Alain Bourdin *Editor*

Major French Cities facing Metropolization

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Acknowledgments

Introduction

Urban Studies encompasses a wide range of disciplines. Some examine events which "happen in the city," others study the processes which transform cities, and others consider the city and its definition as a subject (Farias and Bender 2009; McCann 2016; Robinson 2022). We have chosen to frame our approach within this third perspective.

In recent decades, the study of the processes which transform cities has dominated. This has been done through the study of planning (Rydin et al. 2022), economic development (Scott and Soja 1996; Veltz 2002), the transformation of the urban social space (including studies on gentrification) (Hamnett 2003, 2008) urban renewal, major urban projects (Flyvbjerg et al. 2003), and the changing uses of the city, for example, in terms of mobility (Offner 2022). One analytical framework and one theory have both played a central role in the studies carried out, particularly in recent times. These are metropolization (itself associated with globalization as a general framework) and the theory of the neoliberal city, which is actually a theory of neoliberal urbanism (Harvey 2006; Pinson 2020).

Much less attention has been paid to the subject of the "city" itself. Most of the time, statistical definitions in terms of population (UN) and/or employment (France) or very simple distinctions have been used, i.e., the city and the urban area (Choay 1994) or the city and the suburbs. The concept of the right to the city according to Lefebvre was based on a definition of the city which was linked to daily life and a centrality which would then open up other opportunities, but its users have not really retained this aspect. More refined typologies are few and far between and, for example, the one developed by Peter Hall (1998) is largely historical. However, the wide range of circumstances which can be described as urban is considerable. In a landmark paper, Brenner and Schmid (2013) showed that the concept of urban population used by the UN no longer had a precise meaning. Cities are not differentiated simply by their population or their functions, but by a wide range of factors which result in very different situations on all levels, including social functioning, culture, relationship to the environment, etc., not only on a global scale but also on a national scale.

This is why classifications and combinations of classifications are not sufficient (Bardet and Healy 2015), even when they try to take into account the relationship between the different areas which are being ranked, as in the case of the Mori Foundation's Global Power Cities Index which ranks cities by measuring the balance between their different functions. Defining types of cities in a more qualitative approach inspired by the Weberian ideal-type approach, which makes it possible to define urban "personalities," can make a significant contribution to understanding these specific characteristics. When Saskia Sassen defined the global city (1991), she presented a type of city (rare) but, even though she has also reasoned in other more social and cultural terms, she favors an approach based on globalization and its economic dimension in particular, and this is even clearer in the case of those who follow her line of reasoning, particularly in order to draw up rankings (Global Power Cities Index or GaWC Globalization and world cities research Network, Loughborough University, Great Britain) in that they avoid typologies and seek instead to classify cities in terms of their presence and power in the general process of globalization.[1]

This produces rankings which may increase attractiveness or competition but do not offer real opportunities for comparison. However, as most of the founders of the Social Sciences (for example, in Europe Max Weber, Émile Durkheim for sociology, Paul Vidal de la Blache for geography) affirm, comparison is a major tool of analysis in Human Sciences. This is not based on a term-by-term comparison or on a closed grid, as is usually done by planners, but on an "inventory of differences."[2] The challenge is therefore to develop a line of questioning which allows the comparison to be made using the approach outlined by Marcel Détienne (2008), i.e., the creation of conceptual tools to "compare the incomparable." It is this approach (which, by the way, also requires defining what is known as comparability) which is the most productive. The oscillation within which research then takes place was defined in very simple terms in a private conversation by a consumer anthropologist working primarily in China and sub-Saharan Africa: "I go from feeling that everything is specific in one culture to feeling that cultures and people are similar on a global scale." The creation of types is therefore very useful because it facilitates comparison within the same type or between types.

When using this approach, a common thread must always be chosen. This choice constitutes a kind of hypothesis, and the results which are obtained by using it validate or invalidate this hypothesis. In contemporary literature, cultural criteria have often been chosen (e.g., Harvey Molotch and Davide Ponzini (2019) with the concept of "Arab" urban (even if this term refers to the Arabian Gulf) and even more so criteria linked to economic activity (port cities) or criteria which are more widely used but which are ultimately very much linked to the economy (creative cities).

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[1] As part of the DATAR scheme in France (adopted by the EU), a mixed formula has been developed which combines level criteria (especially in metropolitan functions) with a typology which gives importance to the relationship between the different criteria.

[2] The expression comes from the historian Paul Veyne, who used it as the title of his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France in 1975.

The type of metropolis is of particular interest because it is linked to metropolization, i.e., to a central process of globalization and the evolution of cities. Unfortunately, studies are most often focused on the process of metropolization in cities and very little on the city which metropolization produces. This is the case, for example, in the *Handbook of Megacities and Megacity Regions* (Labbé and Sorensen 2020).

Many cities are metropolized, which in the case of rich countries is almost all of them, but there is a type of city which is defined by the fact that it is very much linked to the metropolization process. This definition of metropolises remains vague. No city is the pure product of metropolization—even Dubai (Ibrahim 2021)—and so a framework of analysis must be created which allows differentiations to be made between cities which are metropolises, and therefore constitute an urban type, and those which are metropolized without being metropolises.

It should be added that in recent years, we have seen a rise in popularity within urban analysis of concepts referring to morality and ethics. The most typical example is that of the just city (Fainstein 2011). This leads to questioning not processes but urban configurations. It could be extended to the concept of urbanity, which (however it is defined) does not concern a process but a situation or configuration which combines tangible characteristics (urban form, site, density) and economic, political, and social characteristics. The types are a means of thinking about configurations.

The aim of the book is therefore to characterize a type of city, i.e., the metropolis.

Using an initial approach, it can be seen that the type of metropolis is characterized by a set of features which have very little to do with its size. In this sense, it is necessary to distinguish between metropolises and *megacities*. If we want to define these different characteristics, we can bring together elements related to facilities, accessibility, and economic power with others which relate more to the capacity for innovation and, more generally, to the knowledge society and economy, all of which demonstrate the process of metropolization, as well as elements of daily life and, more generally, elements which relate to the urban experience. To live in a metropolis is not only to benefit from more urban amenities, but also to live in a different way—in particular, in a world which is much more diverse in every respect (Tasan-Kok et al. 2014).

Recent literature stresses the power of cities in the face of states and, more generally, their key role in the process of globalization/metropolization. One category of cities plays an essential role: those which are able to generate metropolization, stop flows, and control their own globalization. Metropolization involves flows (information, goods, people), and in particular the more sophisticated flows, such as finished products with high added value, unusual services, strategic industrial products, high-level intellectual and artistic products, talent, etc. A metropolis has all of this at its disposal, which makes it capable, for example, of producing major events which enable it to capture a greater quantity of these flows, or of attracting the headquarters of multinationals or their research and development departments, of paying a famous architect (Alaily-Mattar 2020) to design their major facilities, or simply of

having the Curtis Institute[3] or the Hermès stores. In the context of the fierce compe-
tition which characterizes contemporary cities, the rationale of the hunter-gatherer
is not enough. To gain or keep these advantages, cities must become proactive, and
to do so, they must become stakeholders—a question which is at the heart of the
issues raised by Max Weber (1958) and recently taken up again with regard to the
European city (Le Galès and Bagnasco 2010).

However, according to Georg Simmel (1903), another reason for identifying
the metropolis as a specific object is social and cultural. In this respect, the met-
ropolitan configuration differs greatly from that of other cities. Simmel analyzed
the dialectical relationship (even if this word did not belong in his vocabulary) and
therefore the relationship of reciprocal creation which is established between the
functional characteristics specific to the metropolis and the individual and collec-
tive behaviors which interact with these characteristics. He broke away from sepa-
rating the city as a material, economic, and political phenomena from the
inhabitants and their daily life as content, which often still remains an automatic
approach among researchers. The division of labor, the triumph of the monetary
economy, the dominance of calculation and measurement, the development of
personal freedom expressed in lifestyles, the complexity and diversity of social
life with the intensification of "nervous stimulation," but also the distance and
reticence in social relations with the right to distrust and a blasé attitude are all
some of the elements which combine to form a metropolitan "mentality" and cul-
ture. Even though the evolution of metropolises (in particular on an economic and
technological level) goes beyond Simmel's observations, the substance of his rea-
soning remains very enlightening in relation to present situations: intense demon-
strations of solidarity or camaraderie are now set against a background of
generalized mistrust; "nervous stimulation" is nothing other than mental stress
and the multiple cognitive biases which mark metropolitan life, with the "weari-
ness of the self" (Ehrenberg 1998) which this can entail. In addition to the gener-
alization of measurement which he already described, the generalized abstraction
(which he often called intellectualization) also leads to difficulty in setting the
boundaries between the virtual and the reality which we experience today. At the
same time, creativity has become a characteristic of metropolises, as he predicted.

In addition, there is the spatial dimension which is partly addressed by the con-
cept of *urban regions*. While small- and medium-sized cities still function in simple
arrangements around a center/periphery main axis, the spatial organization of
metropolises is much more complex. This is one of the points which François
Ascher (1995) wished to emphasize by introducing the term Metapolis in order to
explain that we cannot simply reduce urban developments to the growth of cities,
but that there are urban configurations (particularly on a metropolitan scale) which
make a radical break (and not just in terms of demographic size or the space occu-
pied) with previous configurations. In this way, the analysis of the area—here

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[3]A music school in Philadelphia where many of today's great musicians trained, including the
Chinese pianists, Lang Lang and Yuja Wang.

defined by the daily functional interdependence measured in terms of employment[4]—of one of the French metropolises (Strasbourg) shows that it is divided into three zones of roughly equal size: the forest, the agricultural countryside, and the urbanized areas. This is a simplification because within the agricultural zone there is a vineyard which functions differently from the rest, a complex network of small towns, leisure areas and a port area shaped by its location near the border (Germany is on the other side of the Rhine), etc. On another scale, Hong Kong and the Pearl River also have very great regional diversity.

The classification of a metropolis does not depend primarily on size, nor does it apply only to world cities. If we describe a metropolis as any city which has the capacity to control its own metropolization in a significant way, this last term becomes the central problem of the theory, because what is significant? The debate is ongoing, but we can in any case affirm that there are several scales of metropolis and that we can better understand the notion of metropolis and its usefulness if we do not focus on the main world cities, which are perhaps "hyper" metropolises, or on certain supercities, which are not metropolises.

This definition of the metropolis implies the existence of regulation, organization, and mobilization mechanisms so that the city can be proactive, at least partially, in controlling its own destiny.[5] This is why a number of supercities are not metropolises. But the main characteristic of the metropolis, which is true of all cities but much more (and with greater speed) of ones like these, is to be always in motion. They thrive on the flow of those arriving and departing and are constantly reconfigured through planning, projects, and events. Hence the interest in processes. However, the movement takes place in an urban system subject to negentropic forces which allow it to regain its equilibrium. Without this balance, the metropolis breaks down. The use of city types helps us to understand this balance and the negentropic forces.

This is why understanding metropolises requires being aware of this movement. We are putting forward the hypothesis that the metropolis exists due on the one hand to the actions which make the metropolis and on the other in the practices and perceptions/representations of those who make it, and that these two readings should constantly be set against each other. In other words, the actions which make the object and the perceptions which one has of the object form part of the object. The epistemological and philosophical implications of this position are not going to be developed here. It implies at the very least that the actor, the action, and its product cannot be easily separated and that the researcher is part of his or her subject in that what the research reports on is not the subject but the relationship between the researcher and his or her subject. Here, we find an approach represented in particular by Richard Rorty (1982) and which leads an author like Flyvbjerg (2001) (and

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[4] Urban areas (which became catchment areas of urban centers in 2020) calculated by the French Institute of Statistics.

[5] Some writers would call it governance. We have not done so, as the term "regulation" seems more appropriate to us because of its less political and more general character, but we are not turning this into a debate.

Sennett too) to think that research in Social Sciences (and particularly in the field of urbanism) must produce ethical rather than scientific truths.

Why France and Not Europe?

The notion of a European city can be criticized, just like for example that of the "Latin American city," but many researchers have recognized its usefulness (Le Galès 2011), which becomes clear when it comes to comparing it to an American or Chinese city. Some, like J. Levy (2004), have developed a theory about European cities. However, it would be a mistake to consider that there is a single model for European cities when their diversity is obvious, as well as to forget that they have a number of common features in terms of their history, their internal organization and the networks in which they belong, their relationship with surrounding regions, and the public policies which are applied to them.

Among European cities, the category of "European metropolis" is essential. Apart from London and Paris, whose size and power far exceed those of the other cities, Amsterdam, Berlin, Madrid, Copenhagen, Barcelona, and Vienna are among the top 20 in the Mori Foundation's 2021 ranking. All of them are characterized by a strong identity linked to history, a sense of heritage and a specific urbanism which has been marked by European interaction. The experience which each of us can have of these cities[6] and other less highly ranked cities (Milan, Lyon, Zürich, Marseille, Turin, Munich, Manchester, Glasgow, Liverpool, Bordeaux, Antwerp, Rotterdam, to name but a few Western European cities, none of which is the capital of a country) makes it possible to identify a "profile" of the city in that all of them have a long history which is reflected in the organization of their space—notably with central districts which pre-date the twentieth century and are often much older. They are all highly metropolitans, even if some of them are only just now recovering from a period of serious turmoil linked to the major industrial transformations of the late twentieth century in particular. They all have a specific local society with its own characteristics and a powerful local power and are rooted in a strong tradition. If you adopt J. Levy's approach, it should be added that they all have a very high coefficient of urbanity (you can walk through them, there are many places to meet and interact, public space plays an essential role in the organization of the city). Exploring the European metropolis not as a global sub-city (which rankings tend to do) but as a specific urban type is therefore of interest.

In the whole panoply of European cities, French cities have a number of specific characteristics. Some of these are unique to France, while others are shared with regions in other countries: southern French cities share characteristics with those in Italy and Spain, and those in eastern France with cities in Rhineland Germany.

The most interesting aspect is precisely the question of metropolises. One study has been very successful. It was called *Paris et le désert français [Paris and the French Desert]* (Gravier 1947). It reflected a belief—which went over and above the facts put forward—that everything was concentrated in Paris, to the detriment of

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[6] This type of awareness must be taken seriously in research because it is particularly "falsifiable" in Popper's sense by peers, since there are hundreds of practitioners from various social sciences who visit the same European cities.

other cities. In fact, the attractiveness of Paris was considerable, the rate of urban-ization was lower in France than in comparable European countries (Great Britain, Germany, Italy), the French regional capitals were less populated, and there were very few large industrial cities comparable to Birmingham, Manchester, Milan, or the Ruhr urban region. As Fernand Braudel (2011) pointed out, France belatedly remained a rural and even agricultural country. The French government was suffi-ciently concerned about this in the 1960s to give priority to the development of "balanced metropolises" as part of its regional planning policy.[7] All of them are among the current metropolises (in the legal sense[8]) and all of them benefit from a fast connection (high-speed train) to Paris and, to a lesser extent, to each other. Pierre Veltz (2012) is of the opinion that, together with Paris, they constitute a single metropolis: the metropolis of France. French cities were late into entering interna-tional, European, and national competition and were protected and greatly assisted by the State, at least until recently. This set of circumstances makes them "belated" metropolises which have become players in the metropolization process long after many comparable cities in European countries. Nevertheless, they remain European and we cannot overlook them as European examples.

So, the question arises: what do these recent French metropolises teach us about European metropolises and about the metropolitan phenomenon as something other than metropolization? This is the question which this book aims to answer.

It does so by relying on a fairly large-scale research program called the Platform for Urban Projects and Strategies (POPSU Plateforme des Projets et Stratégies Urbaines).[9] This program is itself guided by French public policies, and it is neces-sary to explain what nature this influence takes.

In the 1980s, the French parliament passed a series of laws which allowed for the transfer of a significant part of the legal powers of the state to local authorities (regions, departments, and communes). France had more than 36,000 communes (still 35,416 in 2020) and, after various attempts, successive governments aban-doned ambitious projects to redraw the communal map (as did several European countries). Another strategy therefore prevailed. The formation of federations of communes called "communities" was encouraged (financially) or required. To start with, these[10] were often quite small (a few thousand inhabitants outside the major population centers) and their powers were limited. As a result of legislation and

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[7] In 1964, following a report carried out (in 1963) by two French geographers (Michel Rochefort and Jean Hautreux), eight agglomerations or urban regions were designated as "balanced metropo-lises": Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing, Nancy-Metz, Strasbourg, Lyon-Saint-Étienne-Grenoble, Aix-Marseille, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Nantes-Saint-Nazaire. They were primarily regional capitals (all of them would host the headquarters of a region), but they were also intended to be open to inter-national competition.

[8] The laws of December 16, 2010 and January 27, 2014 created the status of metropolis.

[9] This program was developed in three stages: POPSU 1 (2004–2009), POPSU 2 (2010–2016), and POPSU 3 (2018–2022). Information about this program can be found at http://www.urbanisme-puca.gouv.fr/popsu-plate-forme-d-observation-des-projets-et-a288.html, as well as Wikipedia: https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popsu

[10] Which had to form a territory without any discontinuity.

government action, these federations grew and their powers increased. There came a time when all the significant agglomerations unified their "territory," i.e., all the communes which were strongly linked to the main commune through employment, supply, and access to services, as well as sometimes other elements of a sociological or cultural nature—for example, the existence of a historical territorial entity or what is called "pays" (country) in French but which is closer to the idea of "terroir." Many of these federations spontaneously associated the term metropolis with the name of the main commune. This denomination avoided losing the reputation of the central town while showing that what surrounded it added something extra. The term metropolis, which had been abandoned in the blur of the 1960s, came back to the fore, so much so that the State decided to use it to define a new status for federations of communes which would give more power to the federation and would be reserved for the main conurbations in France (at the outset there was talk of some 15). In relation to the question posed by this book, the ambiguity remains total because it associates cities which can be included (even modestly) among the European metropolises (Lyon, Lille, Marseille or even Toulouse, Bordeaux, Nantes, Strasbourg) with others which seem to belong to the category of "medium-sized cities" (Brest, Rennes, etc.). It got worse when the number of regions was reduced (2015); the list of metropolises[11] was extended to include regional capitals (Orléans, Dijon, etc.), cities which had lost their status as regional capitals (Metz, Clermont-Ferrand, etc.), and a few others (Tours, Nancy, etc.).

This ambiguity was what the POPSU program was confronted with. Initially, it wanted to study cities which were in the process of being built. This objective was the result of two decisions. The first, which took place in the 2000s, consisted in making architectural and urban design a subject of research like any other. In a context which was also that of the development of cognitive sciences and neurosciences, it was becoming increasingly difficult to accept that design was a "black box," even when it came to artistic or architectural design. The inspiration came in part from studies into management sciences which dealt with industrial design (in France, Midler's work (1995)) and which gave significant importance to the twofold process and organizational dimension of design. This led to questioning the whole notion of the project and resulted in a series of studies into architectural and urban projects in Europe.[12] But there are no projects without stakeholders (cf. above), and this led to a second decision: that of prioritizing the knowledge of the stakeholders involved in the urban fabric and collaborating with them. The aim was to understand the dynamics of the activity which produced the city, which in turn led to considering

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[11] Twenty-two in 2021, including 19 under common law, 2 with special status (Paris and Marseille), and 1 metropolis which is not a federation but a local authority (Lyon).

[12] L'élaboration des projets architecturaux et urbains en Europe [The development of architectural and urban projects in Europe]: Les acteurs du projet architectural et urbain (vol. 1), La conception en Europe (vol. 2), Les pratiques de l'architecture—comparaison européenne (vol. 3), Les maîtrise d'ouvrage en Europe (vol. 4) [the actors of the architectural and urban project (vol. 1), design in Europe (vol. 2), architectural practices—European comparison (vol. 3), project management in Europe (vol. 4)], Edited By Plan Construction et Ardchitecture – Eiroconception-Europan, Paris.

the relationship between the narrative and the activity and the performative function of language (Debrie and Desjardins 2021), as well as to an understanding of how the actor thinks about his activity. The urban project was then understood not as the design and realization of a program but as a relationship to a city in a process of change (Arab et al. 2022).

These objectives developed according to two constraints. On the one hand, local authorities did not want to be merely passive spectators of the research concerning them, but wanted instead to be involved at the very least in defining the mandate and possibly by working directly with researchers and specialists. On the other hand, the State was questioning the definition of metropolises. It was primarily a matter of creating a legal framework, but government organizations wanted to have access to research work which would clarify the characteristics and role of these new legal entities.

This had two consequences for the research program. The first was that the cities studied were always chosen from the list of those eligible for metropolitan status and then from the list of metropolises (in the legal sense), and the second was that the research programs were oriented toward themes which were more related to understanding the phenomenon of metropolization than to defining the metropolis as an urban type.

As a result, for the second series of research projects (POPSU 2), key themes were negotiated with the partner communities and researchers, and then, within the set of themes thus defined, each research team (in agreement with its local partner) chose two or three questions which formed the basis of its research project. The main themes retained after the negotiations were: the knowledge economy, metropolitan fragility (particularly social fragility), metropolitan regulations (beyond the traditional question of governance), sustainable development, stations, and transport hubs.[13] All the participating metropolises (researchers and decision-makers) (Rennes, Lille, Strasbourg, Lyon, Grenoble, Toulon, Marseille, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Nantes) chose one of their research activities in the field of the knowledge economy, and this was certainly the subject which most interested local partners.

It was clear from this issue, and to a lesser extent from the others, how important it is for cities to question globalization and its effects, and how strong the process of metropolization is in most of the cities studied.

As a result, the purpose of this book is different from that of the research program which serves as its source, even though it relies primarily (but not exclusively) on data from that program.

In the search for a definition of metropolises, and more precisely of French metropolises as a special case in the area of European metropolises, what common thread should be adopted, avoiding as much as possible the confusion between legal status and type in the eyes of Human and Social Sciences?

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[13] Remember, according to a method also used for POPSU 3, it was important to find issues which were of concern to the city involved and the investigation of which could involve local researchers. The coherence of the whole was a secondary objective.

Defining the characteristics of French metropolises and their specific nature in relation to the European model using a series of metropolization criteria could be this common thread. The ideal objective would be to define their ability to control metropolization for each of these criteria and to draw out an ideal type for the metropolis. However, this last objective would mean setting up substantial research facilities, particularly with regard to the effects of public policies. This was not part of the objectives of the POPSU program, since official French sources concerning the evaluation of public policies are scarce, especially when it comes to documenting the issue of controlling metropolization, and the research itself is rarely considered in these terms. It is easier to analyze French metropolises on the basis of a series of metropolization criteria, and existing statistical sources make this possible, but this is what rankings do, and we risk losing two essential aspects. The first is that of totality: a type of city, in this case the French metropolis, is a whole whose different dimensions interact constantly. It can, for example, combine a technopole area, which is an economic powerhouse, with an area in decline where poverty is concentrated. There is also the qualitative aspect. As Simmel showed, a city is also an atmosphere, a mentality, a spirit, which is only poorly recorded in statistical data.

A theme-based approach remains unavoidable, however, insofar as a city is divided into specialized sectors—into the economy, public policies, and society. It is also a combination of structures with differentiated areas, monuments, complexes, parks and empty spaces, wastelands and shantytowns, or areas for the traveler community.

The rationale of the research program to which this book refers (POPSU), which strongly involves local stakeholders (specialists and elected officials at the very least) and researchers, leads to finding a solution as regards local policy agendas. We have therefore chosen to organize it around the themes which have dominated local policies in metropolises over the last few decades, while ensuring that the themes selected have been the subject of strong research involvement. In addition, each time we wanted to include an overview presentation, including a critical dimension, the analysis of a case or a very specific question, as well as a "lateral leap" presented by a writer from another European country which would feed the thinking process with regard to the French situation. Each part will be the subject of a discussion in the rest of the book.

We have selected five major themes: networks, economic development, social issues, urban form, and the ecological and digital transition.

The oldest is certainly that of networks. Without going too far back in history (like Dominique Lorrain (2005) did regarding the distribution of water) remember that when Électricité de France (the public company in charge of producing and distributing electricity) was created after the Second World War, two principles were laid down—namely, generalized interconnection (with central regulation installed in Paris) and the connection of all points of consumption to the network, even the most isolated, in the name of Republican equality. This program was achieved, with very few exceptions. This is one example among others of a two-fold approach—that of the networks and that of regional equality ensured by the State. Electricity and water supply networks (and later telephone networks) were very

busy after the Second World War and did not involve the cities any more than the countryside. But this goes hand in hand with a prevailing model of urban development in France which favors everything which precedes construction, in other words, planning. There is a whole profession of planners (mainly public, dependent on the State or local authorities). One of the aspects of the developer's work is the development of networks (roads, sanitation, energy, telecommunications, district heating, etc.). Hence the concept of network urbanism (Dupuy 1991) which leads to the scientific and professional discipline of urban engineering (Allemand 2099). At the same time, this model is characterized by the existence of large private companies (particularly firms specialized in drinking water management) which offer an ever-wider range of urban services. They were particularly active in the field of public transport at the time of the development of tramways and subways. What these companies offer are transport *networks*, and it is always on this scale that they (like the partner communities) think. These urban services multinationals have mainly operated in metropolises and their strong presence could almost be used as a defining criterion.

Remember that networks are both a tangible/functional element of the definition of the French metropolis—undoubtedly more so than in other countries—and a way of thinking, certainly emphasized by engineers, but also much more widely shared.

The second theme is that of the economy and local development. Most of the major metropolises in France have an industrial past. But until the decentralization laws of the 1980s (and even a little later), they did not really establish themselves as economic players. This suggests that the municipal authorities had little or no involvement in local development and the economy. The employers of large companies, even if they had genuine local roots in the most industrial regions, were above all involved in national negotiations with the State, with the latter imposing very tight regulations which limited competition between cities, as well as presumably their competitiveness. As a result, it was very rare, for example, for development coalitions to be formed which included local authorities, employers' associations, possibly employees' unions, and other stakeholders (such as universities), and which had a strong voice. The last few decades have seen the emergence of cities and more particularly metropolises as economic key players. Communities have acquired the tools and personnel necessary to intervene in economic issues, new compromises have been made, for example between socialist municipalities and local employers, and coalitions have been formed, while at the same time, as a result of European policies and the at least relative withdrawal of the State, competition between cities has developed. In this respect, the difference between metropolises and cities is clear. The former have entered more strongly into the national, European, and global competitive environment and have equipped themselves with all the necessary resources, while the others are having more difficulty, with the smallest often looking to benefit from more State aid.

The metropolises have taken steps toward economic development and, more recently, they have all turned toward the knowledge economy (Campagnac-Ascher 2015). In addition to the fact that this choice is very strongly pronounced in metropolises, it has the advantage of bringing with it an overall vision of the metropolis.

Even if the people in charge of creating the metropolis as a key player do not subscribe to the theories of Richard Florida (or are even unaware of them), they lean toward the creative city and the priority given to the "creative class" in terms of urban facilities. They attach major importance to cooperation between research and industry and therefore to the presence of laboratories and high-level higher education institutions with their researchers and students. They are organized to keep or welcome start-ups, a strong cultural activity, high quality educational establishments (at all levels), an airport, and if possible a TGV link of the highest possible standard, and those who have a historic center of great heritage quality are seeking to have it classified as a world heritage site.

The social question in metropolises is the third theme, which is quite paradoxical in nature. This is because, beyond the considerations which have just been mentioned (to put it simply, attracting talent and offering them the living conditions they want), no metropolis has really considered what a metropolitan society is, with its specific dynamisms, its flaws, etc. However, there is no doubt that social concerns have had a strong influence, but they always refer to State policies which concern all cities. These were concentrated on neighborhoods which were mainly located in metropolitan areas and were experiencing great difficulties as a result of twentieth-century housing policies, economic developments, and geopolitical and cultural factors. As already mentioned, by the end of the Second World War, the urban population was only about half that of the whole of France. It should be added that demographic change took place much earlier than in other countries and that the total population varied little.[14] The same was true for the urban population. However, a policy of social housing development was in place before 1914. It was severely disrupted by the war and only slowly picked up again (Gustiaux 2016). In short, after the 1939–1945 war, the population grew very rapidly and moved overwhelmingly to the cities, even though some of them had suffered heavy destruction. As a result, there was a very acute shortage of housing.[15] Consequently, large-scale solutions had to be found to house these new inhabitants. They were implemented relatively slowly, especially from the 1960s onward. But the buildings and neighborhoods created in this way aged badly, were very quickly abandoned by the most affluent part of their population and concentrated social problems, including unemployment, poverty, etc. From the end of the 1970s onward, the French government began to concern itself with this issue,[16] and during the decades which followed, state programs followed one another, focusing on social aspects (unemployment, training), on economic development (creation of free zones in social housing neighborhoods to attract businesses), and on improving housing. The State-run nature of the

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[14] Thirty-six million in 1846, 40 in 1896, 41.5 in the 1930s, 39 during the Second World War.

[15] In 1954, during a very harsh winter, a priest and hero of the resistance, Abbé Pierre, launched a radio appeal for the protection of the homeless, which influenced housing policies and gave birth to the Emmaus movement, which remains the main organization in France dedicated to poor housing and the homeless.

[16] Creation of the interministerial working group on housing and social life in 1977, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing was President of France.

policies did not prevent them from being interpreted locally, which led to quite large differences. In any event, it was the large urban areas which faced the most difficult situations and which were the focus of the greatest number of measures. This has led wider-scale larger-area local authorities to set up numerous teams dedicated to these measures, which were grouped together under the heading of urban policy making. These included social mix policies to combat segregation. This again was a national concern, supported in particular by the 1991 Urban Orientation Law and by the specific characteristics of metropolises being essentially due to the fact that segregation was more pronounced there than elsewhere,[17] and experiments designed to facilitate social diversity were more numerous and more significant.

Providing a welcome is another aspect of the social issue for metropolises. Insofar as they want to attract both residents and visitors, they try to become welcoming and therefore offer housing conditions (short or long term), facilities and services which may suit the different categories of desired newcomers, such as students, business executives, and tourists. This also concerns migrant populations and political refugees in particular who arrive in the largest metropolises, even if they are not wanted there. In fact, Lille, Marseille, and Lyon in particular (and of course Paris) are home to more than a hundred different nationalities and have to deal with community issues related to their great diversity, a situation which can be found in other European and North American metropolises.

The fourth theme is that of urban form. It manifests itself in metropolises in several ways. The first is through the complex developments which make up the majority of "urban projects" in France to this day. The Parisian agglomeration includes a good number of them, in particular La Défense, the Halles district, Paris Rive gauche, but also Lille (Euralille), Marseille (Euroméditerranée), Lyon (La Part Dieu and the Confluence), Nantes (Ile de Nantes), Montpellier (Antigone and Port Marianne), and others. These projects belong in part (Nantes, Marseille, Rouen, etc.) to the category of waterfront projects which exist all over the world, but this is not at all the case in other cities. Similar projects can be found in Spain, Germany, England, the Netherlands, Milan, etc. In these developments, the concern for urban form is always important and justifies the use of great architects and specialists in public space.

The theme of urban form also includes questions about the densely populated city and suburban areas. Here again, the phenomenon is not specifically metropolitan, but it is developing much more here than elsewhere. It is the subject of many questions and debates, both from the point of view of sustainability (with the high land consumption which it implies, the lengthening of networks and that of travel, which has an impact on the carbon footprint[18]) and from the sociological point of view. Some writers (Jacques Levy) tend to "demonize" those living in the suburbs, whereas others (Martin Vanier, Eric Charmes, etc.) put forward more nuanced or

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[17] The increase in segregation in metropolises is a matter of debate among researchers, and a recent study shows that the trend is not clear (see Hugo Botton et al. 2015).

[18] This point is highly controversial. See Marie-Hélène Massot and Jean-Pierre Orfeuil 2007.

even distinctly positive interpretations (Bourdin 2012). Case studies always focus on the periphery of metropolises and suburban regions, which question the urban form but also the social organization which is part of the definition of metropolises. Their specific nature in France and in Europe lies in the role which traces of the past play in their structuring, in particular in formerly rural towns or small cities with their very old roads and vestiges of agriculture.[19]

Finally, there is the question of city models or the organization of urban territories. The desirability of new cities, polycentrality, and the development of major public transport systems (metro) are issues specific to metropolises, as are tensions in the real estate market, whatever their causes (intensity of demand or factors more related to the financial impact of part of the urban production process).

The final theme is not covered much in this book as it has only emerged recently. It is in fact twofold. It is first of all the environment and more precisely combating global warming and its effects. French metropolises have been concerned with the environment for a long time—certainly for more than a decade. However, until recently, they have not developed specific local policies in this regard and have been part of State policies. This is no longer the case today, and the ongoing phase of the POPSU program allows the extent to which some of them want to give absolute priority to this field using a very wide range of initiatives to be measured. It also concerns the "digital revolution" and in particular the collection and management of urban data, including some personal data. In this field, the specific nature of metropolises is obvious, but here too, the definition of local policies (and not just variations on those of the State) and more generally their emergence as key players is recent.

In a way, this book stops at the moment when the "urban revolution" which will produce the city of tomorrow is developing. However, this will be done in relation to this strongly formed urban type which is the metropolis, which will be either a facilitator or an obstacle and which it is more necessary than ever to understand properly—and not just describe.

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[19] Think in particular of the vineyards in Bordeaux, Lyon, Nantes, Strasbourg, Aix-Marseille or, in all cases, of the historical horticultural belts which surrounded the metropolises and whose conquest by urbanization contributed to the organization of suburban spaces.

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Contents

Part I
Does the Knowledge Economy Make the Metropolis?

Alain Bourdin

Introduction

As has been said above, in France, cities, and in particular metropolises, have quite recently become indisputable economic key players. On this point, the laws of decentralization (from 1982 onwards) do not constitute a fully satisfactory point of reference. It is true that they give local authorities the legal skills which enable them to play this role, but in the past and for a long time, "key elected officials", with varying degrees of cooperation with local business community, have negotiated the major points of local development with the State (for example, the installation of a Ford factory in the Bordeaux area in 1970). However, decentralization has not miraculously provided municipalities with competent technical teams to coordinate the various local key players involved in economic activity and to become a genuine "city-actor" in this area. And these local key players (who were more focused on the Parisian aspect of their activity—even if there were solid partnerships in some places (in the North, in the East, in the ports) and even if institutions (chambers of commerce) had the task of developing these partnerships—needed to learn how to work together efficiently.

The chapter which opens this first part is an overview which deals with a moment which owes much to the questions which troubled local economic development officials at the turn of the 2010s, particularly regarding the importance given to the creative economy. Initially, we wanted to take stock of the role of the knowledge economy in French metropolises because it was at the center of the discussions taking place between those in charge, but without emphasizing the specific aspect of the production of new ideas. We have been presented with the importance of the notion of creativity, which is reflected in the success of Richard Florida and, in particular, of the (albeit uncertain) notion of the creative class (Florida 2002), which

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has been taken up by a number of polling organizations and research institutes both here and abroad. As the writers point out, French statistics have long been concerned with identifying the jobs which require the most autonomy and innovative skills and which are linked to metropolization[1]. The transition from ranking jobs by business sector (processing industries, catering, etc.) to ranking by function, five of which are defined as metropolitan (design/research, intellectual services, inter-company trade, management, culture/leisure), and then the identification of key jobs within these functions (executives and company managers with 10 or more employees) led to the identification of a specific category of individuals, over and above their jobs, who occupy them. However, although everyone knew that the cultural industries had economic weight, no one linked the presence of artists to development. There was even less talk of a "class" and its specific needs. Even if Florida did not gain many followers, the notion of the "creative city", which was also developed by other authors such as Charles Landry (2000), has taken hold in France in a rather novel way. As a result, an assessment of the impact of the knowledge economy in French metropolises involved developments concerning the creative economy, even if in the context of the year 2020, other concerns took the lead.

The Grenoble case study takes us in another direction, more directly related to the objective of the book, i.e. defining the metropolis as a form. This city, which benefited from excellent world rankings for creativity, had its resilience put under scrutiny following the 2008 crisis. Based on the analysis of relatively mediocre results, the author develops the idea of the technopolitan economy (so typical of Grenoble) weakening and considers its consequences. In other words, if an economy centered on innovation and globalization (the technopolitan economy) may have seemed (rightly or wrongly) to unify the metropolitan reality, it is no longer so. This raises the question of what the capacity of metropolises to influence their own metropolization through the economy actually means. This chapter also refers to the "creative class", which raises the question of its existence and its possible specifically French characteristics. This question is taken up in the third part of the book.

The "lateral leap" is provided by the third chapter, which was written by a team from the Polytechnic University of Milan.

Milan belongs to this category of metropolises, absent in France, which have great weight in their own country and in Europe and which exist on a global scale, but do not belong to the class of genuine world cities like London or Paris and are in a more equal relationship with other cities in their country. The Milanese team's kinship with authors who have influenced the analysis of recent regional economies (Bagnasco, Becattini, Camagni, etc.) is strong, and one of their contributions is to have worked on areas of the knowledge economy in order to question the technopolitan model: French developments such as the Grenoble peninsula or the Saclay plateau may mark the end of an era. In this regard, the authors state: "The multi-scalar Milan seems to highlight the beginning of a new phase of the urban metamorphosis process that followed the end of Fordism and post-Fordism…The

[1] See for example Philippe Julien (2002), but the first studies in this field are much earlier.