The public funding of ‘security’ projects in England and Wales, France, and Italy: how much? Where? For whose benefit?

This paper is part of a wider project that understands security as a governmental strategy and adopts a comparative perspective in order to analyse how its deployment has opened up new spaces for governing in three different countries: England and Wales, France, and Italy.

The decision to conduct comparative research on security networks is warranted for several reasons. On one hand, there are common traits in how the field of security has come to be structured in these countries, particularly in terms of the substantial empowerment of urban authorities, the shared emphasis on the creation of partnerships and the provision of public funding. On the other, the varying degrees of autonomy granted to local authorities, the different distribution of competences between distinct levels of government and the forms that relationships between them can take, all point to the need for comparative research.

This paper specifically looks at the financial resources that central governments and local authorities exchange through the networks that have been established for the production and governance of security. By combining together an analysis of how strategic priorities, rules for funding and for assessment are laid out by relevant authoritie, with the financial data relative to the provisions that have been made, the paper will present a full picture of security funding in the three countries. Understanding how funds are allocated each year, how they are distributed geographically and how they are used will shed light on what security means in specific contexts, what constituencies benefit the most from the resources available and how both have shifted over time.