mediterranean Sea, and currently 70% of the French fleet of warships is located there. In Toulon metropolitan area (around 500,000 inhabitants), 24,000 people work for the army or for the local administration of the ministry of defense. Toulon's development followed the upside-downs of national defense strategies and policies; thus, the city is considered by local civilian authorities as being historically dependent on the military presence in three relevant and related issues.

The first one is political. Since the army is a hierarchical organization whose headquarters are located in Paris, decisions concerning local development were taken at the national level. By then, the local interest is perceived as having been systematically subdued to the military (and national) one. The second issue is economical. For centuries, the army has been the first employer in the area, mostly because of the activities related to warship construction and maintenance. For this reason, each evolution in defense public expenditure had strong effects on local employment rates and more generally, on the economy of the whole city. During the 1990s, the shrinking of public expenditure in both naval and military sectors created a steep increase of unemployment rates in Toulon (20% of the active population was unemployed in 1999)<sup>1</sup>, the failure of military subcontracting firms, and negative net migration rates. If the Ministry of Defense is still the first employer in the city, local authorities argue for the necessity of differentiation between the city's economical activities and the military function. The third issue is Toulon's urban layout. Toulon developed within a thin space between the hills and the seaside, which constrained urban extension. Today, 8% of the land is owned or legally controlled by the army<sup>2</sup> and 8 kilometers of the seaside (about 70% of the total) are dedicated to military activities and closed to inhabitants and tourists. The Ministry of Defense is a dominant landowner in the city, which has several consequences. Its land ownerships are out of the land market, whereas their location would make them an easy investment for the creation of a surplus value. Moreover, some parts of the city are submitted to building restrictions, because of the technological and environmental

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<sup>1</sup> Source : Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques

<sup>2</sup> Source: Préfecture Maritime de la Méditerranée

risks related to military activities (nuclear batteries of the submarines and weaponry deposits). Finally, the legal status of bay waters is military, which entails restrictions to the circulations of civilian boats (ferries, private boats, trade ships).

As it will be discussed later, land control is one of the main issues opposing the army and the city council. To be understood, it has to be placed in the context of the broader region, the French Riviera, a coastal line attracting tourists on a world-wide scale. Toulon's tourism (both in terms of touristic flows and second-houses) is underdeveloped compared to those of neighboring municipalities. Still, land prices are about three times higher than the rest of French cities<sup>3</sup> and second houses are 13% of the total. In the newspaper distributed by the municipality (*Toulon Méditerranée Magazine*), in the strategic planning reports, and in our interviews, civilian city officers publicly complain about the "visual and material barriers" splitting the city and the sea and sharply reducing the length of the Toulon marina. Further, the lack of available land for new construction is usually accounted by the geographic position of the city (between the mountains and the seaside) and to the great amount of space "confiscated" by the army.

To conclude, the army in Toulon is considered as an exogenous power, ensuring a redistributive function thanks to military public expenditure (with negative effects during phases of expenditure cuts) and having strong spatial effects. By then, the idea of dependence is deeply rooted in Toulon's city officials.

## *2.2. The emergence of an urban development project implying the army as a major partner*

French urban development was led by the central state until the 1980s. Until that time, some ministries and inter-ministerial committees defined local policies in the name of the "general interest" (Béhar & Estèbe, 1999). Indeed, urban policies were part of the modernization project of the French society pursued by administrative and political elites. The spatial component of the project consisted in the construction of a hierarchical system of territorial specialization and complementarities, the national territory being supposed to function as a whole. Considering Toulon, the city was assigned to its military purpose, and military public expenditure ensured a redistributive function at the same time. In this context, locally elaborated projects for the city were weak or nonexistent. City civilian authorities describe the lapse of time from the end of WWII until the 1980s as a period where "*we didn't need anything*" and nobody felt the necessity for developing city projects. The high public expenditure benefiting the city was enough to ensure social order and the re-election of the mayor in charge. Indeed, considering the political side, Maurice Arreckx was the city mayor for almost thirty years (1957-1985). He ruled a political system based upon corruption and nepotism and fed on by the easy availability of public money. During the 1990s, a moral, economic and political crisis affected the city, and part of the leading class (both economic and political elites) was swept away by lawsuits and scandals (Ardid, 1995; Di Iorio, 1998; Martin, 1996). After a highly contested far-right term, when the city was ruled by a Front National's mayor (1995-2001), the right-wing mayor Hubert Falco was elected<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Excluded Paris and the Ile-de-France

<sup>4</sup> He is a member of the political party *Union pour un Mouvement Populaire*



Since 2001 Toulon's local government have been following patterns of change similar to those shown in the literature about evolutions in European cities. For the first time in this area, a supra-municipal institution (*communauté d'agglomération*) was created by the city of Toulon and the surrounding municipalities in order to cope with institutional fragmentation. Its competences are related to common issues at a metropolitan scale (public transportation, housing policy, economic development). But, in a context of increased decentralization, it also contributes to the redistribution of powers among the different layers of government and empowers the metropolitan area. This is enhanced by the concentration of power in Toulon. Indeed, Hubert Falco became city mayor by a large majority of votes and benefited from a strong political legitimacy and central government support because of his defeat of a far-right city council. Like most current French city mayors, he holds both a central and local post. In Toulon, he is the city mayor, the president of the *communauté d'agglomération*, and holds several minor local responsibilities. At the national level he has been holding ministerial posts since 2002, the latter being at the Ministry of War Veterans<sup>5</sup>.

Considering the public policies, Toulon's political and administrative elites have recently introduced a group of policies whose aim (as described in preparatory documents) is to transform Toulon into an "attractive Mediterranean metropolis" from the current status of a city reduced to its function as a military port. Since 2003, the city responded to three "calls for projects" launched by the central government in order to allocate public resources by concentrating them in some "leading" places<sup>6</sup>. Although they differ in policy contents, the three initiatives are presented by city officials as part of a general development project. A new encompassing "vision" for the city is put forward, embedded in two main ideas. The first one is opening the city to the sea, which means developing touristic activities in the marina and enhancing maritime civilian exchanges. The second one is developing industries and R&D in marine and submarine fields. Both goals have been put in policy objectives and projects, and what is interesting is that they all frame the army as the most relevant partner for a successful local development. In consequence, local military institutions (both the Navy and the Ministry of Defense) have been associated in responding to three "calls for projects." The association of the army with the Toulon project therefore has to be understood in the context of the evolution of French territorial policies and the incentive of related instruments to the participation of various actors on city projects. As it was shown in the literature, in Toulon we can observe a claim for a greater engagement of an actor controlling some resources considered fundamental to urban development. For local government officials transforming Toulon in a "Mediterranean metropolis" implies the mobilization of the army.

But in which terms is this institution interesting for city officers? Making the army a partner in local development aims to mobilize two kinds of resources locally associated with the institution. The city does not hold a relevant university, and all the most advanced research centers are related to the military

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<sup>5</sup> Secrétaire d'Etat aux Anciens Combattants

<sup>6</sup> The first one requires the elaboration of a "metropolitan project" based upon the cooperation between institutions located in the same metropolitan area (as a way to overcome administrative boundaries) and deals with several metropolitan planning issues. The second one, oriented to economic development, is an attempt to enhance the collaboration between R&D institutions and local firms. And the third one, related to decentralization laws, transfers the responsibilities from the ministry to local authorities and the management and development policies of the civilian port in Toulon and in the metropolitan area.

institution. Plus, its commanding officers are a significant part of the high-skilled population. Army research and development activities are therefore considered as the main source for further industrial development. In addition, the urban space controlled by the Ministry of Defense is seen as decisive for the implementation of urban projects. However, the army is an exogenous and independent authority whose activities have strong effects on the city, and making the institution a partner in the coalition for urban development (as publicly affirmed by local authorities) is neither an automatic nor an easy process.

### **3. A problem of collective action: the attempts to create an institutional thickness**

Scholars who have studied the evolution of city governments focused on the processes allowing actors' resource mobilization and on paths leading to the emergence of bargaining venues for collective action in cities. They showed that key variables are the densification of information exchange networks, the recognition of shared interests between actors and the consolidation of a common framing of policy problems (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994; DiGaetano & Strom, 2003; Kilburn, 2004; Pierre, 2005). Focusing on the relations between Toulon's city government and the military institution, allows to show the different kind of strategies developed by civilian authorities in order to get the army involved in a coalition for local development and to have easier access to its resources. Toulon's government strategies are analyzed as an *institutionalization process*, aimed at attaining organized, established and routine procedures, ruling the bargaining context with the army (Jepperson in Powell & Dimaggio, 1991).

#### *3.1. The new framing of the military presence*

Local authorities (both at municipal and metropolitan level) developed a new framing of the military presence in Toulon. It is based upon a chronological narrative that includes an interpretation of the past, a statement about the present and some arguments that legitimize the new public policy guidelines (Hassenteufel, 2008). The chronological story and new framing function therefore act as a justification for the formulation of the new agenda (Garraud, 1990; Stone, 1989). The deconstruction of the framing and causal links embedded in it reveals some interdependent points of discourse. They are aimed at normalizing the military presence in Toulon (making the army an urban actor as another) and mobilizing the institution resources.

The first point focuses on the land issue. The lack of available land is often accounted to the military presence by city officials. Stemming from the idea of army restructuring, shrinking and shifting from a labor intensive to a capital intensive organization, city officials claim that the army does not need such a large amount of property; by consequence, the Ministry of Defense could easily transfer some of its property to the city. This narrative is accompanied by the claim, often repeated in the local newspaper by civil authorities that the city will never attempt to obtain any "*strategic square meter*." This is a double-folded public statement. On one side, it is understandable to blame avoidance logic because it implies that the city (the local interest) is never going to harm the national defense. On the other side, what is "strategic" is undefined, and therefore opened to conflicting definitions.

The second point is about the *normalization* of some benefits historically accorded to the army and its members. The idea of sharing (“*partager*” in French) recurs in all the interviews with city officers. It is justified by the fact that military activities are not the core of city economic development anymore. Therefore, the institution should renounce some of its exclusive advantages in the city, both in terms of spaces and services. Plus, soldiers and other army employees are “*Toulon citizens equal to others,*” and they have no reason not to share their benefits with all Toulon inhabitants.

The third register establishes the idea of “*perfect interest convergence*” between the city of Toulon and the army. In fact, both are constrained to national and international competition. French army and military industries have to prove competitive in a globalized economy. At the same time, Toulon is competing with other cities in Europe for the attraction of investments and high-skilled labor force. Moreover, an enhanced city development would benefit not only the city inhabitants, but also the soldiers and their families. Thereby, a partnership between the local and military institution can (and have to) be a natural convergence of shared interests, and it would be a win-win situation. This register, completing the two formers, states that economic competitiveness is both an army and a city interest, and institutional agendas are thus in accord.

To resume, the chronological narrative comes from the idea that the army was an exogenous power ruling essential issues in the city. Then, it shifted toward the representation of a future where the city develops its own capacity of action. Here, the army becomes the partner whose resources will contribute to enhance local development. As a consequence, the framing implies the perceived domination of the army over city policies to be transformed in an equal and negotiated relation.

### *3.2. The stabilization of negotiation venues and the use of experts and middle-men*

Before analyzing the bargaining context and actors strategies, some remarks have to be made in order to understand this collective action problem. In national laws there are no established negotiation venues between local governments and the military; the problem of building a relatively stable pattern of interactions is therefore dependent on locally elaborated solutions and initiatives. In Toulon, those initiatives always stem from the municipality; thus, if the mayor or his deputies do not undertake them, the relations between the city and the army would be inexistent as was the case in the past, except for the official national ceremonies. Finally, the actors involved in negotiations are very few and well placed in the hierarchy. The mayor and the *Préfet Maritime* (the highest military charge in Toulon) are the key and most relevant contacts. Beneath them, there are their respective deputies and department directors.

Some main strategies have been undertaken by the municipality during the last few years in order to create a favorable and stable bargaining context. Here, striking a bargaining situation has provided both parties with some security and a reduction of transaction costs (North & Weingast 1989). The first strategy could be defined as an institutionalization of bi-lateral meetings. After the creation of supra-municipal structure (*communauté d'agglomération*) and after the Toulon's project emergence, number and frequency of meetings have sharply increased. In addition to meetings between the mayor and the *Préfet Maritime*, there are now assemblies of the *Projet Rade* management committee and meetings concerning specific technical issues.

Although they differ in content, those meetings (always proposed by civilian local officials) are based upon established procedures: periodicity, location (alternatively civilian and military official buildings), and pre-defined orders of the day. It is a process of stabilizing relations between civilian and military hierarchies, in a city where the latter is considered as an exogenous power. Indeed, through the stabilization of norms, they become permanent and self-reproducing institutions which reduce uncertainty and enhance one's commitment. They function as institutions created in order to solve the problem of collective action (Hall & Taylor, 1997; Powell & Dimaggio, 1991). Furthermore, some of the meetings have been given a name, "*Les rencontres Mairie-Marine*"<sup>7</sup>, which make them easily recognizable. The "*Rencontres Mairie-Marine*" are the most well-known negotiation venues. They involve the mayor and the *Préfet maritime* (the highest military charge in Toulon), in order to deal with urban problems common to the municipality and the Navy. The meetings were introduced in the 1980s by the right-wing mayor François Trucy, and they took place once or twice a year. After Hubert Falco was elected, they were reintroduced and became more frequent. Perceived as institutions, they survived until the emergence of some conflicts in 2005. With this name, they were widely publicized by the municipal official report (*Toulon Méditerranée Magazine*), which was a manner both for legitimizing and publicly showing the "*perfect harmony*" between civilians and military in Toulon.

The second strategy consists of the use of middle-men and experts in the everyday policy making. In the 1980s, François Trucy hired a retired Navy admiral in his cabinet, whose principal task was to deal with the military hierarchy in Toulon. Since then, several retired Navy admirals have been either elected (because they were on the lists for municipal elections) and then chosen as mayor deputies or hired in cabinets. For instance, one of them has been in charge for the launching of the "*Rencontres Mairie-Marine*," and others for some policies requiring close collaboration with the navy.

Retired admirals are both middle-men and experts in the policy process because they belong to both worlds (Hassenteufel, 2008). They have been high-level commanding officers, they have personal relationships with several officers - who could even have been under their command - and they generally benefit from good consideration in military hierarchy. They thus have political resources and personal relationships, enabling them to lead debates and to be taken into account. In addition, they have a deep knowledge of how a military institution functions. In the everyday making of local policies, they are therefore the experts to be consulted concerning the organization chart (e.g. which is the right office to contact?), the values and the norms of the military institution, and the best language to be used. At the institutionalized meetings, retired Navy admirals help in reducing uncertainty by making answers foreseeable. Therefore, they stabilize civil-military relations and create a sense of equality.

## **4. A non-linear institutionalization process: interruptions and conflicts**

### *4.1. Venue changing as a solution to the land disposal*

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<sup>7</sup> The City-Navy Meetings

The type of interactions and whether or not they are very controversial are elements linked to power struggle and the degree of consensus between actors regarding problem solving. Indeed, a very controversial issue can lead actors to undertake strategies different than those associated with more concurring problems. Furthermore, in a context of multilayered governance, the existence of a constraint in a specific political venue or level of government can lead an actor to displace its action to a different level. Thus, he is likely to address a venue where power relations could be more favorable and its request taken into account more easily (Kriesi, 2007). Considering the army and local government in Toulon, they are both embedded in a multilayered system. On one side, army commanders in Toulon belong to a hierarchical chain going to the Navy Etat Major and to the Ministry of Defense. On the other side, Toulon's mayor belongs both to the local and national level.

Local and institutionalized bargaining is the strategy undertaken to deal with the vast majority of issues. But, strategy of venue changing is used by municipal officials in order to deal with the issues considered as "*very strategic*" for Toulon development and the municipality policy agenda. The main issue concerned by this strategy is military land disposal. As we said, the land owned by the army is one of the main resources identified by Toulon municipality as relevant for the local project. Speaking about this issue, city officials and military officers describe it in terms of a power struggle. When the land is at stake, the ideas of "*being solid*," "*keeping its own positions*" and "*showing who really rules the city*" are frequent. Moreover, there is a mutual mistrust about "*strategic square meters*" and both sides are accused of lacking in clarity. Therefore, the issue is thus both salient and controversial.

The army and the city hold divergent interests concerning this rare resource, and that the army is a veto player in each decision concerning this specific issue (Tsebelis, 2002). On one side, the first interest of the army in Toulon is ensuring and maintaining the conditions necessary to its own functioning. Thus, land use, property disposal, spatially defined security rules, are the material bases for the institution to function. The necessity of maintaining a military sovereignty on those elements is a permanent goal of the army, which holds judicial resources that ensure this sovereignty such as property rights, authority in defining risks perimeters, decree ruling the transit in the bay and several others decrees concerning the security of military sites. By consequence, every change in the status quo either stems from the institution itself, or its need for approval. The effect on public policies by an existing veto player is that decisions concerning the material organization of the city are slowed down and sometimes blocked.

On the other side, the action over urban spaces is one of the most important and defining characteristics of city governments. The production and transformation of the building environment and the autonomy of cities in defining land rules are at the heart of urban policies. In fact, they provide leverage which allows local authorities to influence which activities, both in terms of production and consumption, are located in the city. By then, they are instruments helping to regulate the benefits that different groups (and voters) can take from a specific pattern of activities (Harvey, 1985). Furthermore, in the context of evolution of European city governance, the new urban projects always include a part of transformation of the existing environment. These kinds of actions have the double function of symbolizing urban renewal and effectively changing the value and use of land assets (Pinson, 2009).

By consequence, the army and the Toulon city government have diverging interests regarding urban space. If the military institution holds judicial resources ensuring its sovereignty and functions as a veto player in decisions concerning the land use, the accessibility to the national-level for Toulon mayor Hubert

Falco opens the possibility of displacing their bargaining venue and reverses power relations. A good example is the sports hall realized on a military parcel close to the main naval base. In fact, the new public structure was one of the main points of mayor's political program in 2001, and being the first to be realized, it was supposed to symbolize the city "*renouveau*". Here, the disposal of the land to the city was obtained thanks to political pressure on the Ministry of Defense in Paris. When the mayor got his first governmental charge in 2002, his double responsibility to the national and local system gave him direct access to the Ministry of Defense. At that moment, he publicly declared in Toulon's municipal report<sup>8</sup> that he intended to defend Toulon interests in the central state, and "*negotiations with the Navy*" were part of it. Since then, the definition of parcels which could be given to the municipality are dealt with at the national level.

Locally institutionalized meetings and bargaining at the central level therefore coexist as two focal points of political activity. Although the first strategy aims at creating shared norms and established foreseeable behaviors, the displacement of venue is an exceptional strategy which occurs when local negotiations are failing and when the issue is considered by Toulon city government as worthy. The attempt to create an institutional depth and get the army involved as a partner in local development is thus a non-linear process. It takes place in multiple venues, and it encounters interruptions, conflicts, and aversion strategies.

#### 4.2. Time, reputation and conflicts outbursts limiting the emergence of a stable coalition

The relationship between the city and army is a sequence of repeated interactions taking place in multiple venues, but they have to be considered as being part of a unique process. In fact, the points of conflict and agreement cannot be understood if three elements are not taken into account: the history of previous interactions, reputation and mutual confidence, and the personality of people in charge. Each interaction and its results have an effect on the following ones. Indeed, past interactions and the "long arm of the future" could be incentive for both parties to abide by the bargain after it is made. In turn, reneging can lead to the deterioration of the bargain context and eventually to the end of institutionalized relations (North & Weingast, 1989). For this reason, the bargaining here is different from a market exchange: the satisfaction of parties' answers can be postponed and can concern different issues related to different venues. As a high-ranked marine told us, "*Here, you should have several cards in your play, to be able to exchange them*"<sup>9</sup>. Furthermore, meetings involve a relatively small number of people who know each other; personalities, friendship, or conflicting standpoints are thus relevant elements. Civilian officials consider the "*personality*" of the Préfet Maritime and his assistants as a determining element in explaining their choices concerning the common issues and more or less positive results. Although city officials and representatives stay in a post for a long time, the turnover of military commanding officers is high (2-3 years). This allows city officials the possibility to return to waiting strategies: if an agreement on a specific issue is not attained, they can "*wait for the next admiral*," who will probably be in charge before the end of the electoral term.

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<sup>8</sup> Toulon Méditerranée Magazine

<sup>9</sup> In French: "Il faut avoir plusieurs cartes dans son jeu pour pouvoir les échanger"

These points are useful for the understanding of conflicts that occur throughout the process of institutionalizing relationships. In fact, in 2004-5 the *Rencontres Mairie-Marine* were interrupted and the relationships became much more conflicting. The *casus belli* stems from the agreements concerning the use and responsibility for the sports hall built on the former military parcel. Since its construction, the sport hall has been a source of conflicts. In fact, Navy officers in Toulon thought that the Navy still needed the “stolen” land, and, since the sports hall is located within the nuclear risk perimeters of the naval base, they formulated several doubts about the opportunity of such a location for public equipment. The hall built, an agreement regulated time-schedules between the inhabitants and defense employees and maintenance charges of the building, and it originated a harsh conflict, where both parties accused of renegeing and escaping responsibilities.

According to our point regarding time and reputation, this example is interesting because it entailed the whole suspension of collaborative relations between the municipality and the Navy for almost 4 years and the interruption of institutionalized meetings. Although concerning a unique report, it had consequences upon all of the issues relating to civilian and military institutions. Parties estimated the commitment as no longer credible. Moreover, the solution to the conflict did not take its origins from a mutual agreement, but from the change of personnel in charge. It thus shows the absence of locally constituted forms for conflict-solving, except from exploiting military turnover.

The process of mobilizing the army undertaken by civilian officials have consequences on the military institution. In a phase of defining and implementing new local policies, the military officers (both the head commanders and the technicians) consider their attendance to all the meetings as mandatory. In fact, their sovereignty upon the urban space has become the object of political bargain. For this reason, the army is now compelled to explain its needs, and to justify each possible opposition that could be formulated against city projects. In this sense, they consider to be shifting from a period when “*strategic interest*” of national defense was never questioned, to a new phase where the army is obliged to bargain and legitimate its presence in the city. Furthermore, there is a widespread sentiment that the organization is not adapted to face the new solicitations. Frequent and controversial meetings require high levels of energy, time and information gathering, although not more than 5 marines are effectively in charge for the relations between all the local governments along the whole Mediterranean French coast.

To some extent, the army is participating in a local partnership, since the intensification of meetings and exchange networks along with the emergence of a bargaining context went with collaboration on issues related to technology transferring and tourism. In turn, the shrinking of defense national expenditure pushes to collaboration in issues related to military personnel (housing and social services). From an exogenous power, the army has become an actor whose presence in the city is not so different from, for instance, a big firm, or the authority of a civilian port. However, the existence of diverging interests upon the land use makes the institution an urban veto player and its assimilation in a stable urban development coalition impossible.

## **Conclusion**

This article aimed to analyze the effects on the city of a military presence and testing patterns of change on a military city. The army is an actor controlling relevant resources in the city. Here, it is perceived by city

officials as an exogenous power putting the city in a position of dependence which had strong spatial, economical and political effects.

During the last ten years, Toulon experienced changes similar to those accounted by the literature of many European cities. The rescaling of power authorities among different levels of governments entails new relations between the army and local governments. Indeed, a metropolitan project, linked to the necessity of obtaining central government extra-resources has emerged, and the army is considered as one of the most relevant partners to be involved in a successful local development strategy, mostly because of its land ownership and its technological skills.

The analysis of effective construction of a local development coalition involving the military institution showed that civilian officials developed several strategies in order to institutionalize local civil-military relations. The routine meetings and hiring of retired admirals are complementary strategies that stabilize bargaining venues and reduce uncertainty. The intensification of exchanges and the compulsory bargaining for the army are two relevant consequences.

However, the most relevant common issue, the land control, is dealt with by a strategy of venue changing. The city mayor, benefiting from its double charges, obtains the satisfaction of his requests by recurring directly to the central government and the Ministry of Defense in Paris. The change of venue and the interruptions in institutionalized meetings lead to conclude that the absence of local regulation prohibits conflict solving. In fact, the object of the last part of the article, interests concerning land control are salient and divergent. Even if the army is participating in some local development projects, it is a state institution whose priorities make it an actor insoluble in a local development project. It can thus be regarded as a strange urban interest group: asking for nothing, but ensuring its own functioning.

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