

From Paris to Greater Paris: An Old Project, a New Approach

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As the capital of France, the city of Paris is endowed with a special status due to its size and conurbation effect that are unequalled in the country. Nevertheless, the Parisian urban area remains split into numerous local authorities, joint inter-communal bodies and *quangos* that the Government said put a brake on economic development in the whole Ile-de-France Region and in the whole country. The 2010 local government reform of *métropoles* (larger cities and their urban areas) has given more responsibilities to their elected inter-communal councils, but it is not applicable to the Region of Ile-de-France. Rather than an institutional reform, the Government has imposed a sustainable development strategy based on improving the regional public transport network and building new economic development zones. Moreover, this strategy aims at by-passing the regional transport authority lead by the regional council. An urban development corporation (*Société du Grand Paris*)

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has been established under central Government's control to hold the project's ownership and to manage development and building operations. There is a re-centralisation process at work, which contradicts the constitutional principles of local autonomy and decentralized Republic, and fails to create a relevant Greater Paris authority.

Key words: special status of capital, city of Paris, local government – France

1. Introduction

As many other capital cities, Paris has been endowed with a special status in relation to its function but mainly to its size and conurbation effect that are totally unequalled in the rest of France. Due to the French view on the administrative and political structure of the state and on the controls over public authorities, central Government at its higher level – the Prime Minister or even the President of the Republic – is directly involved in the governance of Paris area (Lefèvre). Even under the Monarchy regime, Paris was a 'province' exclusively ruled by the king. Within such a centralised state for such a long time, Paris has asserted itself both as the economic capital and as the place for the registered offices of national and international companies and institutions.

However, despite its economic and cultural development, the issue of designing new borders for 'Ville de Paris' has never been clearly raised: Paris remains a rather small municipality in size and population towards its ranking in the world. Indeed as a public authority *Ville de Paris* is only one of 36,800 French municipalities and its area is restricted to the heart of the economic metropolis, *la Région parisienne* which has a rather complicated structure: one region, seven *départements* (provinces), 1,280 municipalities and dozens of joint bodies (for municipalities or for provinces). This organisation is now being questioned since it is viewed as an impediment to economic growth of both Paris and its region. This fact is the basis of the recent reform act adopted in 2010: strengthening the economic attractiveness of the whole conurbation that is regarded as the driving force of the development of the country as a whole.

Nevertheless, this time the idea is not to have a local government reform. The idea is to create *Grand Paris* as 'an urban, social and economic project of national interest to unite larger strategic territories within the Ile-de-France Region with Paris and the heart of the urban area as the very first

of these territories' and 'to promote sustainable economic development [that] will show solidarity and help job-creating in the Capital Region that aims at reducing social, territorial and fiscal imbalance for the benefit of the whole national territory'.¹

In order to strengthen economic attractiveness, the law has delineated the areas for economic and urban development' (*zones de développement économique et urbain*) that are designed around major strategic centres. It also intends to improve the public transport network by building a new transport line around Paris that will connect economic centres in the region.

As Christian Blanc said: 'Given the dense transport network that links living places to job places it should be quite easy to bring together economic development and urbanisation'. The then Junior Minister for the development of the Capital Region was presenting Greater Paris transport plan to the people of the *département des Yvelines*.² His sentence gives the opportunity to question the role of authorities and councillors in the decision-making process when it comes to main policies for the capital city. The question is that far from the classical model of territorial democracy (Breuillard, 2005), would Greater Paris, as organised under the 2010 Act, be the first ever example of functional democracy being implemented in France?

The paper will first ask if the Greater Paris project is really a new way to answer the issue of the relevant area for the Capital Region. In the second part, it will be proved that this new area is designed by the central Government and not by the devolved local authorities. Finally, it will be assessed to what extent the project enucleates a re-centralisation process for a world-class city that ends up in an area for an urban transport network.

2. What Is the Relevant Area for the Capital City?

One could say that the Greater Paris case is typical of what is at stake in any reform of local government in France and how difficult it is to achieve such a reform. In fact, the 2010 Act has very little to do with a true plan for a new local government structure as it is or was the case with other European capitals.

The City of Paris. With 2,233,818 inhabitants (2008 Census), Paris has 3.5 per cent of the total French population. It is by far the largest city

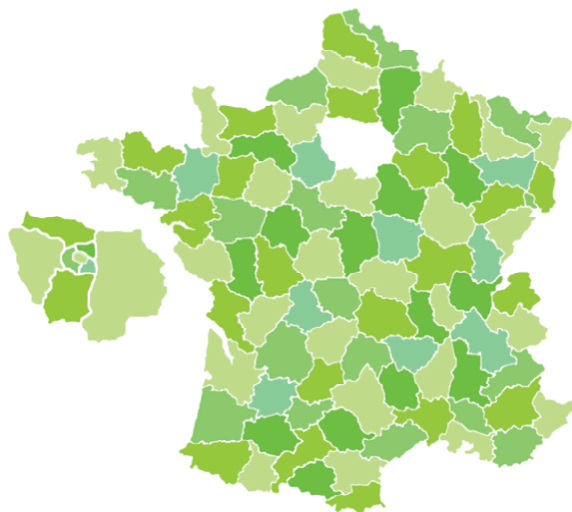
¹ 2010 Greater Paris Act, N° 2010–597, 3rd June 2010, Journal Officiel de la République Française, n°0128, 5th June 2010 (Art. 1).

² <http://www.ensemble-pour-orgeval.fr/?p=211>

in France ahead of Marseille (859,543) and Lyon (472,305). It ranks fifth in the European Union: it is much smaller than Berlin,³ the second city in Europe, and it is fifteen times smaller than London. Its area is very small: with only 105 km², less than 1 per cent of the total area of Ile-de-France Regional Council it ranks 113th among continental French communes. Its density is one of the highest in the world: 20,696 inhabitants per km², even as high as 25,073 inhabitants per km² when deducting the areas of Bois de Boulogne and Bois de Vincennes.⁴ It makes about 20 per cent of the regional population but it is the most powerful municipality both economically and demographically. This leads to very peculiar relationships with other local authorities in the Parisian Region since Paris can rely on political and financial resources that are unequalled in its neighbouring municipalities.

The Ile-de-France Region. It is the most densely populated region in France: 8 million inhabitants and 18.5 per cent of the French population (excluding French overseas territories), ahead of Rhône-Alpes (6.65 million) and Nord-Pas-de-Calais (4.1 million). Paradoxically, it is also one of the three smallest regions (12,000 km²), ahead of Alsace and Corsica. Hence, it is the most densely populated region in France (966 inhabitants per km²).

Figure 1: Ile-de-France Region within Mainland France

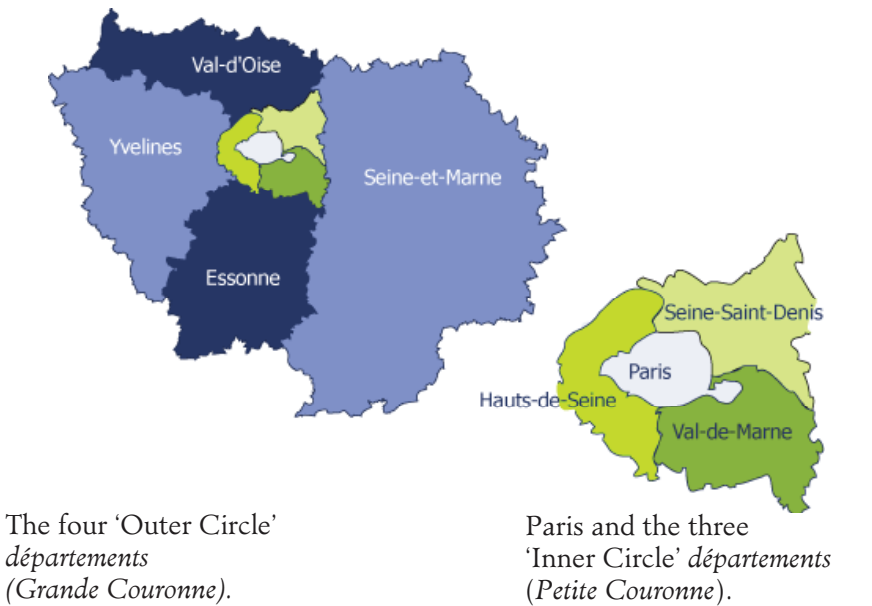


³ City of Berlin has a population of 3.5 million while Berlin Land has over 4.5 million inhabitants.

⁴ London is much less densely populated: 4,978 inhabitants per km² (12,892/sq mi) (July 2010 estimation).

As far as local government structure is concerned, Ile-de-France Region is certainly the most intricate city in Europe with eight (8) provinces (*départements*), dozens of joint bodies, 1,280 municipalities, not forgetting central government field offices.

Figure 2: Eight *Départements* within the Ile-de-France Region



The consequence is that local and regional governance is torn between numerous tiers, but it also varies according to places, since every local authority has to deal with variegated forms of cooperation. Since the Decentralisation Reform Act of 1982, changes in the institutional framework have often aimed at simplifying the decision-making system on top of purely economic and financial reasons. Up until now, the Parisian Region has been unwilling to implement such reforms unlike the other European capitals. However, as the maps show, none of the areas that could be relevant from an economic perspective relates to any local government unit.

There is no local authority that would correspond to the urban area. The metropolitan area can be measured in different ways:

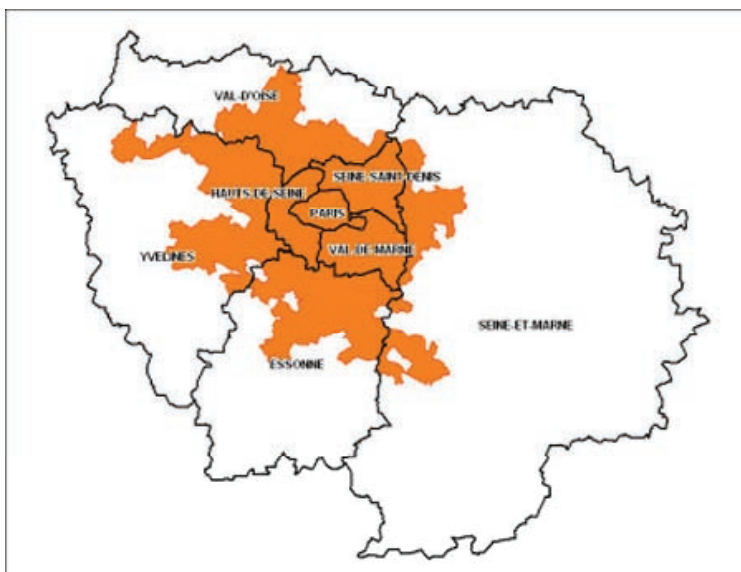
- The Parisian Conurbation (INSEE unité urbaine): 9.4 million inhabitants in 1999, 398 municipalities and 2,575 km², 3 circles: 20 Paris boroughs (arrondissements), 123 neighbouring municipalities in the Inner

Circle (Petite Couronne), 255 far-off municipalities in the Outer Circle (Grande Couronne).

- The metropolitan place-to-work area may be related to the Paris ZPIU (Zone de Peuplement Industriel et Urbain, Industrial and Urban Population Area): 11.8 million inhabitants, 15,450. km².
- Paris urban area: 10.6 million inhabitants including the urban centre and the outer-urban municipalities in which nearly of the employed people work in Paris (9 % of the population of the urban area). It is bigger than Ile-de-France Regional Council and extends into the neighbouring regional councils to the north, west and south (Centre, Champagne-Ardennes, Haute-Normandie and Picardie, and a total of 14 départements). It is the 22nd most populated area in the world.

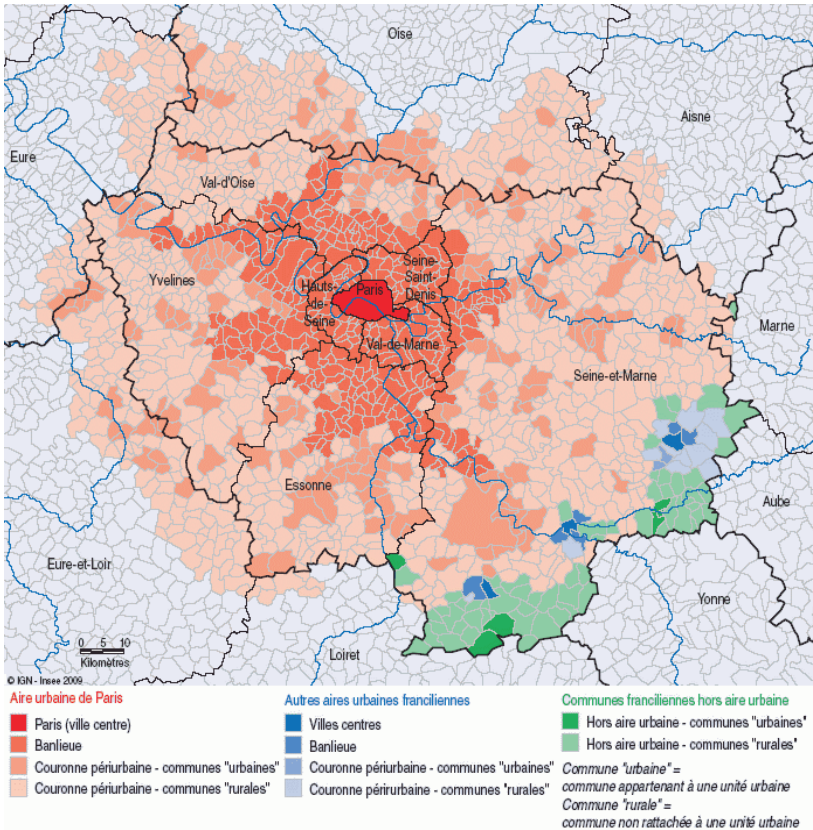
Strangely enough, this wide territory has no institution of its own, no legal entity, no official name, and no political representation. However, since 2008, it has been under a separate central government department that has been incorporated into the Ministry for Urban Policies (*Ministère de la Ville*) after the November 2010 reshuffle.

Figure 3: Map of the Parisian Conurbation within the Ile-de-France Region



Source: <http://www.bruitparif.fr/cms/uploads/pics/agglomeration.jpg>

Figure 4: Paris Urban Area



Source: INSEE, http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/document.asp?reg_id=20&ref_id=14206 &page=alapage/alap311/alap311_encad1.htm

3. A Structure That Evolves towards Common Local Government Law

Similar to all European capital cities, Paris has been expanding since the Middle Ages through a succession of institutions. As a municipality, it was created during the Revolution, abolished in 1795 and cut into 12 independent boroughs (*arrondissements*), re-established in 1800 by Bonaparte, who turned the *arrondissements* into office areas. After 1860, it was run by the *préfet du département de la Seine*, not by an elected mayor, with

the support of a non-elected assembly (*Conseil général de la Seine*) which met in the city hall.⁵

The expanding area became set after the 1859 Act, which annexed the land that spread to the old Paris fortified wall. Eleven municipalities were then incorporated in an authoritarian way. Because of this perimeter, Paris was definitely secluded from its outskirts (*la Banlieue*).

A city-province council. Paris was excluded from the two main acts on directly elected local councils, the 1872 Act on Provincial Councils (*conseils généraux*), and the 1884 Act on Municipal Councils. Its present status was created by the Act on the Reorganisation of the Parisian Region⁶ that stipulates that ‘the city of Paris is a local authority with a special status and is granted the responsibilities of a province and of a municipality’. Since the 1975 Act on the Governmental Regime of the City of Paris, the capital has tended to come to alignment with other municipalities although some special features have remained. From 1982 to 1986, Paris became yet more similar to an ordinary local authority in accord with the ‘classical’ model of local self-government that is enshrined into the decentralisation reform. Two separate acts were adopted on 31 December 1982 that completely re-organised the three main cities Paris, Lyon, Marseille (so called *lois PML*: Law N° 82–1169 on the Administrative Regime of Paris, Marseille et Lyon and Law N° 82-1170 on Elected Councils for Paris, Lyon and Marseille).⁷ All three are now divided into *arrondissements municipaux* (16 in Marseille and 9 in Lyon)⁸ and have directly elected councils.

In 20 *arrondissements municipaux* of Paris, the directly elected councils have gained several responsibilities. As a deliberative body, each council is made up of 1/3 of the members of the Paris City Council who are elected in the respective *arrondissement* and of 2/3 of *conseillers d’arrondissement*. Each of the 20 councils elects its mayor (*maire d’arrondissement*), who is the executive body. However, this mayor must be a member of the Paris City Council before he/she can be elected.

⁵ Every year the Paris Council elects its chair who mainly holds an honorary position. Police responsibilities are in the hand of the *préfet de police*, appointed by the central government.

⁶ The 1964 Act N° 64–707 (10th July).

⁷ Both acts were codified as Articles L. 2511-1 and following in the *Code général des collectivités territoriales* and as Articles L. 271 and following in the Election Law.

⁸ 1987 Act N° 87–509 (9th July): in Paris and in Lyon, each borough (*arrondissement*) has its own council but in Marseille, each group of two *arrondissements* makes an area with its own neighbourhood office.

Responsibilities of the *conseil d'arrondissement* are mainly consultative but for a few decision-making powers for the local community (*arrondissement*). It can send oral and written questions to the Paris Mayor and ask for a debate to be raised in the City Council. The *conseil d'arrondissement* makes decisions about the place and development of all public facilities at the disposal of the local community and is in charge of running them. However, the Paris City Council must first approve their construction. The Paris City Council can delegate the management of any local utility or service to the *arrondissement* council. The Mayor of Paris is consulted before any decision is made by the City Council about town planning strategy and policies, and allowances that are to be paid to NGOs that have their activities in the respective *arrondissement*. It is granted an overall subsidy (*dotation globale d'arrondissement*) by the Council of Paris. The revenues and expenses are annexes of the municipal budget. Finally, it has several staff members.

Mairie de Paris is the authority for two different local government units: a municipality and a *département* both in the same area and with the same council, the Council of Paris, which is directly elected and which elects the mayor. The Paris Mayor is elected for a six-year term among the councillors. Due to the voting system, he/she must be the first name on the winning list. His/her responsibilities are the same as those of any other mayor except for the police, which are in the hands of a special envoy of the Ministry of Interior, the *préfet de police*. Some minor responsibilities concern public health, public order in open markets and trade fairs, maintenance of city-owned buildings and quiet neighbourhoods (2002 Act). He/she holds a twofold position as the executive body for the municipal council and for the provincial council (*conseil général*).

Jacques Chirac was the first elected mayor from 1976 to 1995 when he became the President of the Republic. He was succeeded by Xavier Tiberi, previously his first deputy mayor. Bertrand Delanoë, a member of the Socialist Party was elected as the leader of a Green-Left coalition in 2001 and in 2008.⁹

Conseil de Paris with its 163 members is the deliberative body for both the municipality and the *département*. It is elected according to the rules for the larger towns (over 3,500 inhabitants): proportional representation, two ballots, the winning list gains the majority of the seats. Since Paris has

⁹ The 2007 municipal elections were postponed to 2008 due to the Presidential and general elections.

a double status, it has a large number of responsibilities: budget, housing, building and maintenance of state primary schools, environment and nature protection, economic development, culture.

Consequently, the legal status of Paris entails a limited room for manoeuvre for the *arrondissements*. Indeed, it deprives the *conseils d'arrondissement* of living any truly democratic life. On the other hand, major issues, such as public order and safety of goods and individuals are not different for the Mayor of Paris than for any mayor of a big city or a small town. They remain a power of the central government via the special organisation of the *préfecture de police*.

In a way, there is a sort of internal decentralisation within the Paris City Council down to the *conseils d'arrondissement*. This helps keeping alive the relationships between citizens (inhabitants) and the councillors and local services. The 2002 Act reinforced their role since it transferred them the right to create new consultative bodies, such as neighbourhood meetings (*conseils de quartier*). The next step for them could be to gain more responsibilities even if they do not become principal authorities if Paris should enlarge its power at inter-communal level, for instance at the Inner Circle level. *Arrondissements* are as big as other big or medium-size towns in France, and they should be able to benefit from more available funds in order to be able to answer their communities' needs. It has to be said that *Ville de Paris* has a budget of €7 billion and that €109.5 million are paid back to *arrondissements*.

Ile-de-France Regional Council, from special to ordinary status. The Region of Ile-de-France comes from the ancient Crown Estate French kings had owned and extended since the 10th century. Under the *Ancien Régime*, the province was submitted to the king's direct rule. It was turned into a *département* (*Département de Paris*) in 1790 and renamed *Département de la Seine* in 1795. In 1961, amalgamation of municipalities was first attempted through a non-elected joint body, *District de la région de Paris* whose executive manager was directly submitted to the Prime Minister (1961 Act, 2nd August). After the 1964 Act, *Département de la Seine* was abolished and its area was split into four new *départements*: Paris (one municipality), Haut-de-Seine (27 municipalities), Seine-Saint-Denis (24 municipalities) and Val-de-Marne (29 municipalities). Following a decree, a regional government office *Préfecture de région* was created to encompass the area of the *District* it overlapped with. In accordance with the 1976 reform act on *Etablissements publics régionaux*, *District de la région de Paris* was turned into *Région Ile-de-France*. Since then, two very different structures have

coexisted in the same area: a regional office of central government and a joint body with an indirectly elected council (*Cottour*, 2008).

The next step is better known. The 1982 Decentralisation Reform Act granted French regions the status of local authority and in 1986, after the first direct regional elections, all regional councils including Ile-de-France became principal authorities.

Thus, since it does not match either the borders of City of Paris (*Ville de Paris*) or those of the Region of Ile-de-France (*Région d'Ile-de-France*), the Parisian conurbation is far from being governed by a single public authority, quite the contrary. Firstly, there is no relevant tier for housing, transport, economic development or law and order policy decision-making. Secondly, for several decades, government tiers have been added one on top of the other, so that ordinary people cannot understand how local government works; the usual question 'who does what' is particularly uneasy to answer.

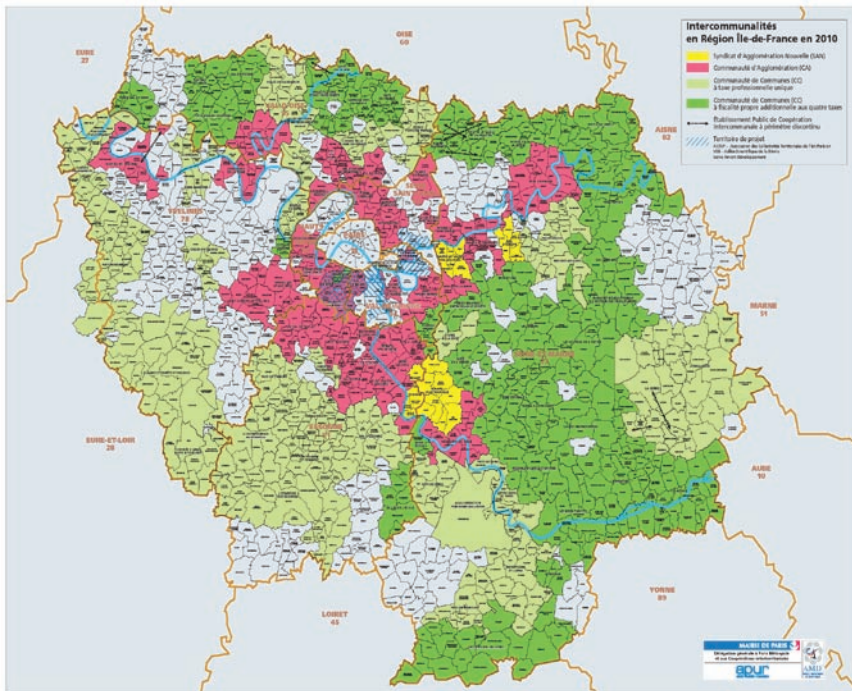
4. Disorder at the Intercommunal Level across Ile-de-France

The very dense web of municipalities has given way to a peculiar situation in which *Ile-de-France* is the only French region where richer towns and cities get together or stay isolated so that they leave poorer towns to form some sort of joint initiative, too. Central government has an important role to play and responsibilities to take, since the law has prescribed that *préfets* can oppose the creation of joint intercommunal bodies if they think their areas are irrelevant.

Paradoxical joint bodies. As many as 1,090 joint intercommunal bodies are in existence and some of them have overlapping borders: 105 groupings, including 28 *communautés d'agglomération* and 72 *communautés de municipalités* financed by a dedicated and common tax-system; 700 *syndicats de municipalités* and 230 *syndicats mixtes*. Thus, out of 1,280 municipalities, some 417 municipalities representing 52.9 per cent of the population in the region take no part in any *Communauté Urbaine*, or *Communauté d'Agglomération*, or *Syndicat d'Agglomération nouvelle*, or *Communauté de Municipalités* (B.I.S., 2011). Nevertheless, 20 per cent of municipalities belong to nine joint bodies or more. 'In this region, only 75 per cent of municipalities belong to an intercommunal body with a common taxation system (*Etablissement public de coopération intercommunale*); while a

much larger number of municipalities are members of other types of joint bodies. In Ile-de-France, municipalities belong to 6.2 syndicates (with no dedicated fiscal system) on average while in the rest of France the number is only 3.9 syndicates’.

Figure 5: Map of Joint Intercommunal Bodies in Ile-de-France Region



Source: http://www.apur.org/sites/default/files/documents/interco_IDF_2010.pdf

Obviously the regional area points at a paradoxical case. It shows more groupings without any common taxation system than the average region in France and fewer joint bodies with a common taxation system, where only the latter aim at sharing the tools of planning and economic development. While 95.5 per cent of the total number of French municipalities (90 per cent of the total French population) are members of intercommunal organisations with a common taxation system, these figures are as low as 74.8 per cent of municipalities and 56 per cent of the population in Ile de-France (B.I.S., 2010).

The absence of any joint body that could be granted large financial means is an impediment for good governance in any conurbation. Moreover, it

is a reason for citizens to be puzzled and for major projects to be delayed by such complicated decision-making processes and initiatives, especially when public transport is concerned. A very recent example can be given by the *Velib'en banlieue* affair.

In 2001, pressured by a group of Green Party councillors, the mayor of Paris contracted out an automatic rent-a-bike system with SOMUPI, a branch of the French company J. C. Decaux. In January 2008, at the request of Société Clearstream, an unsuccessful contender, the Administrative Tribunal of Paris annulled the city council's approval of contract with SOMUPI. It was about 300 new automatic rent-a-bike spots and 4,500 bicycles in 30 neighbouring towns, within a 1.5 km circle around Paris. The tribunal stated that the possibility to open up the renting system to neighbouring municipalities was not proposed in the first contract and so it was illegal to change the initial contract. Then the City of Paris appealed to the Supreme Administrative Court (*Conseil d'Etat*) that annulled the lower Tribunal's decision in August 2011: Paris Inner Circle can be connected to the City of Paris in order to facilitate transportation beyond Paris city limits into 30 more towns.¹⁰

Some joint bodies are powerful but undemocratic. The most powerful organisations are also the least democratic because their assemblies are not directly elected by citizens; they are made up of representatives of each local council. However, the organisations that have a rather technical responsibility really have the ability to shape the areas and to have influence over citizens' life since they are in charge of delivering major public services: public transport, sewage and drinking water supply, garbage collection, etc. Some have been working for more than 100 years. Such is SIGEIF, *Syndicat intercommunal pour le gaz et l'électricité en Île-de-France*, created in 1904 for gas and electricity; it covers 172 municipalities around Paris. Further, SEDIF, *Syndicat des eaux d'Île-de-France* established in 1923, gathers 144 municipalities, then SIPPAREC, delivering electricity and telecoms to 86 municipalities around Paris, whose origins are in the old *Syndicat des municipalités de la banlieue de Paris pour l'électricité*. SCBPE, also created in 1923; SIAAP, *Syndicat interdépartemental pour*

¹⁰ These towns are: Arcueil, Aubervilliers, Bagnole, Boulogne-Billancourt, Charenton-le-Pont, Clichy, Fontenay-sous-Bois, Gentilly, Issy-les-Moulineaux, Ivry-sur-Seine, Joinville-le-Pont, Le Kremlin-Bicêtre, Le Pré Saint Gervais, Les Lilas, Levallois-Perret, Malakoff, Montreuil, Montrouge, Neuilly-sur-Seine, Nogent-sur-Marne, Pantin, Puteaux, Saint-Cloud, Saint-Denis, Saint-Mandé, Saint-Maurice, Saint-Ouen, Suresnes, Vanves, Vincennes.

l'assainissement de l'agglomération parisienne, founded in 1970, it covers all four Inner Circle *départements* (Paris, Hauts-de-Seine, Seine-Saint-Denis and Val-de-Marne), and 180 municipalities in the Outer Circle; SIAAP takes charge of wastewater treatment.

One of these *quangos* should be described more precisely because it has played a major role within the negotiating business about Grand Paris reform: it is *Syndicat des Transports de l'Ile-de-France*.

4.1. Le Syndicat des Transports de l'Ile-de-France (STIF), a Stake in Powers

As early as in the 1930s, public transport needed to be organised and coordinated for the Parisian Region as a whole. In 1938, the Committee for Transports in Paris was established by a decree that appointed central government stakeholders as a majority group in the management board. A new organisation was created after the Second World War. The 1948 Act (21 March) established *Régie autonome des transports parisiens* (RATP) and *Office Régional des Transports Parisiens* (ORTP) on 1st January 1949, which paved the way for *Syndicat des Transports Parisiens* (STP) ten years later. In December 2000, STP became *Syndicat des Transports d'Ile-de-France* (STIF). In July 2005, central government officials were withdrawn from the executive board and replaced by the representatives of the Regional Council. Since then the Regional Council has had the majority in the board (15 out of 29 members).¹¹

In a way, public transports were decentralised at the time when the region gained its principal authority status. Since 2006, STIF has been fully transformed from a local authority responsible for transport to the Regional Council and the 'provincial councils'. It has five (5) different tasks to perform: to organize, coordinate and finance public transport for passengers across Ile-de-France, which is provided by RATP (underground and buses in Paris), SNCF (regional railways network), and private bus companies; to coordinate improvements in the public transport system; to control project ownership; and to co-finance the improvements or construction of facilities that are needed to improve the service quality.

¹¹ Beside the Regional Council, Ville de Paris and all seven *départements*, the Regional Chamber of Commerce for Ile-de-France and some joint intercommunal bodies (*Établissements publics de coopération intercommunale* – EPCI) within the region are represented.

As Federica Gatta states, ‘even if a web of network systems and services exists, we know that any territory takes shape in its symbolic dimension. If these features are necessary to give an area its strength, they are not self-important enough to build a sense of coming together and a shared idea of a metropolis’ (Gatta, 2011). Many solutions are proposed that vary in accordance with the responsibilities but also with the political party affiliation of those who promote them. On the one hand, there are the *Mairie de Paris* and the Regional Council, and on the other the President of the Republic and his government. Nevertheless, everybody acknowledges the same fact – Ile-de-France needs a ‘brand new breakthrough in governance’ as explained in the 2008 Dallier report, a ‘territorial big bang’ as proposed by the Balladur report. Nevertheless, the law that was finally adopted on 26th May 2010 has restricted its scope to the creation of a development company with the responsibility of building a super-tube that partially relies on the transport project elaborated by the Regional Council.

5. ‘Grand Paris’ Seen from the Perspective of a Local Authority

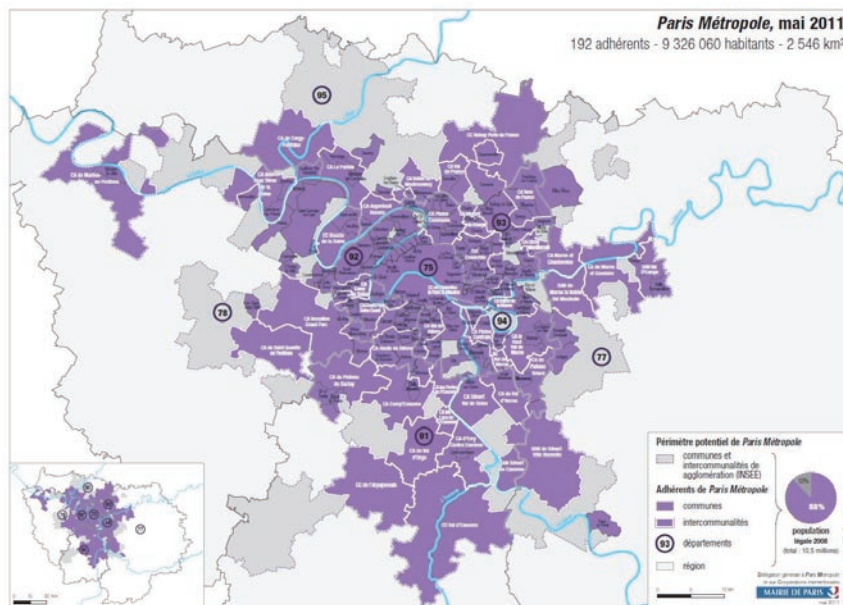
On the initiative of the Paris Mayor a new structure has emerged as a *syndicat mixte*, Paris-Métropole. Feeling confident because it had taken hold of the presidency of STIF’s board, the Regional Council was eager to launch its new project for public transport, but the Junior Minister for Paris opposed it.

5.1. Paris-Métropole, an Initiative of Local Authorities to Run the Economic Region

From 2001 onwards, Pierre Mansat, the Paris deputy mayor, has managed to gather the representatives from all local government units in the Parisian area in order to make them work together so that they could break down the walls between local authorities and quash old resentments. In July 2006, the City of Paris launched a metropolitan conference with the help of councillors and mayors of all persuasions. Gradually, presidents of joint bodies and *département* boards joined in the informal arena. From July 2006 to 2009, the Metropolitan Conference met twelve times and more than a hundred authorities took part in workshops about

diagnosis and stakes for spatial development projects. Then they needed a better-integrated organisation with its own budget and autonomy from the existing bodies in order to guarantee higher standards in analyses, research works and proposals. Thus, *Syndicat mixte d'études Paris Métropole* was born on 29th June 2009, a cross-authority study group aiming at becoming a melting pot of new governance for the Capital Region. Nowadays *Paris-Métropole* incorporates 112 local authorities (municipalities, joint inter-communal bodies, *départements* and the Regional Council) that speak for the political and territorial diversity in the metropolitan area. It represents 2,546 km² and 9.3 million inhabitants (88 per cent of the total population).

Figure 6: The Area of *Paris-Métropole*



Source: <http://www.parismetropole.fr/images/stories/nous-connaître/carte192membres.jpg>

The study group is managed by a committee, a board, and a president. The committee represents all local government councils that have supported its creation. It works under the principle of 'one unit, one vote' to better represent its political and territorial diversity. The executive board is elected for a one-year term among the committee members and its decision-making processes are based on consensus. The board must include a representative of the Regional Council, of each seven *Départe-*

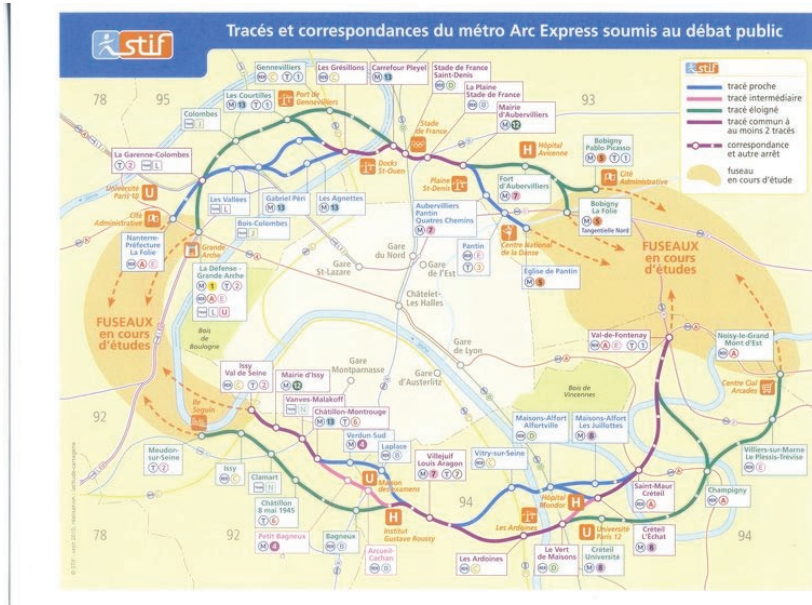
ments in Ile-de-France, and of the City of Paris. The number of municipal councillors and representatives for joint bodies must equal the number of representatives of the Region, and the *Départements* plus one. The chair is elected by the committee among the board members for one year.

Paris-Métropole's strategy is characterised by four main lines: economic development and solidarity, public transport, housing, and metropolitan area schemes. Either strategic or operational, these initiatives gather all the member councils and tend to include all the local stakeholders. In order to answer challenges in a concrete way, each mainline is discussed through a thematic committee in which experts join forces with councillors. Short-term task groups may work on topical issues for designated areas. Its main objective – to raise metropolitan awareness – is met gradually. As soon as it had been created, *Paris-Métropole* showed its interest in 'an innovative strategy for the capital city which cannot be developed without local councillors and citizens' co-driving forces and without any ambitious and efficient local-central government partnership.¹² This is why the 2010 Grand Paris Act granted *Paris Métropole* the right to be consulted by central government on major issues such as transport policy or territorial development poles.

5.2. Arc Express, the Regional Council's Transport Strategy to Be Opposed by Central Government

Unlike commuters of the Paris Inner Circle transport network, fewer people travel on the Paris Outer Circle transport network from one side of the banlieue to another. This must be related to statistics forecasting a 6-8 per cent growth in population and jobs and 7 per cent growth in urban transport by 2020 for the Region of Ile-de-France. In view of reducing car driving and of improving access to the Paris Outer Circle, *Arc Express* has been designed as a circular underground-system within the Paris Inner Circle. It is focussed on the heart of the urban area: a 60 km-long automatic light railways network that connects other existing public transport lines (underground, regional express network, RER, commuter trains, and trams).

¹² *Réconcilier attractivité et solidarité métropolitaine*, <http://www.parismetropole.fr/nous-connaître/nos-missions>

Figure 7: *Arc Express*, the Transport Scheme by the Regional Council

Source: STIF, communiqué de presse du 8 juillet 2009, http://www.stif.into/IMG/pdf/CP_Arc_Express.pdf

Field studies were officially launched by the President of Ile-de-France's Regional Council and the *Préfet* in December 2007 in line with the 2007–2013 contracted plan that both authorities signed in March 2007: €25.5 million will be spent including 18 million to be paid by the Regional Council. *Syndicat des transports d'Ile-de-France* (STIF) plays the task-force role since it delivers transport services in the whole region. The total cost is € 6 billion and will amount to €8 to 11 billion due to land purchase and the construction of new railway stations and facilities. The service is due to start in 2017 and be completed in 2025.

5.3. Central Government's Opposing Decision

In September 2007, at the opening of *Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine*, the President of the Republic publicly expressed the view that a new comprehensive development scheme for *Grand Paris* should be proposed as a topic for international competition. He had an idea that Paris's failure in the competition for the organisation of the 2012 Olympics clearly showed

a serious problem with its institutional and organisational structure: far too complicated regulation of urban development and town planning impeded economic development. 'We should have new thoughts on cities. We should have a broader view. We should do all we can to make our cities better places to live in, more attractive, more sustainable, and more humane'. In 2008, President Sarkozy launched the 'international competition on the future of Paris as a metropolitan area' to find new development plans for Grand Paris. Ten multidisciplinary teams were working for 9 months to design ten new scenarios for the city of to-morrow. At the same time, Christian Blanc was appointed Junior Minister for the development of the Capital Region. However, the outcome has turned out to be much more modest: the world-class capital city will be designed through a network of urban transportation and a development policy, and both will be implemented by a state-owned agency.

5.3.1. Société du Grand Paris: A Way to Put an End to Local Authorities' Ambitious Project?

Finally, the Parisian Region will be delineated by an underground service line shaped as a double-circle (*la double-boucle*). According to the 2010 Act, 'the urban scheme (Grand Paris) articulates three different outcomes: an urban public transport network ... local development contracted plans to be jointly agreed by the central government, municipalities and joint inter-communal bodies, and a network of train and bus networks (TGV trains and the various urban transport networks in the region)'. The idea is that a new public transport network should link up the main business parks in the region and connect Paris with its banlieue. Grand Paris project aspires to be a comprehensive strategy for a new sustainable planning and economic development policy for the whole Capital Region. It intends to create more solidarity and more jobs and thus to benefit the whole country for the next twenty years.

In fact, the strategy for the international metropolis has been scaled back to an automatic light railway system to connect nine economic development poles. The Government's priority seems to withdraw town planning competences from local authorities for the development of areas where trains will run.

Figure 8: The Grand Paris Area as Shaped by the Government' Transport Scheme



5.3.2. Two Different Schemes for Two Different Visions of the Urban Region

Blanc's main task was to take charge of the Government's opposition to the Region's *Arc Express* scheme – he officially expressed doubt about the central government's financial assistance to it. Indeed both plans, *Double Boucle* and *Arc Express*, are very different from one another in their layout and goals and meet two different logics. *Arc Express* is 60 km long while the *Double Boucle* scheme is twice as long: a 130 km long service to run more quickly and further from Paris *intra muros*, to stop at nearly 40 stations, connecting Paris airports to the main economic growth poles. The Grand Paris bill was finally adopted in Parliament in June 2010. The project will cost €21.4 billion; it will be launched in 2018 and completed in 2023. The Government expects joint bodies and local authorities, municipalities and *départements* on top of the Regional Council, to take their share of the cost.

Figure 9: The Junior Minister's Double Boucle Scheme



Source: http://www.lexpress.fr/region/grand-paris-double-boucle-contre-arc-express_911844.html

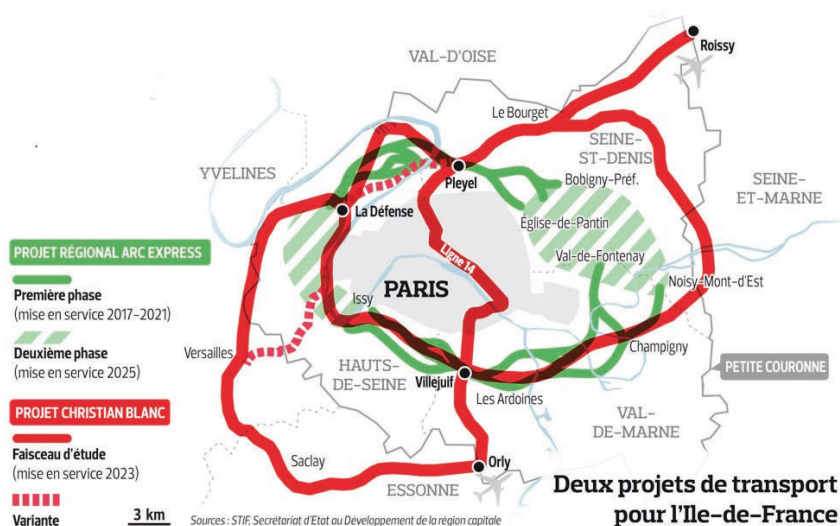
The STIF executive committee was afraid its own plan could be dropped against the Government's competing proposals. In July 2009, it decided to ask the *Commission nationale du Débat public* (CNDP, National Commission on Public Debate)¹³ to open a session to discuss whether the *Arc Express* scheme was compatible with the northern outline of the Grand Paris development plan. CNDP underlined 'the social and economic goals that [gave] the project a national interest status since it tended to increase economic attractiveness and to help urban growth in the whole region and to open up derelict areas so as to reduce social inequalities and better lead into places of living and working'. Moreover, the Commission stated that the conditions for the *Arc Express* plan to be compatible with the *Grand Paris* transport network project should be more clearly explained in the report and in the debate.¹⁴ In September 2010, CNDP declared the reports on *Grand Paris* network were clear enough for the debate to be opened. From 1st October 2010 to 31st January 2011, advantages and disadvantages of both schemes were discussed. Although the Senate had amended

¹³ 2002 Act, N° 2002–276 (27th February)

¹⁴ *Commission nationale du débat public*, Press announcement, 2nd September, 2009.

the *Grand Paris* bill in order to prevent opening of any public debate on *Arc Express*, the right to request such a debate was finally restored by the cross-party Commission in Parliament.

Figure 10: Comparing the Two Schemes



Unexpectedly,¹⁵ to quote the words of the Minister for Urban Policy¹⁶ and the President of the Regional Council, a 'historical' agreement on the design, organisation, financing and outline of the transport network was unanimously approved by the executive board of *Société du Grand Paris* on 26th May 2011, and then by a decree later in August. This automatic underground system is to connect nine selected areas that are designated economic development poles deemed to attract companies, research units, and universities. These poles could become clusters for

¹⁵ Valérie Pécresse, the then Secretary of State for Higher Education and leader of the UMP opposition party group in the Regional Council expressed her doubts that the agreement could be the reason why and the principal means that helped M. Huchon, the President of the Regional Council, to escape from being on trial for illegal financing of the 2001 regional elections.

¹⁶ Leroy was appointed when the Cabinet was reshuffled in November 2010. After Blanc left the Government in July 2010, the issue of Grand Paris was transferred to the Minister for Rural Areas and Country Planning.

companies and bodies that share a similar field of expertise. Being located close to one another, they are complementary. A total of € 32.4 billion will be invested from 2010 to 2025 in construction of the new facilities and in modernising the existing transport systems, such as the *Réseau Express Régional (RER)*, regional railway trains.

What has remained from the President's ambitious strategy for an international ranking metropolitan area? Nothing but an urban development agency and a transport network scheme. The 2010 Act¹⁷ aims at reinforcing economic attractiveness of the Paris Region that is said to be a driving force of the whole country. It delineates economic and urban development areas to be structured around certain main strategic growth poles; a 4 per cent growth rate and the creation of about 800,000 jobs are expected within a decade.

The responsibility for construction work related to the new railway network has been allocated to *Société du Grand Paris (SGP)*, a state-owned company whose members include Regional and provincial (*départements*) authorities, but in which the central government will hold the majority of shares. Development plans in strategic areas and in places around the new tube stations will be quickly implemented through special processes called *contrats de développement territorial* (territorial development contract plans) to be agreed by the central government and related municipalities. If municipalities agree, these contracts may allow for the creation of *zones d'aménagement différé* (future development zones) in which central government will be transferred the right to pre-empt land. If central government does not use its right, the respective municipality will be able to use it in a second place. 'The *Grand Paris* project will structure further developments in the whole region in order to build the metropolitan area of the future, the world-class city that President Sarkozy wishes to see' Minister Leroy claimed on 26th January 2011', but its successful achievement cannot be guaranteed at a time of budget cuts.

6. Conclusion: Back to Re-centralisation?

In his 2008 report, Senator Dallier did propose an overall vision to design a single map combining labour and housing poles, transport networks and economic development schemes in order 'to overtake political divides and

¹⁷ As published in JORF N°0128 (5th June 2010).

to give people one sole ambition, that is to give means to the metropolitan area to keep its world-wide influence and to recover its economic, social and urban cohesion. He hoped to turn the conurbation that struggles for development and attractiveness into a new local government unit, which would look for social cohesion and would be delegated a limited number of responsibilities so that it could be able to create its own transport policy and to guarantee its own safety. Hence, the idea of an institutional reform came in the first stance – a new local authority renamed *Grand Paris* would be granted a special status and would be first amalgamated with the four Inner Circle *départements*. Now there is no such thing as an institutional reform. None of the 2009 Balladur Report proposals related to any reformed local governance, and none of the ten scenarios proposed by the Dallier Report, have been retained.

Although President Sarkozy has had a personal will¹⁸ for *Grand Paris* that he reckoned 'belongs to everybody, every local councillor, every mayor',¹⁹ three aspects of the re-centralising process at work can be noticed: the number of administrative arrangements proposed by the central government, the type of governance in *Société du Grand Paris*, and the way town planning and development plans have been drawn.

The number of administrative arrangements proposed by the central government. Two stakeholders and one legal tool are at the central government's disposal. The Ministry for Urban Policy was created in November 2010 following President Sarkozy and Prime Minister François Fillon's joint decision. It is in charge of informing all the stakeholders about the Government's policy and its commitment to urban and development policies in the Capital Region. In this view, the ministry keeps an eye on mobilising and coordinating all institutional stakeholders for the project. In close link with the Préfet of Ile-de-France Region, it makes sure that every possible tool that is at central government's disposal for implementing the Grand Paris policy is used in every domain: public transport, urban development and improvement, economic and cultural development, social and territorial cohesion. Both the Préfet of Ile-de-France and the Préfecture of Paris are mentioned in the Grand Paris Act when it comes to contracts of territorial development (*contrats de développement territorial*) that are worked out by the central government and local authorities. The Préfet of Ile-de-France Region, who is also the Préfet of the City of

¹⁸ 'I make a wish' (9th January, 2009)

¹⁹ Speech on 29th April 2009

Paris, is empowered by law to start the implementation and negotiation of the contracted plans with local authorities. Seventeen *contrats* should be ready by the end of 2012. A new regional structure plan will have been approved by the end of 2013, and will have included all major directions as stipulated in the Act. *Contrats de développement territorial* will delineate quantitative and qualitative goals in order to ensure that the various functions to be found in any city are integrated; that social classes are mixed inside blocks of flats, and that land use is carefully balanced and takes into account the objectives of sustainable development. These *contrats* must guarantee that the plans of local authorities are consistent with the central government's directions and projects.

Société du Grand Paris, a tool for central government only. According to the Grand Paris Act (3rd June 2010) and decree (7th July), *Société du Grand Paris* is a government-owned corporation (*Établissement public industriel et commercial*). It is granted powers and room for manoeuvre under central government's control. Its main tasks include ownership and contracting authority rights for the Grand Paris network of infrastructure. It is made to develop areas where it has been delegated a right for compulsory purchase. Its budget is about €70 million for the first year, with a hundred employees that should have been hired before the end of 2011. SGP is responsible for financing the *Double Boucle* project worth €21 billion. It is also responsible for giving more value to land around tube stations. It is due to work as a public service and for in the public interest. It is legally able to buy all kinds of goods directly, 'even through processes of compulsory land purchase or pre-emption in order to sell, to rent or develop, or to build on'. Moreover, half the members of the supervisory board are central government's representatives. The chairperson of the executive board is appointed by the Council of Ministers after proposals by the minister in charge of its control. On 14th September 2011, the head of cabinet of the Ministry of Interior was appointed. The *Préfet de région* (regional prefect) represents the Government within SGP. It is worth noticing, and certainly a revealing detail, that no local authority is mentioned on SGP's website. However, the supervisory board is chaired by André Santini, the mayor and an MP (UMP, the Government's coalition party) for Issy-les-Moulineaux, and includes the President of the Regional Council, the Presidents of all seven *conseils généraux* (councils for *départements*) and the Mayor of Paris.

Documents for spatial and town planning are written without any reference to Town Planning Act. Territorial development contracts (*contrats de développement territorial*) aim at creating new partnerships and at implement-

ing long-term development projects within strategic areas inside Grand Paris. Contrary to Town Planning Act (Art. L.111-1-1), the 2011 *Société du Grand Paris* Act defines its process of elaboration and the contents of a territorial development contract (*contrat de développement territorial*). This contracted plan is signed by the central government (the Préfet for the Region acting as the Government's representative), municipalities and their joint bodies. Other local authorities, the Region and *Départements*, are associated too, on top of other institutions: *Paris-Métropole*, *Atelier international d'architecture du Grand Paris* and the association of mayors of Ile-de-France. As for the overall scheme for the transport network, it is drawn by the central government's offices and approved by the Government. Local authorities are only asked to give their advice. Even the issue for public consultation is written by *Société du Grand Paris*. According to the Law, economic and urban development zones as well as the new railway system will be built without any regard to *Syndicat des Transports d'Ile de France's* exclusive responsibility. Here are the legal arrangements that totally oppose the constitutional principles of local self-government and decentralised Republic (Art. 1 and 72). 'Without a reform of the governance of Paris Region, whatever their commendable aims and the size of their financial means, policies will remain as little efficient as in the past; ... So talking about *Grand Paris* without contemplating any institutional reform is as meaningless as talking about State reforms without any change in the structure of central government'.²⁰

For the time being, the most relevant tier of local government to deal with the Parisian urban area seems to be the Regional Council even if it does not have a clear responsibility in such fields. However, the Region's capacity is often questioned by the central government and it has difficulties in asserting its leadership, all the more because other authorities also play an important role in the development of the urban area: the Chamber of Commerce, major public companies in transport (RAPT, SNCF, Aéroports de Paris), etc.

Central government and the Regional Council have different legal tools at their disposal, but do not seem to be using them. The idea was to create new tools in order to show how important the Grand Paris project was. In 2009, the Balladur Commission on local government reform proposed to

²⁰ Rapport d'information fait au nom de l'Observatoire de la décentralisation sur les perspectives d'évolution institutionnelle du Grand Paris.

establish Grand Paris as a new local authority but President Sarkozy did not agree with the former Prime Minister.

Since the Government is so deeply engaged in this project, it is easy to understand that Paris is a place for fierce political competition among the French national, regional and local governments.

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FROM PARIS TO GREATER PARIS: AN OLD PROJECT, A NEW APPROACH

Summary

Despite the constitutional principles of unitary state and uniformed local authorities, as the capital of France, the city of Paris is given a special status due to its size and conurbation effect that are unequalled in the country. Because it is located at the heart of a state with a long-standing tradition of centralization, the Parisian Region has passed through many dedicated reforms that have tried to establish relevant institutions and ways of control. At present, it is structured as one region, eight départements including the City of Paris (Ville de Paris), which is both a commune and a département, and numerous joint inter-communal bodies and specialized agencies, for which the Government claims that they stall economic development in the whole Region of Ile-de-France and in the whole country. Along with the problem of rather difficult management of this 'multilayer-cake' shaped structure, there is also additional problem between the right-wing Government and the Left-Green coalition-controlled Region and Paris City councils. Rather than an institutional reform, the Government has imposed a sustainable development strategy based on improving the regional public transport network and building new economic development zones. Moreover, this strategy aims at bypassing the regional transport authority lead by the Regional Council. An urban development corporation (Société du Grand Paris) has been established under the central government's control to hold the project's ownership and to manage the development and building operations. There we find unprecedented arrangements that are far from the constitutional principles of local autonomy. It is worth questioning whether central government is trying to get back to the old centralized republic. Furthermore, one can wonder if the Grand Paris Reform Act can account for the recent evolution of the French model of local government, from area-based democracy to functional democracy.

Key words: special status of capital, City of Paris, local government – France

OD PARIZA DO VELIKOG PARIZA: STARI PROJEKT, NOVI PRISTUP

Sažetak

Unatoč ustavnim načelima unitarne države i jednoobraznih lokalnih jedinica, kao glavnom gradu Francuske, Parizu je dodijeljen poseban status zbog veličine i konurbacijskih učinaka koji su jedinstveni u zemlji. Budući da se nalazi u srcu države s dugom tradicijom centralizirane vlasti, regija oko Grada Pariza prošla je brojne reforme kojima se pokušalo uspostaviti relevantne institucije i načine kontrole. U ovom je trenutku taj prostor strukturiran hijerarhijski i sastoji se od jedne regije, osam departmana, uključujući i Grad Pariz, koji ima dvojni status općine i departmana, te brojnih zajedničkih međuopćinskih tijela i specijaliziranih agencija, za koje središnja vlast tvrdi da kočje gospodarski razvoj u cijeloj Regiji Ile-de-France, ali i u čitavoj Francuskoj. Uz probleme upravljanja takvom strukturom koja izgleda poput „torte na više katova“, tu je dodatni problem između desne središnje vlasti i lijevo-zelene koalicije koja je na vlasti u Gradu Parizu i široj regiji oko njega. Umjesto institucionalne reforme, Vlada je nametnula strategiju održivog razvoja koja se temelji na poboljšanju mreže regionalnog javnog prijevoza i gradnji novih gospodarskih razvojnih zona. Nadalje, strategiji je cilj zaobići regionalne institucije odgovorne za transport, kojima upravlja Regionalno vijeće. Osnovana je korporacija za prostorno uređenje i razvoj (Société du Grand Paris), pod nadzorom središnje vlasti. Ta je korporacija vlasnik projekta i upravlja razvojnim i građevinskom radovima. Smatra se da je to postupak bez presedana, koji je daleko od ustavnih načela autonomije lokalne samouprave. Valja se zapitati pokušava li se to središnja vlast vratiti staroj, centraliziranoj organizaciji zemlje. Nadalje, treba se upitati i je li reformski Zakon o Velikom Parizu zapravo odgovoran za nedavne pomake u francuskom modelu lokalne samouprave, od lokalne prema funkcionalnoj demokraciji.

Ključne riječi: poseban status glavnog grada, Grad Pariz, lokalna samouprava – Francuska