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The Greater Paris: A plan for a Global City

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Abstract

Over the last decade or so, the debate on the planning and development of the Paris (Île-de-France) region has revolved around two little words: “Grand Paris” (Greater Paris). Despite political and scientific controversies surrounding the future of the capital region, three major issues, different but interdependent in nature, have emerged: the economic development of Paris and its place on the world stage; socio-spatial justice and quality of life in the region; and governance. These three issues are key to understanding the processes under way in the Paris region in connection with the concept of a Greater Paris. The aim of this paper is to stimulate scientific discussion by exploring these issues on the basis of key stylized facts and the rationales of the various stakeholders.

Keywords: Greater Paris, metropolis, Paris Region, socio-spatial disparities, urban planning

Classification JEL: R11, R12, R21, R41, R50, R58

Introduction

For the last 10 years or so, the future of the Paris region (Île-de-France) has been at the heart of political and scientific debate. The subjects concerned are numerous and varied: economic development strategy, institutional structure, model of governance, transport infrastructures, housing policy, the place of the Paris city region within France and on the global stage, and the accentuation of socio-spatial inequalities, to name but a few. The term *Grand Paris*, or “Greater Paris”, which disappeared from common usage in the 1960s, has reappeared in recent years, its precise meaning changing over time (Weil, 2010). It was first used to promote the institutional reform of the densely built-up part of the Paris–Île-de-France urban area.¹ It was then linked to a competition for ideas involving 10 teams of architects launched by Nicolas Sarkozy in 2008,² associated with a law,³ linked to a company created to build a new automatic metro system,⁴ and used in the name of a metro system,⁵ before becoming *le nouveau Grand Paris* (“the new Greater Paris”) and being linked to a second law.⁶ Unsurprisingly, therefore, the debate on the development and planning of the Île-de-France region has for the last few years been centred around and embodied by the expression “Greater Paris”.⁷

The creation of a “Greater Paris” is a complex objective, which raises a host of questions of different kinds that are interconnected and can be difficult to reconcile – for example, the thorny issues of social equity and economic growth. Reflecting upon Greater Paris means trying to find ways of achieving very different objectives in terms of public policy, economics, social equity, and efficiency, such as ensuring social well-being, managing housing and transport crises, enabling economic growth, developing the city’s influence internationally, providing access to jobs, democratizing urban government, and improving environmental quality. Above all, it means envisaging a future for the different territories that make up the Île-de-France region.

Despite the variety of proposals put forward, the apparent oppositions that these generate, the complexity of demands and expectations to consider, the diverging interests of different groups and the sheer number of stakeholders involved, it is nevertheless possible to highlight three major issues – different in nature but interdependent – that have emerged in the course of discussions on the economic development and planning strategies of Île-de-France regional council, and on which a relative consensus has been established. These issues are the product of fears (of varying legitimacy) and opinions held to a greater or lesser extent by the region’s inhabitants, and of various predictions concerning the economic, social and environmental situation of the region.

These are: (I) the economic development of Paris and its role on the world stage; (II) socio-spatial justice and quality of life; and (III) governance. We shall explore each of these issues on the basis of the key facts and the underlying reasoning of the different stakeholders in order to gain a better understanding of what the future holds for Île-de-France at present.

¹ See the Dallier report.

² The Consultation internationale du Grand Paris (“International Consultation on Greater Paris”).

³ The *loi sur le Grand Paris* (“law on Greater Paris”) enacted on 3 June 2010.

⁴ The Société du Grand Paris.

⁵ The Grand Paris Express.

⁶ The *loi sur la métropole du Grand Paris* (“law on the Greater Paris metropolis”).

⁷ The expression *Grand Paris* has been used in French institutional contexts since the early 20th century.

I - Counting on competitiveness

The first issue we shall consider is that of the region's economic development strategy and maintaining Paris's role and influence in the world. This is a purely economic question, namely that of competitiveness, as highlighted by successive French governments since 2007: "It would be a disgrace if Paris were to get left behind by Shanghai, London or Dubai"; "Greater Paris means a Paris that wants to play a role in the European economy and in the world economy. Greater Paris means a Paris that is France's trump card in Europe and on the world stage" (Sarkozy, 2007 and 2009); "It is a question of safeguarding the attractiveness of the Paris region, and of France as a whole" (Ayrault, prime minister, 2013: 3).

The reasoning that underpins this idea is the following: Paris and the Île-de-France region risk seeing their comparative advantages decline, which could lead to a loss of competitiveness at international level and consequently the loss of its status as one of the world's most important cities. This would be significant as Paris, in its capacity as a global metropolis, is not just France's gateway to the international stage, but also multinational firms' gateway to the national market in France. It is the principal link between the national territory and the global economy. Consequently, if the attractiveness of Paris declines, it is the entire French economy that would be affected. This explains the importance of this issue within the Greater Paris project.

In order to gain a clearer understanding of this issue, the analysis of the role that Paris and the Île-de-France region play in France (section 1.1) and in the world (section 1.2) that follows will enable us to identify the specificities of this metropolitan area, along with its assets and weaknesses in a world where we are currently seeing changes in the geography of economic power, particularly with the growing importance of Asia, and where globalization is generating new regional disparities (Bourdeau-Lepage *et al.*, 2012).

1.1. The Paris Region: France's leading region...

Paris and the Île-de-France region occupy a specific economic position in France, which cannot be compared to that of other large French regions for a number of reasons.

First, a very high proportion of national production is concentrated in the Paris region⁸. It is home to barely 19% of the French population, but produces around 28% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP)⁹. In 2008, with a GDP per job of €98,706, compared to €75,948 for France as a whole (INSEE, 2010a), Île-de-France's workers were significantly more productive than the national average (by more than 30%), giving the region a GDP per inhabitant that is 53% higher than that of "metropolitan France" (i.e. mainland France and Corsica). However, the GDP of Île-de-France has been declining over the last few years, and the region's economic growth between 2001 and 2013 was only half that of London, Tokyo, New York or Berlin (Saint-Étienne, 2013).

Second, Île-de-France differs from other French regions because of its demographic profile and its attractiveness to young people and the most highly qualified workers.

⁸ The terms "Paris region", "capital region", "Île-de-France region" and "Île-de-France" shall be used interchangeably throughout this article.

⁹ This situation has been stable since 1960. On 1 January 2008, Île-de-France had a population of 11,672,000.

The Île-de-France region has a large natural population surplus that has been growing since 1999. The under-39s represent 56% of the population, compared with 50.6% in the metropolitan French population as a whole (INSEE, 2010b). The region attracts a third of all new arrivals to metropolitan France¹⁰. These arrivals are mainly young, economically active individuals and students (IAU-ÎdF, 2013: 32).

The capital region also differs from the other major cities in France in terms of the concentration of metropolitan functions¹¹ (intellectual and cultural functions, creative functions, management functions) within its boundaries, and in terms of its specialization in finance, information technology and telecommunications, research and development (R&D), and in terms of the very specific roles played by manufacturing and farming.

One in three jobs in the Paris metropolitan area (PMA: *aire urbaine de Paris*, or *AUP*, in French) concerns metropolitan functions, compared to one in four jobs in France as a whole. Consequently, the PMA was home to around a third of the country's metropolitan functions in 2006, even though this area does not even contain a quarter of all jobs nationwide. Of these metropolitan functions, the ones that are concentrated to the greatest extent in the PMA are cultural/leisure functions and design/research functions: almost 40% of the former and 38.5% of the latter are located within the PMA. The next highest concentrations concern intellectual services, business-to-business (B2B) commerce, and management functions (INSEE, 2010c).

Over 56% of French salaried jobs in the following sectors are concentrated in the Île-de-France region: (1) publishing; (2) telecommunications; and (3) information technology and services. Furthermore, the region exhibits a strong relative specialization in these types of activities (*cf.* the location quotients in Table 1). More than 40% of salaried workers in France employed in legal, accounting, management, scientific R&D, and other specialized scientific and technical activities are located in the region (see Table 1). Furthermore, the economic activity of Île-de-France is characterized by a high concentration of financial services. The region is home to 42.1% of employees in this sector in France and the head offices of 75% of the country's banking and insurance firms, as well as a large proportion of consultancy and law practices and companies specialized in mergers and acquisitions. It is the leading French region in terms of research, with 39% of all R&D jobs nationwide and over 42% of internal R&D spending in 2006 (Ministère de la recherche, 2010).

The capital region is also the nation's leading industrial region, ahead of Rhône-Alpes, with 14% of French private-sector industrial companies and around of 13.6% of private-sector industrial workers nationwide in 2008. However, Île-de-France is ranked only 16th out of the 58 "interregions" in the eurozone in terms of salaried industrial employment (INSEE, 2007¹²). Moreover, for several decades now, the region has seen its manufacturing base decline in a similar fashion to the London, New York and Tokyo regions. Nevertheless, these industries still represent twice as many jobs in the Paris region as in London or New York (Bourdeau-Lepage and Prager, 2007).

¹⁰ Here, "new arrivals" means people who lived abroad five years previously; 2006 data.

¹¹ These include functions linked to intellectual services, design and research, business-to-business (B2B) commerce, management, culture and leisure.

¹² It should be noted that this ranking depends to a great extent on the size of the regions concerned.

Table 1 - Sector distribution of the jobs salaries in 2008 in Île-de-France (IdF)

Sectors	Number	Share of each sector (in %)	Share of in France (in %)	Location Quotient IdF/France*
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	464	0,0	6,7	0,3
Mining and quarrying	1 727	0,0	6,6	0,3
manufacturing	419 005	10,1	13,6	0,5
Electricity, gas and water supply	8 980	0,2	35,8	1,4
Water, déchets & dépollution	27 660	0,7	20,5	0,8
Construction	274 905	6,6	18,1	0,7
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and personal and household goods	699 671	16,9	23,1	0,9
Transports, storage and communication	204 101	4,9	23,7	0,9
Hotel et restaurants	263 387	6,4	29,7	1,2
Information & communication dont :	337 620	8,1	57,1	
<i>publishing, audiovisual et diffusion</i>	116 020	2,8	59,3	2,4
<i>Telecommunications</i>	41 371	1,0	57,4	2,3
<i>Information technology & services</i>	180 229	4,3	56,4	2,2
Banking & Insurance	297 126	7,2	42,1	1,7
Real estate, renting and business activities	69 873	1,7	34,4	1,4
Specialized scientific, technical Activities, dont :	474 750	11,4	40,1	
<i>legal, accounting, management</i>	355 947	8,6	40,4	1,6
<i>Scientific R&D</i>	24 104	0,6	41,2	1,6
<i>other specialized scientific and technical activities</i>	94 699	2,3	38,9	1,6
Administratif services & compulsory social security	515 433	12,4	31,4	1,3
Public administration	43 850	1,1	22,5	0,9
Education	74 955	1,8	25,2	1,0
Health & social work	231 460	5,3	16,3	0,7
Arts, spectacles & Leisure	71 327	1,7	31,8	1,3
Other community, social and personal service activities	130 759	3,2	25,5	1,0
Total	4 147 053	100	25,1	1,0

* For a given sector, the IDF LQ is the ratio of the share of that sector in the IDF employment to the share of that sector in the nationwide employment in the same sector.

Source: calculated from Unedic, 2010.

To conclude, it is clear that Île-de-France plays a dominant role in France with regard to decision-making and creative functions. As the capital, it is the seat of central government. As a region with a very high concentration of businesses (business services and head offices), it is the French hub for world business networks. Key flows of information, capital, people and knowledge all pass via Paris. The Greater Paris area, with its highly diversified economic profile, is the driving force of the French economy and is home to a significant proportion of the nation's economic power, not least because it produces almost 30% of GNP. As France's primary cultural and research hub, it is also a major source of innovation and artistic creation. However, the region has also encountered certain difficulties, such as its relative decline of attractiveness for the populations, who live there, or the erosion of its industrial and research activities. These weaknesses could ultimately have negative consequences for the whole country. Similarly, Île-de-France may seem a somewhat paradoxical region, where economic growth and low-income areas with high unemployment coexist.

1.2. ... in the archipelago of global cities

As a historic European metropolis, Paris occupies a remarkable position in the archipelago of global cities. It is without doubt a first-class world city, as confirmed by various international rankings and the level of interaction that Paris enjoys with other global cities (1.2.1). However, the perceptions that economic players throughout the world have of Paris seem to have become less favourable over time, with the city attracting fewer greenfield investments¹³ in recent years (1.2.2).

1.2.1 Paris: unquestionably one of the leading global cities...

There exist many different rankings of world cities, all of which seek to define the most powerful and attractive global metropolises. Each of these rankings uses its own methodology and its own list of best-performing cities from which to choose, which makes it difficult to compare the position of any given city from one ranking to another. However, these rankings are nevertheless valuable tools that enable us to establish the broad trends in terms of the role played by a particular city in terms of globalization.¹⁴

According to the *Global Power City Index* produced by the Mori Memorial Foundation in Japan, in 2009, Paris was the 3rd most powerful city in the world (see column 5 of Table 2), and the most accessible of the 35 cities studied, ahead of London, Amsterdam, New York and Singapore. It was also the city where the quality of life was highest, followed by Berlin, Vancouver, Zürich, Toronto, Vienna and Geneva. The French capital was also well ranked for its cultural life (3rd in the world overall). However, in terms of R&D, Paris only came in 7th (behind New York, Tokyo, London, Seoul, Los Angeles and Boston) and 6th for its economy. Paris was the 4th most attractive city in the world for researchers, after New York, London and Tokyo, and 6th most appealing for managers.

These results are close to those of the *Global Cities Index*, created by consultants at A. T. Kearney in conjunction with think tank The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, or the *World Cities 2010* index produced jointly by Knight Frank and Citi Private Bank. In these surveys, Paris is ranked 3rd, behind New York and London and ahead of Tokyo (see columns 6 and 9 of Table 2).

In MasterCard's *Worldwide Centers of Commerce* index, seven dimensions that reflect the economic role of cities are evaluated using 43 indicators and 74 sub-indicators. Paris only comes 7th in this ranking (see column 7 of Table 2), notably because of its low scores for ease of doing business and its legal and political context, but also because, as a financial centre, Paris is not seen as an essential location, and faces stiff competition in Europe from London, Frankfurt, Madrid and Moscow. This is, of course, linked to the city's history. Unlike London, Paris, has never been a city that has managed business transactions across the globe.

¹³ These are investments that aim to develop or extend a site (including joint ventures; however, mergers, acquisitions, privatizations and alliances are not taken into consideration). Source: Greater Paris Investment Agency & KPMG, 2013: *fDi Markets* database by Financial Times Ltd.

¹⁴ It is true that pinpointing the position of Paris (or any other metropolis) within the network of global cities requires access to interurban information flows, in order to measure the level of interaction between cities and the level of integration of a given city within global networks, and therefore its sphere of influence.

Table 2 - Paris: one of the 10 most important cities in the world

Rank	Indicators of the different international rankings								
	Global Network Connectivity Index 2010	Image 2013	Attractiveness 2013	Investments 2012	Global Power City Index 2011	Global Cities Index 2008	Master Card Index 2008	Cities of Opportunities 2010	World Cities Survey 2010
1	London	New York	New York	London	New York	New York	London	New York	New York
2	New York	London	London	Hong Kong	London	London	New York	London	London
3	Hong Kong	Paris	Shanghai	Shanghai	Paris	Paris	Tokyo	Moscow	Paris
4	Paris	Tokyo	Beijing	Sao Paolo	Tokyo	Tokyo	Moscow	Chicago	Tokyo
5	Singapore	Shanghai	Paris	New York	Singapur	Hong Kong	Chicago	Paris	Los Angeles
6	Tokyo	Hong Kong	San Francisco	Beijing	Berlin	Los Angeles	Hong Kong	Toronto	Brussels
7	Shanghai	Berlin	-	Moscow	Seoul	Moscow	Paris	Sydney	Moscow
8	Chicago	Chicago	-	Sydney	Hong Kong	Chicago	Frankfurt	Tokyo	Berlin
9	Dubai	Moscow		San Francisco	Amsterdam	Seoul	Seoul	Hong Kong	Beijing
10	Sydney	Toronto	-	Paris	Frankfort	Toronto	Amsterdam	Stockholm	Toronto

Sources: Table established by the auteur with *GaWC Bulletin Research*, n°300 et 369, GaWC, 2011 ; Greater Paris Investment Agency & KPMG, 2013 (colonnes 2, 3 et 4) ; Institute for Urban Strategies. The Mori Memorial Foundation, 2012 ; A. T. Kearney and the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2008 ; MasterCard, 2008 ; PriceWaterCoopers, 2010 ; Knight Frank & City Bank, 2010.

The global role and ranking of a city can also be assessed in terms of the intensity of its interactions at world level, measured by its degree of “connectedness” within global networks. In its now-famous inventory of world cities, the researchers from the Global and World Cities (GaWC) group have turned their hand to this exercise. GaWC evaluates the intensity of a city’s contacts via the relations that it maintains with major firms providing advanced services in the sectors of advertising, accounting, banking and finance, insurance, management consulting and legal consulting (GaWC, 2009; 2010). In 2010, in this ranking, Paris was among the leading cities, in 4th position after London, New York and Hong Kong (see column 1 of Table 2).

1.2.2 ... whose image and attractiveness is in decline

The decisions made by the businesses who contribute to determining a city’s future are based on the image that the decision-makers have of the city in question with regard to business and investments. Between December 2010 and January 2013, a telephone survey of the leaders of 502 companies present in 18 countries worldwide was conducted by KPMG and the Greater Paris Investment Agency (Paris-Île-de-France Capitale Économique in French), in order to assess the image and attractiveness of 25 world cities, together with their criteria and intentions with regard to investing in these cities. Overall, Paris came 3rd in terms of image, behind New York and London and ahead of Tokyo, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Berlin, Chicago, Singapore and Toronto (see column 2 of Table 2). Paris’s image varied in different parts of the world: it was ranked 3rd in the US and Europe, but only 5th in Asia, the BRICS countries and the Gulf States. In view of Asia’s growing success in the globalization race, Paris would seem

to be in a more vulnerable situation than New York or London. Added to this is the fact that Paris's image has declined in the BRICS countries since 2009.

The highly favourable perception of the city among business leaders surveyed with regard to quality of life (Paris was ranked 3rd in the world for this criterion), quality of education (4th) and political stability and legal certainty (5th) enabled Paris to obtain 5th place overall in terms of perceptions of attractiveness criteria, after New York, London, Shanghai and Beijing (see column 4 of Table 2). By contrast, when it came to strictly economic criteria – labour costs; economic growth; accessibility and size of markets; quality of infrastructures; wage costs, social-security charges and taxation levels; availability and cost of real estate; and quality of research and innovation – which have a huge influence on investment decisions, Paris does not appear in the top 5 world cities (Paris–Île-de-France Capitale Économique & KPMG, 2013). Bearing in mind that the most important factors cited by economic players when it comes to making investment decisions were political stability and legal certainty, accessibility and size of markets, economic growth, and infrastructures, Paris would appear to be in an unfavourable position at present.

The decline in greenfield investments in Paris confirms this prognosis: while Paris was in 4th place in 2008 with 191 greenfield investments, four years later it had fallen to 10th place with just 108 investments, far behind London (351 investments), Hong Kong (239), Shanghai (233), São Paulo (223), New York (143), Beijing (133), Moscow (129), etc. Paris has suffered to no inconsiderable extent from the reorientation of economic activity induced by Asia's growing importance in the global economy.

What is certain is that Paris benefits from one of the best positions in global urban networks. In all the rankings and evaluations, the French capital is cited as one of the most powerful cities in the world, just after New York and London. Its attractiveness is visible through its integration into networks of advanced service firms, rather than through its role in the financial marketplace. Nevertheless, the level of investment in the Paris area is falling. The rise of certain European cities, and above all of Asian and Pacific cities such as Singapore, Seoul, Sydney, Hong Kong, Beijing, Osaka, Taipei and Shanghai, seems to be weakening Paris's position. As we have seen, Paris has undeniable assets, thanks in no small part to its positive image among economic decision-makers for the high quality of life it offers; however, this alone is not enough.

Indeed, the image (economic or otherwise) that Paris evokes among economic players represents only one viewpoint of the city. Other stakeholders, such as decision-makers in cultural, artistic, sporting and touristic fields, also develop their own image of Paris. A city's image also concerns all sorts of migrants, and not just for professional reasons. This reflects the sometimes disregarded importance that is accorded to factors not closely linked to the economy by economic players and other stakeholders alike. We must recognize and remember that, in the archipelago of global cities, the role a city plays also depends on its social environment, history and heritage, and thus takes into consideration the role played by the city in the past within the network of global cities, its aesthetic in terms of urban planning, architecture and the environment, its style, its environmental assets, the representations it evokes, among other criteria.

Social, cultural, historic, political and psychological factors, along with factors relating to various urban amenities and assets, play a decisive role. These are essential elements for understanding and explaining the position and role of a city in the context of global networks. Most of these dimensions combine to produce a social situation of greater or lesser inequality. When social inequality, which increasingly takes the form of spatial segregation, becomes intolerable, it creates instability – a social risk that can harm a city's image and therefore its

attractiveness and economic prosperity. This necessarily places the social dimension at the heart of the debate on attractiveness.

II - Socio-spatial justice and quality of life

The second issue facing Greater Paris is “the question of socio-spatial justice”. This is based on the idea, and indeed the existence, of an increase in socio-spatial disparities and a decline in the quality of life in the Île-de-France region. The events described as “urban violence” in the media that took place in the 2000s in the Paris region have contributed to the spread of this idea and an increase in collective awareness. Furthermore, the burnt-out cars, damage to public buildings and “riots” of 2005, and subsequent declarations of a state of emergency, in particular in Clichy-sous-Bois and Villiers-le-Bel, in the north-eastern suburbs of Paris, all served to remind politicians that the primary objective of their actions should be to ensure the well-being of their fellow citizens. The extreme expression of discontent of certain sectors of the population prompted – indeed, forced – a collective realization of the existence of disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the capital region. It caused certain fears to resurface, in particular regarding urban insecurity and downward social mobility. It raised the question of a multi-speed metropolis that could exclude a portion of its inhabitants from the beneficial processes of economic development (section 2.1). It also put the question of how to resolve housing and transport problems in Île-de-France back on the agenda (section 2.2), along with environmental issues (section 2.3).

2.1. Socio-spatial divisions: illusion or reality?

It would seem, therefore, that the Paris metropolitan area generates negative social effects. This is consistent with the theory of the emergence of a socio-spatial duality in world cities (Sassen, 1991). In Paris, this theory is characterized in particular by the gentrification of certain neighbourhoods and, at the same time, the impoverishment and homogenization of the city’s most vulnerable spaces (Maurin, 2004).

However, this duality, highlighted by Éric Maurin, does seem to be quite as pronounced in Île-de-France as elsewhere, and certain limits to the dual-city model seem to be apparent. This is supported in particular by the works of Bourdeau-Lepage and Tovar (2011 and 2013). These works, based on the development of an index of well-being, revealed an overall increase in the level of well-being of the region’s residents between 1999 and 2006, but also highlighted significant differences in levels of well-being between different territories within the region; more specifically, in areas where well-being is highest, it is very high and, crucially, very much higher than in other areas. Finally, these works also showed that certain municipalities, particular in the north of Île-de-France, were in great difficulty, and underlined the emergence of clusters of ill-being in the region – all of which brings us back to the much debated question of the role of public action in the process of territorial solidarity.

It is therefore vital that the Greater Paris authorities take action to ensure that these socio-spatial divisions do not grow in Île-de-France, and to ensure that the principles of the French Republic – liberty, equality and fraternity – truly apply to everyone. This lies at the heart of the question of how to resolve the difficulties facing the region’s residents. How can decent housing conditions be ensured in the face of rising property prices and housing shortages? The difficulties facing residents of the Paris region cannot be ignored: for over decade, the

40,000 homes built annually has not matched population growth in the region (IAU-ÎdF, 2013). This has led to an increase in rents and halted the residential mobility of inhabitants of Île-de-France, particularly those who live in social housing; but it has also caused certain categories of household to move farther and farther away from the urban core in order to find affordable housing, or to move into areas with little in the way of amenities where housing costs are lower. This brings us to our second question: how can transport and travel conditions be improved for Île-de-France residents? What needs to be done to connect areas that are cut off from the rest of the conurbation, to adequately serve employment zones, and to provide the majority of the region's residents with decent access to employment? Among other things, this means ensuring good transport conditions for residents in each and every territory that makes up the Paris region.

2.2. Reconciling day-to-day mobility and international attractiveness

Recent studies have underlined the discomfort faced by residents of the Paris region in their day-to-day travel, caused in particular by the high number of connections required, overcrowding in vehicles, heat levels, and uncertainty regarding journey times (see, for example, Bouéroux *et al.*, 2010). Other works have shown that the amount of time that Île-de-France residents spend travelling is higher than in other regions in France, even though the distances covered are shorter (Baccaini *et al.*, 2007; Cour des Comptes, 2010). Indeed, it would appear that Paris is the second most congested city¹⁵ in France, after Marseille. Its average level of congestion is apparently 34%, rising to 71% during the morning rush hour. A report by the French national court of auditors, the Cour des Comptes (2010), noted that, on average, day-to-day travel takes up 20 minutes more per working day for residents of the Paris region than those in other French regions (in 2008, 1 h 24 min compared to 1 h 04 min).

These difficulties are largely a result of the transport policies implemented over the last few decades in Île-de-France and the lack of investment in transport. The transport measures adopted since the 1970s have generally favoured radial links into the centre of Paris (Orfeuil and Weil, 2012; Desjardins *et al.*, 2013). They have not kept up with changes in the lifestyles and mobility habits of the region's residents – the latter of which are partly due to the process of periurbanization and the shifting of jobs away from city centres (Aguilera *et al.*, 2010). Neither have they anticipated or accommodated the public transport needs of workers, despite visible signs of saturation on the various networks. In Île-de-France, only a quarter of the economically active population works in their municipality or (within the city of Paris) municipal *arrondissement* of residence, while another quarter works close by¹⁶ (IAU-ÎdF, 2013). These figures mask significant differences, not just between various categories of the working population, but also between different areas of Île-de-France. Certain *départements*¹⁷ or municipalities contain more jobs than inhabitants (such as Val-de-Marne or Seine-Saint-Denis) and/or certain highly specific categories of jobs. These disparities generate large numbers of journeys within the region. Executives and those employed in what INSEE, the French statistics office, calls “intermediate professions” travel the greatest distances to work, respectively 11.7 km and 11 km in 2006.

¹⁵ A city is considered to be congested if the average speed of travel of vehicles is less than or equal to 70% of the speed limit imposed (study conducted by the company TomTom from April to June 2012).

¹⁶ Here, “close by” means no more than two municipalities (or municipal *arrondissements*) away from the respondent's municipality (or municipal *arrondissement*) of residence (2005 census).

¹⁷ A *département* is an administrative division roughly equivalent to an English county. The Île-de-France region has 8 *départements* arranged in 3 concentric rings: Paris in the centre; Hauts-de-Seine, Val-de-Marne, and Seine-Saint-Denis in the inner ring; and Essonne, Yvelines, Val-d'Oise, and Seine-et-Marne in the outer ring.

Today, it is an established fact that there is a spatial disconnect between the transport networks, the location of jobs and the location of workers in the Paris region (Korsu *et al.*, 2007; Gobillon and Selod, 2007). The average distance travelled by workers in the Paris region in 2006 was 10.3 km, but this figure rises to 18 km for workers who live in the *département* of Seine-Saint-Denis (which covers Paris's north-eastern inner suburbs and includes part of Charles de Gaulle Airport) (IAU-ÎdF, 2013) and has increased significantly for manual workers, whose mobility levels are comparable to those of executives, with an average distance that currently stands at 10.6 km.

In addition to the difficulties that this generates on a daily basis for Île-de-France residents, these figures directly raise the question of unequal access to employment and the way in which isolated areas are managed. It is also linked to the issue of the region's global competitiveness. Historically, Paris has been perceived as a city with a high-performing transport network. The travel problems highlighted above could well have consequences on decisions to set up business in the region (see section 1.2.2) and, to a certain extent, impede Île-de-France's economic development. The regional council and the state have sought solutions to these problems with their respective projects to build new transport infrastructures. However, the two bodies did not have exactly the same view of what the key priorities for the capital region should be, and ultimately did not share the same vision and objectives, at least at the start of the debate on "Greater Paris".

The state, with its plan for an automatic orbital "super metro", above all wanted to make sure that Paris maintained its position as a leading global city. The aim of the "Réseau Grand Paris" was to connect all of the region's major strategic employment hubs, and connect these hubs to the rest of the world. The regional council, on the other hand, was more focused on the sustainable development of Île-de-France and reducing inequalities. Its "Arc Express" transport plan sought above all to create a more interconnected transport network and improve travel conditions for the region's residents.

These two opposing visions for the development and planning of the region came head to head during the Greater Paris debate. This explains the drama and difficulties that both protagonists had to overcome in order to come to an agreement. The clashes between the two were ultimately resolved, resulting in a historic cooperative agreement between the state and the region regarding the route of the future transport network, which more or less combined the "Arc Express" and "Réseau Grand Paris" projects to give the "Grand Paris Express" project. One well-publicized point of contention did, however, remain, namely the issue of how the Plateau de Saclay (a science and technology cluster around 20 km to the south-west of Paris) will be served and, above all, uncertainty regarding the scale of the proposed "Near east of Paris" section of line (*cf.* map in Préfecture de Paris et d'Île-de-France, 2011), which was barely mentioned by local stakeholders and/or the media during the debates that followed this historic agreement. This is significant because the potential existence of this section of line will have a major impact on efforts to rebalance the accessibility of jobs between the east and west of the inner suburbs (Beaucire and Drevelle, 2013).

Underlying all these analyses is the question of the effects induced by new transport infrastructures. For example, the fact that new stations risk pushing up land prices nearby cannot be ignored. New services will have consequences on location choices for businesses and populations by modifying the criteria considered when making their decisions. The distribution of economic activities within Île-de-France could be modified, as could the socio-spatial structure of the region. The whole question is therefore whether the new inequalities that could emerge with the "Grand Paris Express" project will be greater or lesser than the ones that exist already and which these policies seek to reduce. Similarly, it must not be

forgotten the question of transport is intimately linked to other issues, such as the quality of life for the region's residents and the way in which the impact of human activity on the natural environment in Île-de-France is managed.

2.3. Satisfying the desire for nature

The environmental dimension has been present in discussions led by local stakeholders, particularly within Île-de-France regional council and Paris city council. It also occupied a prominent role in the International Consultation on Greater Paris, where certain proposals from teams of architects and urban planners emphasized this dimension. In particular, the Dutch team MVRDV¹⁸ drew up scenarios that presented Greater Paris as a green and compact city. These proposals are very much in keeping with the spirit of the times.

For indeed French society has become greener (Bourdeau-Lepage, 2013). This phenomenon is reflected in the growing enthusiasm for green, environmentally friendly cities that has been expressed, for example, through the creation of associations that seek to raise awareness of environmental issues or protect certain species of plants and animals (Bourdeau-Lepage, 2013), or, as Torre and Bourdeau-Lepage (2013) remind us, through the rise in urban agriculture in Île-de-France and the creation of shared gardens within the urban area. In this way, residents of the Paris region seem to be aspiring to a new form of closeness to nature and are concerned about the effects of their actions on the environment, becoming a kind of *homo qualitus* eager to satisfy their desire for nature.

III - Governance: interaction between stakeholders and a question of scale

The implementation of a strategy capable of combining economic development, a global role, the reduction of inequalities and an improvement in living conditions requires an efficient organization of governance in the Île-de-France region. This central question is the third major challenge for Greater Paris. It is linked to the idea that Paris cannot develop within its current – extremely tightly drawn – boundaries. This challenge calls for a mode of organization that enables a more harmonious and efficient management of public action at a sufficiently large scale, which goes beyond current administrative divisions and ensures both the economic development and the social progress of the capital region as a coherent ensemble of internal and external interactions. This issue is not altogether new, and indeed has been raised on several occasions in recent decades (Bellanger, 2013).

Paris is the capital of a highly centralized state, the organization of which has been the subject of many disputes. Indeed, the history of Paris is peppered with conflicts – of varying degrees of violence – with central government (such as the Paris Uprising of 1832, the June Days Uprising of 1848 or the Paris Commune in 1871). The relationship between the Paris urban area and the state has always been a complicated and ambivalent one (Bellanger, 2010). Throughout the 20th century, oppositions have primarily concerned the planning of the French capital and the surrounding region, as well as its mode of government. What is more, the current Greater Paris project is producing conflicts that are the direct descendants of those that

¹⁸ The name of the team is derived from the initials of three architects: Vissy **M**ass, Jacob **V**an **R**ijs and Nathalie **D**e **V**ries.

have marked the history of this strategic territory. Let us not forget that the reforms of 1961 and 1964, which brought an end to the “Greater Paris” created during the Belle Époque, “sanctioned the conversion of the state into a centralized, dirigiste planning authority” (Bellanger, 2013: 57).

At the start of the procedure to revise the Schéma Directeur de la Région Île-de-France (SDRIF: Master Plan for the Île-de-France Region), a document that predated the Greater Paris debate, the state made its position clear, wishing to add its recommendations to the SDRIF dossier sent by Île-de-France regional council for referral to the French Council of State (Conseil d'État). This reaction led to one of the region's first contestations on this subject. The Greater Paris project announced by Nicolas Sarkozy in June 2007 at Charles de Gaulle Airport revived the controversy over the state's role in the planning of the capital region with even greater intensity. It instantly put the question of the best mode of governance for Île-de-France back on the agenda and rekindled old fears at the regional council concerning the state's interference in the management of its affairs. But the discussions that followed were not restricted to the state and the region alone; on the contrary, they were to involve a large number of stakeholders.

3.1. A diverse range of stakeholders...

It is not just Paris city council, Île-de-France regional council and the state – represented by the French President, his ministers and the prefect for Paris and the Île-de-France region – that have made their voices heard, but also the Société du Grand Paris (the company set up to design and build the Grand Paris Express network), Paris Métropole (a mixed syndicate of local authorities that is a forum for discussion of the issues surrounding Greater Paris), the Atelier International du Grand Paris (a public interest group tasked with researching, developing, promoting and coordinating action linked to the Greater Paris project), existing intercommunalities (indirectly elected bodies for intermunicipal cooperation), departmental councils, and some 400 municipal councils.

To this list of protagonists can be added the following: STIF (Syndicat des Transports d'Île-de-France, the public transport authority for the Paris region); public and private companies such as RATP (the public transport operator in Paris), SNCF (the French national rail operator), RFF (which owns the national rail infrastructure), Veolia and Suez; social-housing (HLM) offices; intermunicipal syndicates for managing services such as water provision, refuse collection and transport; civil-society stakeholders; and architects and urban planners such as Roland Castro. The debate also involves local associations, researchers, and academics. This diverse range of political and institutional stakeholders (at local, regional, national and international level) with varied, and often opposing, objectives makes decision-making and the emergence of a consensus even more complicated.

3.2. ... with sometimes divergent interests

The variety of stakeholders involved has also resulted in the production of some colourful scenarios for the future of the Paris region, because if there is one thing that Greater Paris has sparked, it is the imagination of the private and public players involved in the debates. The International Consultation on Greater Paris, launched in June 2008 by Nicolas Sarkozy, is an illustration of the different possible visions of the future for Île-de-France in terms of urban planning and development.

But there is really nothing surprising in this abundance of ideas. Given the highly composite nature of Île-de-France, there cannot be just one single scenario for the future of the region. Not all Parisians share the same preferences or defend the same interests, and nor do they all have the same political views, the same goals or the same vision of life in society. They do not all live in the same conditions, either, and similarly are not all faced the same difficulties. This diversity with regard to living conditions and aspirations can be a problem when it comes to reconciling interests that are sometimes incompatible and building a consensus around a common project.

This in turn raises the issue of governance processes – a subject that takes on quite a specific meaning here as, among the different components of the debate on Greater Paris, the precise forms of future governance are currently under discussion and constitute a major issue for many stakeholders (Subra, 2012; Weil 2010). For example, certain elected officials feel threatened in their long-term functions and fear they may have to relinquish some of their powers – especially with regard to housing – and are wary of the creation of a particularly labyrinthine form of territorial organization.

3.3. Governance: merely a question of boundaries?

Governance is therefore a highly political issue. The fundamental nature of this issue explains why discussions on the design of a “new form of governance” in Île-de-France have to a large extent focused on the perimeter of metropolitan action and consequently on the prerogatives of any future metropolitan authority. The jousting between stakeholders involved in public life that followed the presentation of the Dallier report or the report of the Balladur Committee, for instance, bear witness to this. However, few studies have focused on how to initiate a dynamic coordination process between the public, private and voluntary sectors, each with very different resources, within the Paris region. And yet this is exactly the outcome to be expected when coordination is placed at the heart of the definition of territorial governance.

As we have seen, governance is not only the result of actions taken by local authorities or by the state. As Christian Lefèvre (2009) has pointed out, alongside the system of public stakeholders are what he calls “economic organizations”. These are major stakeholders whose decisions have a significant impact on the construction of harmonious living conditions in the Paris region. Businesses, and large groups in particular, play a key role in guiding the development of the region, not least through their choices of location, or by defending their interests with regard to transport, housing and retail. Residents of Île-de-France, in choosing their place of residence, and to a lesser extent by voting and joining associations, also contribute directly or indirectly to the social and territorial development of their region.

These factors go a long way to explaining the successive twists and turns that have occurred in recent years. They raise questions about how best to move towards a form of governance that enables consensus and serves the common good. Is the state really the stakeholder best placed to build this dynamic? When it abolished the Seine *département* (which covered Paris and 80 inner-suburban municipalities) in 1964, did it not put an abrupt end to a first taste of a Greater Paris that could have been extended to the outer suburbs? Will the creation of a “Greater Paris metropolis”¹⁹ be enough to ensure a consensual metropolitan government that will guarantee social cohesion and urban integration? Are the territorial stakeholders in the Paris region today ready to establish a metropolitan government? Can they overcome their political differences and mutual distrust? Nothing is certain, especially when we know that the

¹⁹ A *métropole* (“metropolis”) is a new form of intercommunality created for the largest urban areas in France.

bill for the creation of a “Greater Paris metropolis”, passed by the French National Assembly on 19 July 2014, has aroused strong opposition from many elected officials, especially from the Front de Gauche and the right, who are particularly opposed to the disappearance of the existing intercommunalities. Today, the future governance of Greater Paris is still uncertain and remains a challenge that must be met.

Conclusion

To conclude, one final observation must be made. The debate on Greater Paris is a microcosm of the key economic policy issues facing governments in the exercise of their functions. It highlights the dilemmas of public action in the very specific and particularly complex case of the Paris metropolitan area.

Accordingly, we can summarize the objective of the debate if we consider Greater Paris as the catalyst for the development of a shared vision for the future shape of the Île-de-France region. For the capital region, this means having an efficient form of governance that will enable it to maintain its position in the world and be competitive and attractive while also providing its residents with a high level of well-being, respecting the environment, and reducing socio-spatial inequalities.

This raises the question of what assets are present in Greater Paris today, and what assets are currently being created. Will these assets be enough for the Paris metropolitan area to maintain its present position within international urban networks? The history of world cities is made of rises, falls and plateaux. One thing that major cities that have survived socio-economic and political changes often have in common is their level of diversity (Hohenberg and Lees, 1995; Bourdeau-Lepage and Huriot, 2005). A diverse city seems to be a guarantee of stability and attractiveness, particularly within the current globalization processes, where urbanization economies are becoming more widespread globally and where localization economies seem to have become omnipresent. Will Greater Paris’s diversity enable the French capital region to retain the position it enjoys today, in a world where the geography of economic and political power is undergoing radical change?

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