

Coherent area

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Short definition

A "coherent area" refers to an inter-communal space determined by the overlap of an "employment pool" and a "labour pool"; it thus enjoys a certain autonomy, thanks to an optimal match between the resident labour force and local jobs. This has the effect of limiting the range of movements, promoting the population's spatial integration and strengthening a sense of territorial belonging.

Long definition

A coherent area is determined by the intersection of an employment pool (the area of attraction of an employment cluster, in which the flows are centripetal) and a labour pool (the area of diffusion of a labour cluster, in which the flows are centrifugal), when most of the resident labour force occupies a job located within it. A cluster is a concentration, the attraction of which generates an area of influence on the surrounding territory. Thus, an employment cluster is a concentration of economic activities and jobs, which generates a positive attraction of the labour force in the surrounding territory, the employment pool; hence it is a destination for the labour force. In contrast, a labour cluster constitutes an origin, as it is a concentration of workers, which leads to the diffusion of the labour force into the surrounding territory, the labour pool.

The strong match between employment and labour within a coherent area grants it a high degree of autonomy, which facilitates the creation of favourable conditions for the integration of local populations within a community of common destiny, that is, a group of people living and acting in a given territory and sharing - in the present and in the future - similar values, responsibilities, problems, and relations with the environment and external constraints.¹

To function well, a coherent area must have a network of local and urban² mobility that is sufficiently interwoven, combining light public transport and active mobilities. For links between metropolitan centres - in order to discourage excessive distances between housing and work - we should differentiate costs and especially speeds according to kinds of trips: faster but more expensive flows for links supporting interactions and synergies necessary for the metropolitan area's operation; cheaper but slower flows for other trips.

Of course, such a process must be part of a systemic approach that includes all dimensions of the urban dynamic (including housing, mostly untouched in this article).

Development

Origins

The concepts discussed here are based on the work and field experience of Jacqueline Lorthiois, who pioneered the research on territorial pools (employment, labour, life, etc.) in the late 1980s, cited in Appendix A1 of this article, which provides an overview of the work and initiatives that led to them. These works cannot be separated from their historical context; while they have experienced a relative decline as a result of rampant globalisation, the prospect of energy scarcity and climate deterioration is likely to bring them back to the forefront.

The term "coherent area" is inspired by the concept of a "coherent city" - defined by Jean-Pierre Orfeuil as "the city where no one lives too far from their work" - and that of an "intense area" - introduced by Christian Devillers and Marie Evo to describe places of centrality within what they call a "living area"³; they define an intense area as "the smallest perimeter that maximises employment/work exchanges."

We rely on the concept of a "lived territory" defined in 1976 by the geographer Armand Frémont. It includes the space of daily practices (living space) and the space of social interrelationships (social space), based on the population's concrete use of these entities, providing a sense of local belonging.⁴ Lived territories, determined by the use of local populations, are opposed to prescribed territories defined in 2000 by the geographer Anne-Marie Granié⁵ as all zones decided by institutions, whether they are local bodies (intercommunalities, of which Appendix A2 presents a historical overview) or state-level entities (departments, regions, conurbations).

Goals and expected results

The coherent area aims for relative territorial autonomy, allowing people "to live, work, relax within their territory."⁶ It's the opposite of a dormitory town, or of a "dissociated city" (i.e. those who live there work elsewhere and those who work there live elsewhere) or of an intercommunal grouping based on size or on an institutional perimeter corresponding to political affinities.

The aim is to combat the perverse effects of high concentrations, including populations and economic activities, which are increasingly important as the size and density of the considered urban area are more significant.⁷ Indeed, approaches and methods that work in a medium-sized city cannot be applied to a large city. Larger urban areas differ from medium-sized ones in that housing is more expensive and commuting times are longer due to the increasing dissociation between housing and employment functions. In a large urban area, the territorial interdependencies create a tendency to constantly multiply rapid transport infrastructure - and at a rate that is proportionally greater than the size of the urban area. This is a damaging process because these heavy transports force households to relocate from the centre to the periphery, leading to increasing mobility needs. This process has consequences: difficulties in accessing jobs and rising unemployment, the need for ever-increasing commuting, economic dependence, gentrification, urban sprawl, and social segregation (the poorest being rejected to the remotest fringes of the urban area).

Several objectives must allow territories to achieve greater autonomy:

- enabling socio-economic autonomy to improve the match between employment and labour;
- reducing travel needs at the source, which would reduce waste in terms of cost and lost time, with the development of local public transport networks in preference to transit transport;
- improving the quality of life and strengthening territorial integration, thanks to reduced travel times, resulting in a virtuous circle (development of social ties, residential jobs, involvement in volunteering and community activities, etc.)

Establishing and strengthening coherent areas would have several beneficial effects, directly or indirectly and complementary to each other:

- promoting the territories' internal resources in socio-economic matters, in order to avoid urban sprawl and its deleterious effects (social segregation, etc.);
- containing the urban sprawl⁸ of large urban areas generated by the deployment of mass transit infrastructure and the corresponding territorial and social inequalities;
- strengthening social cohesion and local ties within the territories, among communities of common destiny;
- facilitating the ecological transition by reducing transport needs at the source, as well as reducing the related greenhouse gas emissions;
- reducing the cost of housing: by replacing a large, hyper-connected urban complex with a group of smaller, more autonomous ones, competition for space is reduced, thus lowering the cost of housing nearer to what it is in medium-sized cities;
- improving food sovereignty with agricultural areas that allow most of the production to be relocated locally;
- reducing overall cost to the community: improving the coherence between employment and housing decreases the need for transport, social housing and urban policies;
- increasing resilience in the event of a major crisis, by decreasing the volume of population movements and their interdependencies.

Complexity of large urban areas

Large urban areas usually have complex structures characterized by hierarchical levels, ranging from a simple district to an entire metropolis. Ignoring such hierarchies can create the illusion that the urban area functions as one big pool, with the fluidity of transportation supposedly creating permeable territories. This fails to understand the issue: as travel times increase with the size of the urban area, the necessity of establishing coherent home-work relationships grows accordingly! Under such circumstances, a stronger territorial segmentation arises – requiring inhabitants to devise clever schemes for managing their time and space – entailing stronger territorial specialization, both in terms of population categories and with respect to economic activities, as well as worsening economic, social and environmental disparities.

In the case of a strongly developing new cluster, the previous cluster will not necessarily disappear, which leads to the superposition of two heterogeneous systems – just like a lava flow caused by a volcanic eruption overlaying a substrate of dissimilarly organized geological layers.

Examples of existing coherent areas

Some coherent areas in Île-de-France and other French regions serve as examples to illustrate the characteristics of these entities. They are presented in order of increasing complexity.

The coherent area of Strasbourg

The city of Strasbourg (274,400 inhabitants) accounts for 65% of the jobs in the Urban Community of Strasbourg (UCS).⁹ It has several strong points.

- The short distance of home-to-work commutes:
- 73% of Strasbourg's labour force hold a job in the town where they live (more than double the national average).
- The strong "coherence" of the two pools (maps below):

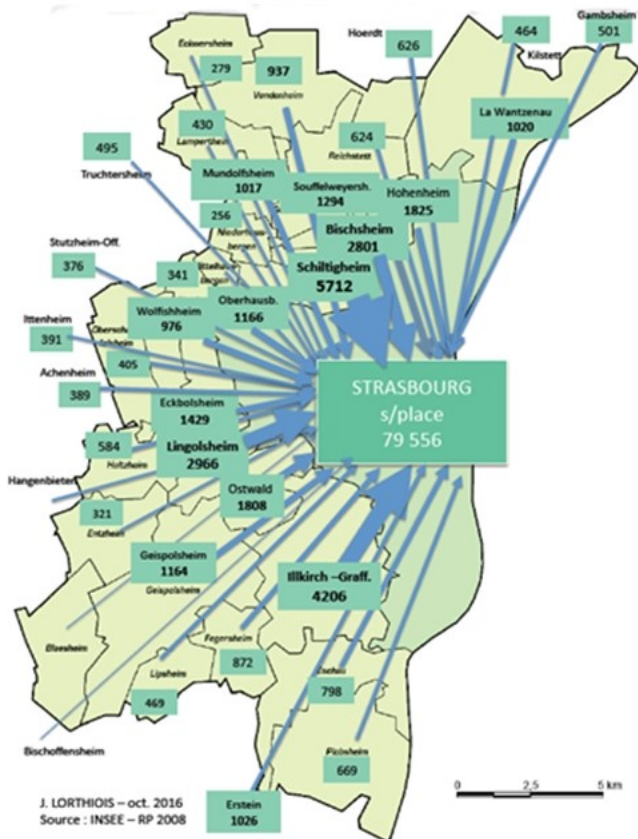
o The employment pool is shaped by the centripetal flows of 161,000 members of the labour force converging on Strasbourg's business centres. Half of them (49.4%) live locally (in the city itself) and 21% come from other municipalities of the UCS.

o The labour pool is determined by the centrifugal flows of 109,000 workers from Strasbourg going outwards to work, 84% of whom remain in their town or the inner ring of suburbs.

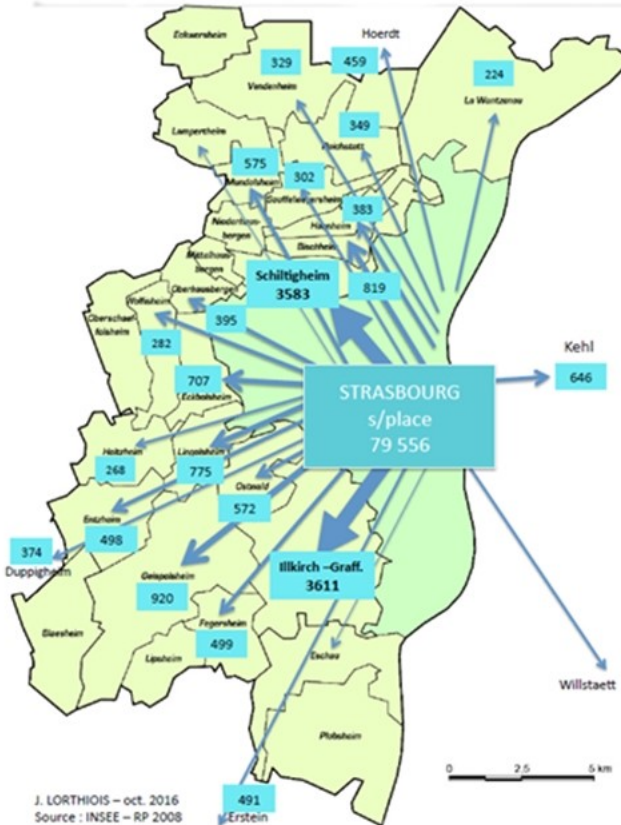
- A large surplus of jobs relative to the labour force

If we add nearly 20,000 unemployed people to those who are in employment, there is a positive balance of 32,000 additional jobs (+25%) relative to the total resident labour force.

As a result of this "urban area of short distances," with employment nearby and a strong network of tram lines, "soft" mobilities are far more widespread than elsewhere, with cars being far less used for home-to-work commutes than the national average. 34% of the labour force in sensitive neighbourhoods use public transport to go to work (more than double the French average, which is close to 15%). These maps show that the pools are organised along a north-south axis, a configuration that doesn't support the case for the "Great West Bypass" project (GCO, for Grand contournement Ouest).¹⁰



Strasbourg employment pool



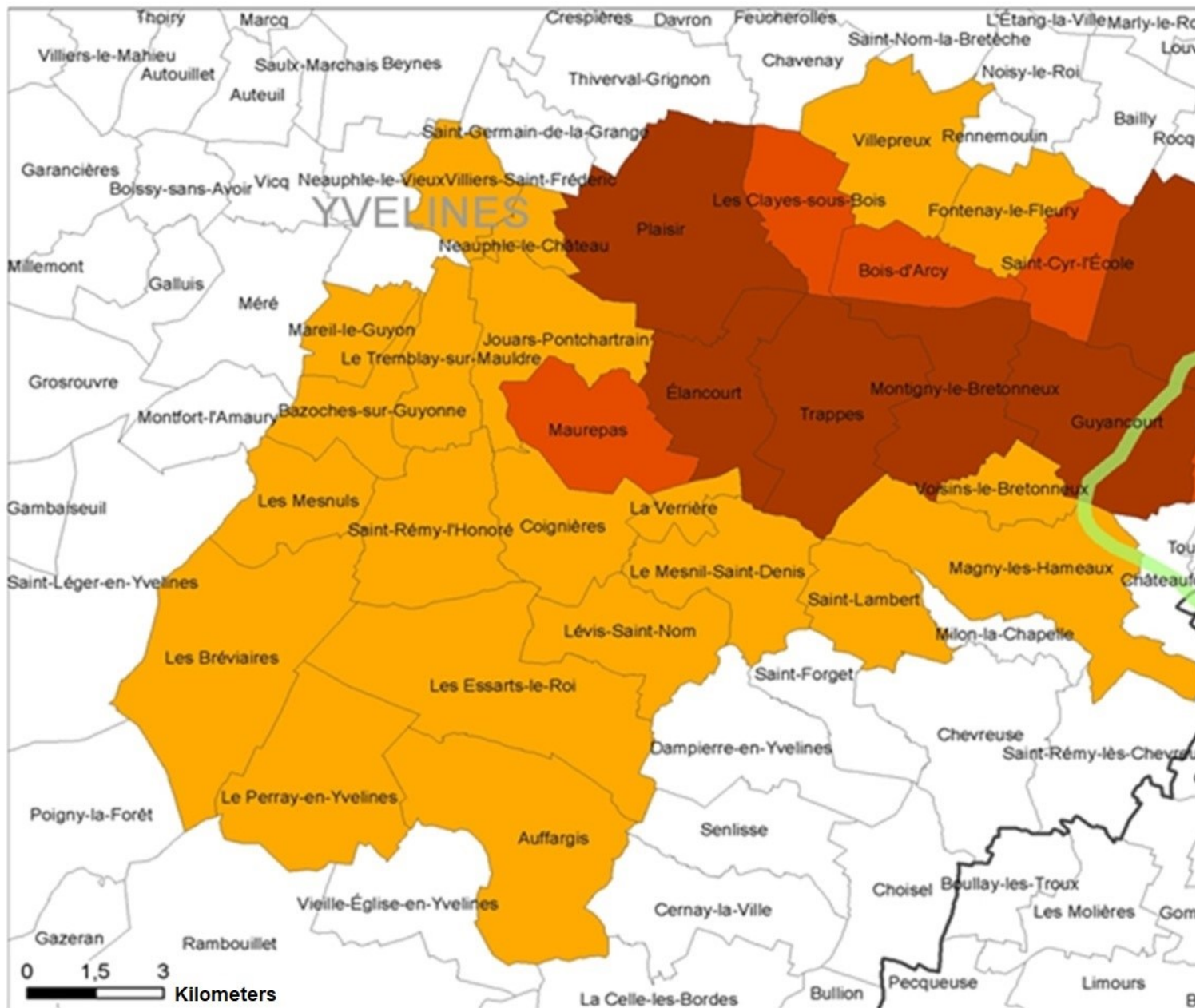
Strasbourg labour pool

The coherent area of Versailles/Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines

The former "new town" of Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, which piggybacked on the city of Versailles, contains a remarkable coherent area: an east-to-west territory that is 15 km long and 7 km wide shown on the map below in brown ("very coherent") and red ("coherent").

This coherent area is made up of 12 municipalities, including Versailles, and in the 2013 census, it had about 156,000 employed workers. It enjoys a high degree of autonomy, with 45-60% (depending on the municipality) of its jobs held by workers living within it; this score is well above the national average (36%). The other municipalities of the territory constitute a labour pool (in orange on the map) with a labour force of about 200,000 working mainly in the coherent area.

This is, in total, a labour force of 360,000 available workers who operate mainly in this coherent area, a true "community of common destiny." A strong match between employment and labour creates a remarkable "microclimate" that feeds a virtuous circle, promoting the creation of residential jobs and allowing the population to take an active part in local life.¹¹



Coherent area of Versailles/Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines

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The coherent area of Argenteuil/Bezons

In order to examine the coherent area of Argenteuil/Bezons, located in a dense urban area, one needs to conduct a spatial analysis at the pool level while taking into account several nested hierarchical levels of territorial home-to-work organisations.

Structure of the area

First of all, a very strong relationship can be observed with the neighboring "local level" called the "Gennevilliers Loop" comprising a cluster (Gennevilliers, 40,600 jobs) playing a role similar to that of Argenteuil on the opposite bank of the Seine. In the 1990s, these two industrial pools were "twin spaces"¹² with complementary trades, generating local worker flows in both directions, by crossing the bridges. These exchanges have partially dried up with the growth of the tertiary sector.

The influence of the "metropolitan level" has grown with the reorientation of the active population towards the tertiary sector and the simultaneously increasing influence of the "wider La Défense" cluster, i.e. Nanterre/Puteaux/Courbevoie augmented by Rueil-Malmaison and Neuilly-sur-Seine, amounting to 344,000 jobs. Of further note is the influence of the Saint-Denis/Saint-Ouen/Aubervilliers cluster (55,000 jobs), notably strengthened by the gradual evolution of the urban fabric. On the North-West side, the former new town of Cergy-Pontoise (90,000 jobs) has grown by attracting businesses from dense urban areas, previously located in Paris or in the inner ring of suburbs, including Argenteuil.

Finally, the influence of the "capital level" (1.8 million jobs) has grown as the combined result of the deindustrialisation of all Parisian suburbs and the intensification of the central urban area (QCA: Quartier Central des Affaires [Central Business District]¹³, 640,000 jobs), helped by improved transport facilities.

Determining the Argenteuil/Bezons coherent area, requires cancelling out the effects of the capital and metropolitan levels, otherwise the very strong attraction exerted by the centre of the urban area would conceal the local home-to-work flows.

The employment pool

This space is structured by the Argenteuil/Bezons employment cluster (double arrow in the centre of the pools), which contains 43 200 jobs. It generates an attraction effect (centripetal flows, referred to as "incoming") that determines an employment pool of some thirty municipalities (red stripes) located mainly on the right bank of the Seine.

Similar to the ripples created by a stone thrown into water, this territory groups together several concentric rings, which have weaker links with the cluster as they are further away from it. Around the two cluster-towns, there is an area of proximity, made up of several towns with worker flows that have Argenteuil/Bezons as their main destination. Of further note is the particular case of some towns present only at the South side, in the Gennevilliers Loop, comprising municipalities that are strongly linked to the Argenteuil territory, having Gennevilliers as their primary and Argenteuil as their secondary destination. Overall, these three constituents (cluster, proximity area, Loop municipalities) make up the actual employment pool, depicted by stripes on the map. It provides 151,000 jobs.

A second ring of weaker attachment includes municipalities principally undergoing the influence of a metropolitan cluster and that of Argenteuil. In particular, this applies to the Montmorency valley, in a residential area strongly dependent on the capital, spanning from Pierrelaye to Deuil-la-Barre (municipalities secondarily linked to Cergy-Pontoise at the West side and to Saint-Denis on the East), contributing about 5,000 active workers. A similar situation exists on the South side, with municipalities of the Montesson Loop, principally in the area of La Défense and under influence of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, supplying 2,700 workers to the employment pool.

Finally, at an outer third ring we notice significantly-numbered flows of commuters related to the demographic weight of metropolitan-level clusters located in the surroundings of Argenteuil. This pertains to workers coming from Cergy-Pontoise and its area of influence (10 municipalities), the Saint-Denis cluster (3) and the wider La Défense cluster and adjacent municipalities (7). To the latter, one can associate the towns of Clichy and Levallois-Perret, strongly linked to the Parisian QCA [CBD]. This third ring supplies some 30,000 workers.

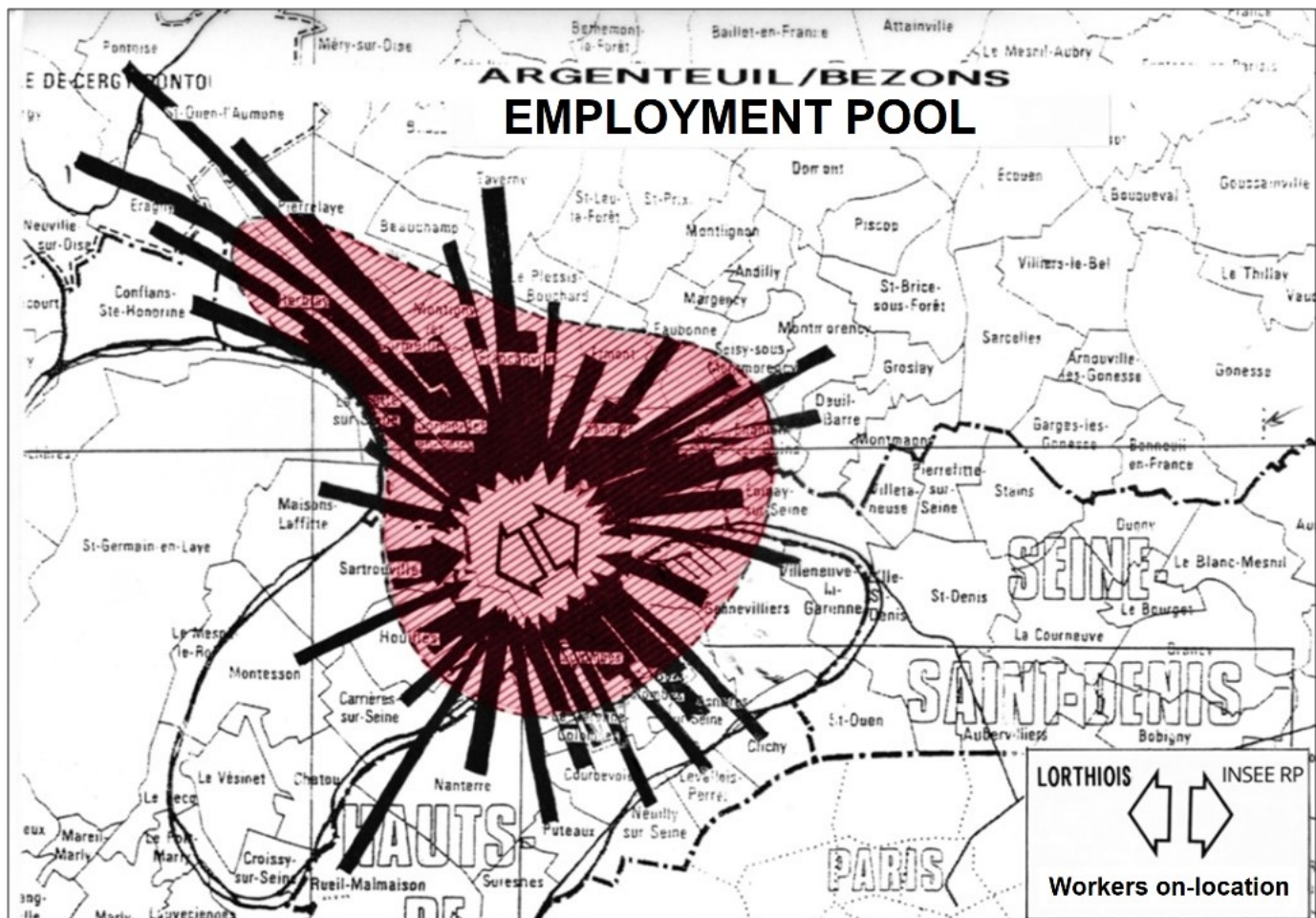
The labour pool

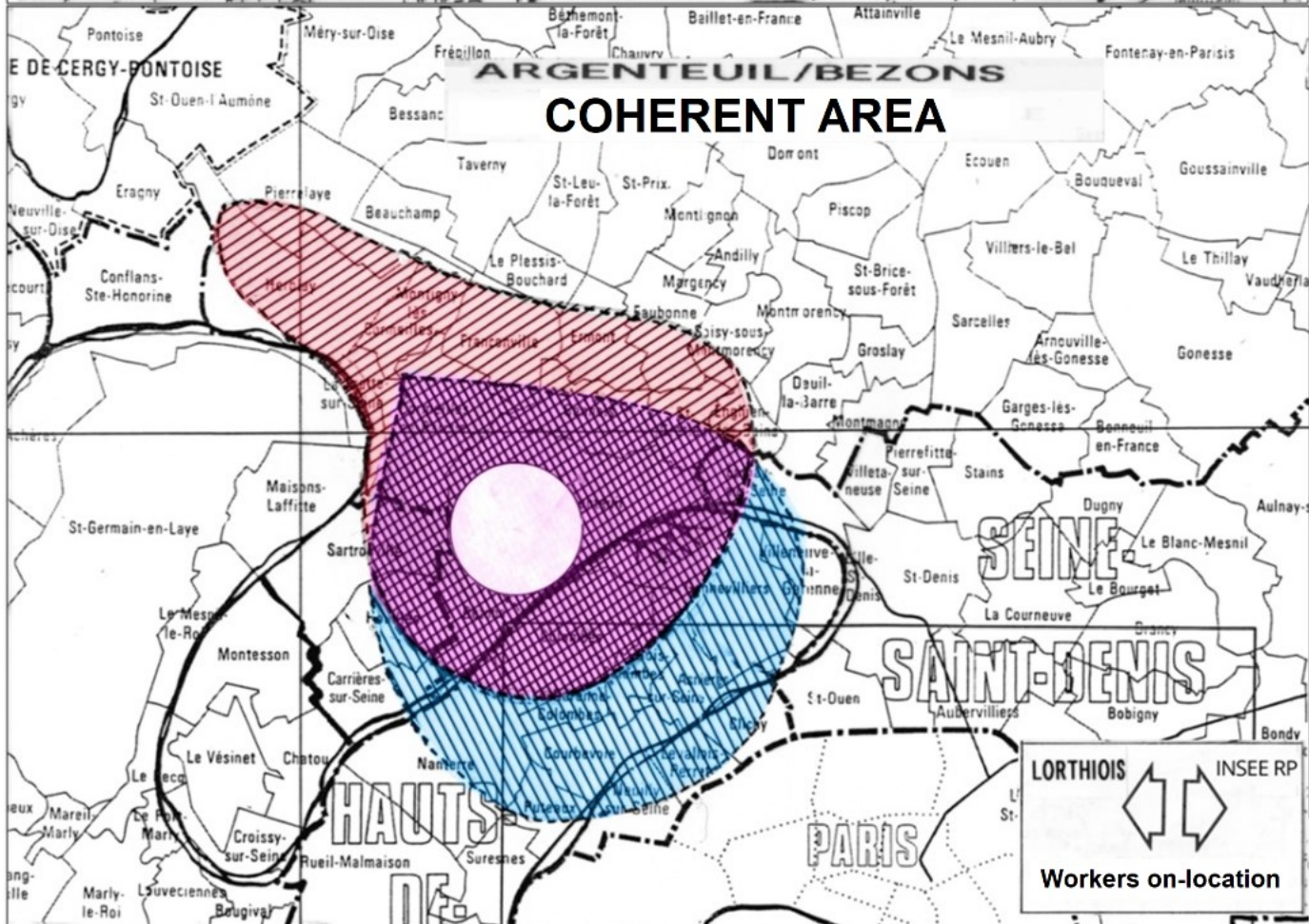
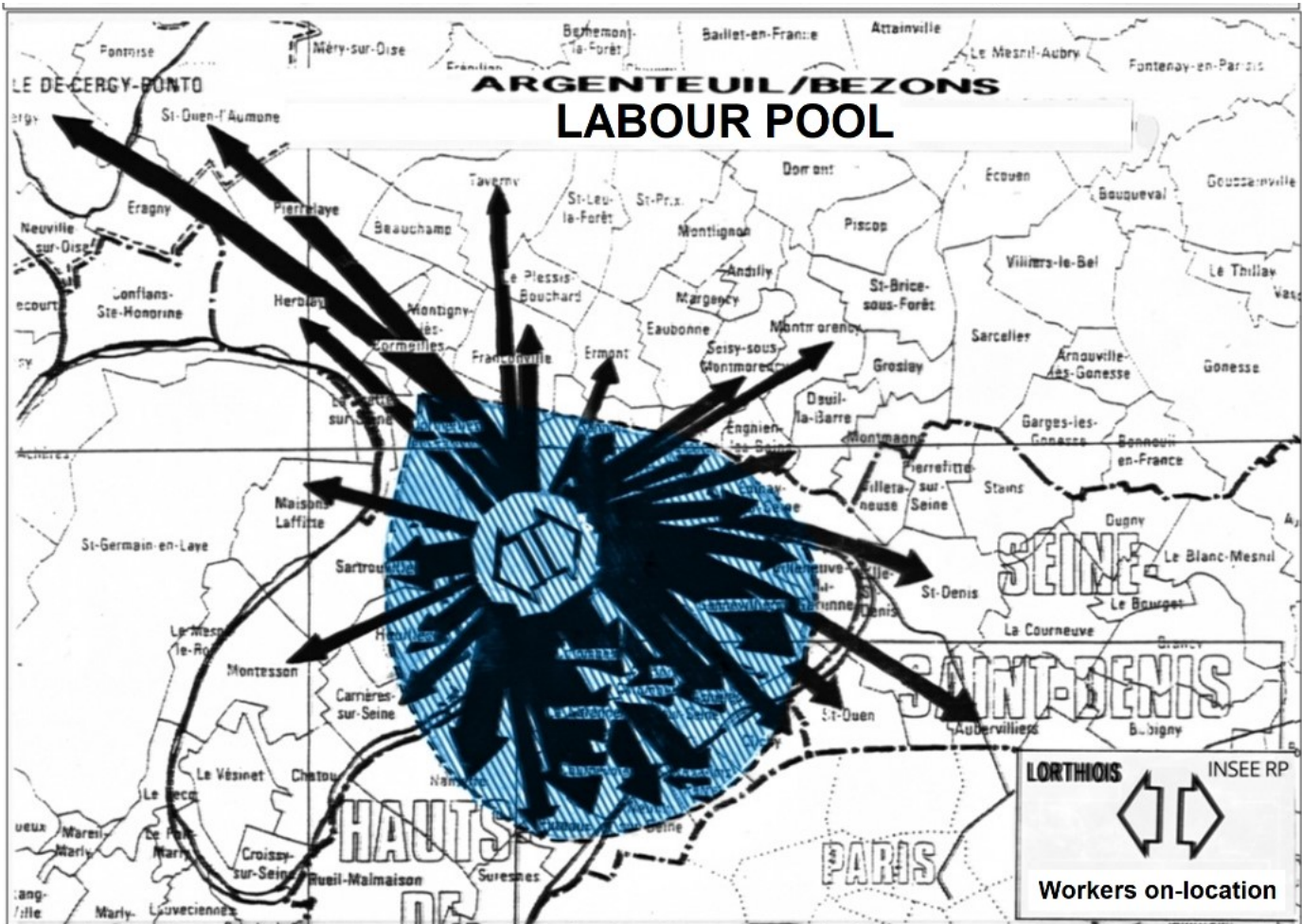
As is generally the case in the Parisian suburbs, the Argenteuil/Bezons labour pool (blue stripes) covers a larger area than the employment pool. Likewise, with 68,100 resident workers, 56,600 of which hold a job, the size of the labour cluster exceeds that of the employment cluster. The labour pool represents about 310,000 active workers, generating the diffusion (centrifugal flows) of about 152,000 workers – Paris excluded – towards some twenty municipalities, located mainly on the left bank of the Seine, and also partly on the opposite bank in the Gennevilliers Loop (from Neuilly to Aubervilliers). Some 20% of this labour force lives and works in the same municipality and approximately the same proportion holds a job in Paris.

Like employment pool, the labour pool is structured in successive concentric rings. Neighbouring destinations welcome a labour force split up as follows: to the West, in the Montesson Loop (5%); to the North-East, in the Montmorency Valley (6%); on the left bank, all the municipalities of the Gennevilliers Loop (17%). Furthermore, a wider ring exhibits notable attractions from Cergy-Pontoise (18%) and from the Saint-Denis cluster (12%) and especially, strong migrations of active workers towards the wider La Défense cluster (35%), to which the towns of Levallois-Perret and Clichy (8%) can be associated.

The coherent area

The coherent area of Argenteuil/Bezons (chequered in purple) is determined by the intersection of the employment and labour pools. It straddles both banks of the Seine and the departments of Val-d'Oise, Les Yvelines (Montesson Loop), Hauts-de-Seine (Gennevilliers Loop) and also Seine-Saint-Denis. It totals 227,400 active workers and 124,500 jobs.





The following table synthesizes two categories of the home-to-work flows: those outwards-going (centrifugal) of the labour pool, identified by their destinations, and those inwards-going (centripetal) of the employment pool, identified by their origins. Furthermore, the table shows the exchanges within the coherent area as well as between it and the outside territories, the most important of which – the Gennevilliers Loop, Paris and wider La Défense – are explicitly indicated (all others being grouped together).

Coherent area (CA) of Argenteuil/Bezons

		Origin : incoming from						
Working at	On-site	A/B cluster	Off-cluster	Gennevilliers Loop	Paris	Wider La Defense	Other	Jobs
A/B cluster	13,646	1,472	7,168	1,967	2,116	1,324	15,464	43,157
Off-cluster	29,310	3,900	16,591	1,649	1,752	824	27,268	81,294
Total CA	42,956	5,372	23,759	3,616	3,868	2,148	42,732	124,451
% of jobs	34.5%	4.3%	19.1%	2.9%	3.1%	1.7%	34.3%	

		Destination : outgoing towards						
Living at	On-site	A/B cluster	Off-cluster	Gennevilliers Loop	Paris	Wider La Defense	Other	Employed workers
A/B cluster	13,646	1,472	3,900	4,830	11,343	6,219	15,223	56,633
Off-cluster	29,310	7,168	16,591	9,084	34,616	16,351	57,651	170,771
Total CA	42,956	8,640	20,491	13,914	45,959	22,570	72,874	227,404
% of workers	18.9%	3.8%	9.0%	6.1%	20.2%	9.9%	32.0%	

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- 123 numbers related to exchanges internal to the coherent area
- 456 numbers related to exchanges between the coherent area and external territories
- A/B cluster Argenteuil/Bezons cluster
- Off-cluster inside coherent area but outside A/B cluster
- On-site working and living in the same municipality
- Other having destinations or origins other than those explicitly specified

This table shows the significance – inside the coherent area – of the home-to-work exchanges in both directions, of which almost three quarters pertain to flows between municipalities "outside the cluster," which underlines the territory's internal attractiveness.

It appears that the coherent area enjoys a fair level of autonomy, at a higher level for local jobs, whilst the local labour force is more dependent on the metropolitan context. For that matter, one may observe that the outward flows to Paris and La Défense and the inward flows in the opposite direction are clearly dissymmetrical; this directly results from the excessive concentration of employment at the centre of the Île-de-France urban area.

When the attraction effects of the "capital level," the "metropolitan level" and the neighboring "local level" of the Gennevilliers Loop are neutralized, it appears that $34.5+4.3+19.1 = 57.9\%$ of the jobs offered by the coherent area are occupied by local inhabitants and that the proportion of active workers living and working inside the coherent area amounts to $18.9+3.8+9.0 = 31.7\%$. This autonomy ratio is somewhat lower than that of the Versailles/Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines coherent area, due to the Argenteuil territory being closer to the centre of the conurbation and therefore being more strongly attracted by the latter. In turn, the coherent area of Strasbourg, under virtually no external influence, enjoys an even higher autonomy ratio.

Focus on Île-de-France, a territory lacking coherence

Île-de-France is a particularly interesting territory to study, due to both its size and the complexity of its territorial organisation. This region is unique in France in that it is both a megacity of some 12 million inhabitants and a metropolis where companies enjoy superior attractiveness and productivity because they can benefit from a skilled and diversified workforce.¹⁴ These two characteristics are contradictory: the metropolitan advantage runs up against the situation of a megalopolis, where territorial and social inequalities are growing. The challenge for Île-de-France is therefore to reduce the downside of being a megacity without compromising the advantage of being a metropolis.

A highly polarised territory

Today, the Île-de-France region (created in 1976) is the scene of a vast Brownian movement with mobility needs reaching 43 million trips per day in 2013¹⁵ and registering more than 300,000 additional daily flows each year. And as we saw in 2020, it's also a great vector for the spread of viruses!

The city of Paris has far more jobs than available labour force and, from 2008 to 2018, this imbalance widened, with Paris losing 20,000 inhabitants and gaining 26,000 jobs. During the same period, the inner ring of suburbs increased its population by 220,000 and its jobs by 67,000; and the outer ring of suburbs welcomed an additional 260,000 inhabitants while keeping a stable number of jobs.¹⁶ There is therefore a clear centrifugal population movement while the number of jobs in the central area continues to rise (19 municipalities account for 50% of employment¹⁷), which mechanically leads to greater distances between housing and employment.

In addition, Île-de-France is the leading office real estate market in Europe. According to the directorate of equipment and land planning of Île-de-France¹⁸, in 2019 the office real estate amounted to 54.25 million m², of which about 32% was in Paris and 25% in Hauts-de-Seine, with none of the other departments in France exceeding the 10% threshold. This strong imbalance is still widening, with the hub of La Défense concentrating the largest number of new constructions.¹⁹ However, we may question the sustainability of these trends in a context of increasing uncertainty due to a recurring health crisis, coupled with the emerging energy and climate crises.²⁰

The Greater Paris approach

In the early 1960s, driven by strong population growth, urbanisation proliferated in a chaotic fashion. Charles de Gaulle appointed Paul Delouvrier "General delegate to the district of the Paris region" in order to "put this mess into order." In 1965, the SDAU-RP (Master plan for the urban planning and development of the Paris region) was born. It reorganised the capital region according to a polycentric structure by creating five new urban centres on the periphery of the existing suburbs: the "new towns" of Évry, Cergy-Pontoise and Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, and later Sénart and Marne-la-Vallée.²¹²²

This desire to create what we today call the Greater Paris could have been a fair success if at the same time one hadn't:

- greatly reduced the autonomy of these new centralities by facilitating access to the capital via urban motorways and regional RER train lines; at that time, people weren't worried about being suffocated by the megalopolis but by cars, with traffic increasing rapidly;²³
- built a large amount of housing in interstitial spaces without implementing the necessary activities, facilities and services, creating additional dormitory suburbs that cancelled out the "wellness" benefits of the "new towns." Only the one in Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, neighbouring the historic cluster of Versailles, has fared well;
- neglected setting up an appropriate governance of these territories.

The overall result was that jobs remained highly concentrated in the heart of the region - with a strong imbalance between the west on one hand and the north and east on the other - and the working-class workforce was largely relegated to peripheral dormitory towns.

Since then, the principle of establishing a polycentric structure to the capital region has been regularly enshrined in the Île-de-France Region Master Plan (SDRIF, for Schéma directeur de la région Île-de-France) without remedying these imbalances.

The pharaonic Greater Paris project, decided by Nicolas Sarkozy in 2007 and implemented by Christian Blanc, aims to introduce a new polycentrism by projecting the creation of new centralities around the stations of the Grand Paris Express (GPE) metro network.

However, this objective is illusory.²⁴ It assumes that urban planning is structured by transport²⁵ and it is part of a doctrine that considers the Île-de-France region as a vast single employment pool that people should be able to travel across from one end to the other - for example: people should be able to live in Meulan and work in Melun, because thanks to the GPE, no one would be more than 2 km away from a train station. This vision is quite unrealistic because it relies on the hypothesis of perfectly static urban areas, when in reality, households relocate further away into the suburbs when a new high-capacity "pipe" (road or public transport, radial or tangential) is put in place, leveraging the faster travel speeds to increase their travel distances without spending any extra time.²⁶ This mechanically leads to urban sprawl (periurbanisation and gentrification) and to a greater specialisation of space, both functionally (excessive concentration of jobs, increased separation of workplaces and housing) and socially (the poorer people being rejected more to the periphery). In the end, by creating new travel needs, these processes of urban dynamics feed a negative spiral that worsens the Brownian movement mentioned above.

Another doctrine that shows a misunderstanding of urban dynamics is that of expecting the GPE to densify constructions, on the assumption that users will spontaneously conglomerate around the stations.²⁷ However, a train station is rarely a place of destination, rather it is above all a place of dispersion. In fact, density and speed are antagonistic. Moreover, the impact of intensification on construction volumes is thwarted by an inevitable increase in land and construction costs, leading people to migrate to more distant territories, thus causing an "undensification" – the opposite of the initial goal. Even if the increased housing prices make such a hypothesis problematic, we could consider building social housing neighbourhoods around the metro stations, but this would inevitably lead to the creation of dormitory areas, or even sensitive zones.

Changing the way we look at mobility to support a polycentric land-use planning

To avoid asphyxiating the region, we deem it essential to divest ourselves of the Greater Paris approach, the costs of which, from a human, financial, and ecological standpoint, are becoming increasingly unmanageable. Indeed, pursuing the energy transition, which we cannot afford to abandon, requires a substantial reduction in travel needs in order to meet the targets of the COP21 agreements.

For these reasons, we must urgently return to a truly polycentric land-use planning strategy, where each of the pools enjoys significant autonomy, which requires decentralising and rebalancing jobs; an overview of attempts in this area is presented in Appendix A1. However, the point isn't to fragment the megacity into watertight socio-economic pools, which would mean losing the advantage of being in a metropolis. Indeed, within a metropolis, territories operate in a network, but this doesn't require linking the employment clusters by mass transit links: travel between employment clusters contributes to metropolitan mobility, but accounts for only 3% of all flows. Also, instead of the constant search for speed, "polycentralisation" should go hand in hand with slowing down traffic. The speed of travel should be regulated, not for the usual purpose of smoothening traffic²⁸, but more importantly to influence urban planning by differentiating flows according to their impact on the locations of households and businesses. Metropolitan mobility of the inter-company travel type should be promoted, but without opening up at the same time for home-to-work travel across employment clusters. Urban mobility should be facilitated only moderately, so as to avoid a combined increase of employment concentration and decrease of housing density within employment pools. Depending on the nature of the trip, one could play on their speed or on toll prices (parking or traffic) or on the pricing of transport fares. On urban motorways, we wouldn't escape the introduction of a toll, with variable fares depending on the level of road congestion²⁹, which lengthens journeys.³⁰ This type of approach is sometimes referred to as "chrono-planning" (chronoaménagement).³¹

Within a coherent area, it's important to strengthen local mobility. Beyond encouraging the practice of "active modes" (or "soft mobility"), this requires implementing a sufficiently interconnected public transport network with an adequate quality of service to deter the use of cars. In areas with low or medium population density, such as periurban areas, this poses a cost-effectiveness problem requiring the development of light and inexpensive infrastructure.

Institutional framework in Île-de-France

France's other regions outside Île-de-France witnessed the gradual development of a double alliance between the regional and intercommunal levels on one hand, and between departments and municipalities on the other. Municipalities that have taxpayers but no land resources and those that have land but no taxpayers can come together as an intercommunality, so that urban planning, housing, job location and mobility can be managed together.

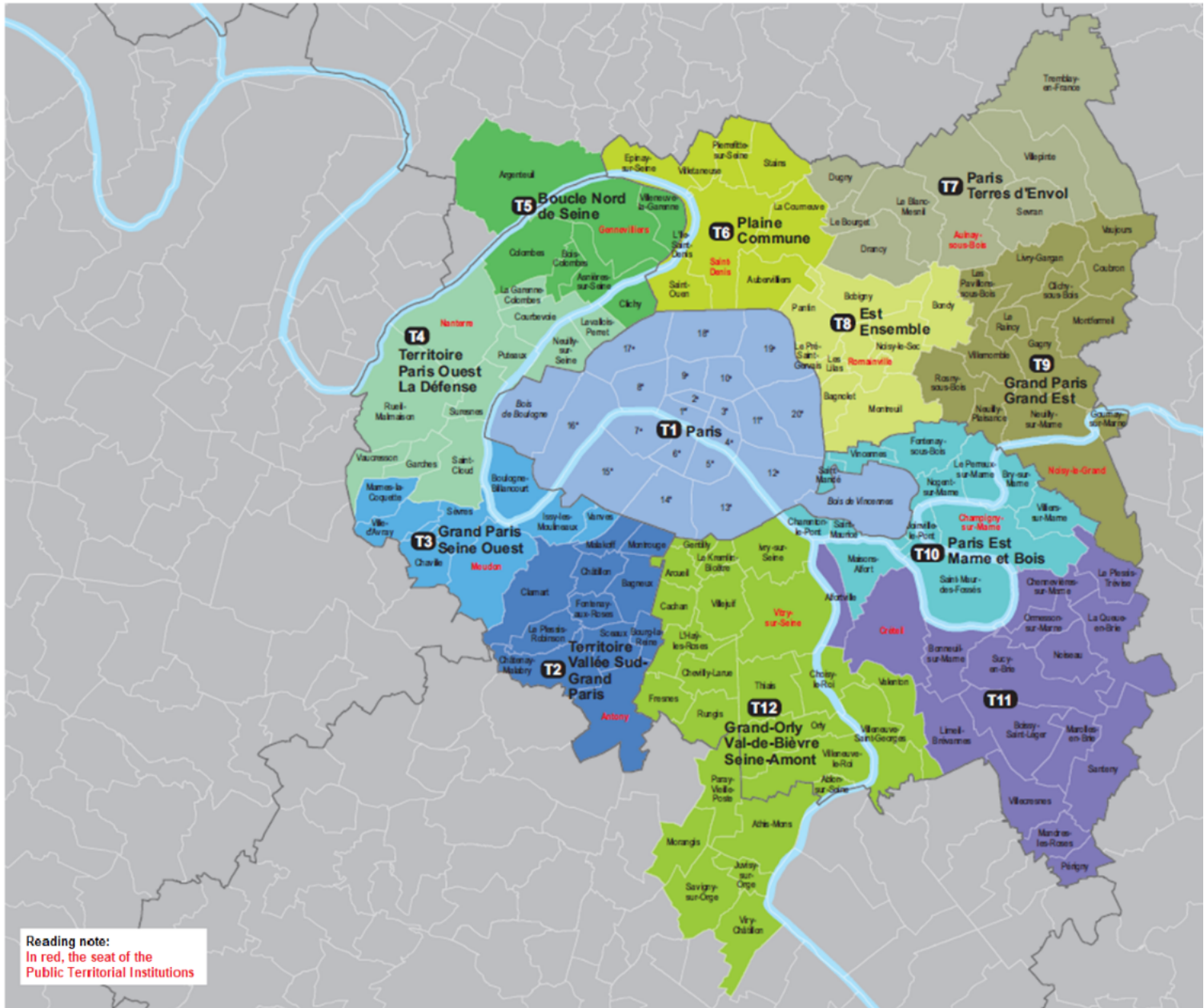
There is no such arrangement in the Île-de-France region, which is characterised by a strong institutional fragmentation. The territorial partitioning introduced by the establishment of departments in 1964 was further compounded by a sectoral segmentation with the decentralisation law of 1982³² that reshuffled the distribution of powers between the various institutional levels. The region holds exclusive jurisdiction over matters of transport, but in terms of urban planning, its role is limited to establishing the SDRIF.³³

The MAPTAM Act of 2013³⁴ and the NOTRe Act of 2015³⁵ further complicated France's institutional landscape.³⁶ They explicitly show the metropolitan level, with the Greater Paris Metropolis (MGP), of which the perimeter covers the city of Paris and the three departments of its inner ring of suburbs, accounting for 7 million inhabitants, leaving out 5 million inhabitants in the departments of the outer ring of suburbs, including 1 million residents in the former "new towns." Its main competence is urban planning.³⁷

Institutional spaces lacking coherence and autonomy

The MAPTAM Act divided the MGP into 12 "Territories" (T1 to T12, see map ³⁸).

The Territory is a new intercommunal structure between the metropolitan level and the local communal level. ³⁹ Indeed, over the past 50 years and thanks to greater mobility performance at lower cost, travel distances have grown by a factor of 5 and the extent of living spaces by a factor of 25. As a result, the municipality can no longer hold the monopoly over local life, even though it is still responsible for providing equipment and local relations and services. The Territory must therefore represent the major political body of the institutional organisation and have a sufficient dimension to achieve objectives of spatial regulation and mobility management. When the intercommunalities were formed, the government allowed municipalities to associate as they saw fit. Since this experience proved to be very disappointing, the local representatives could no longer choose their communal groupings into Territories. There are many inconsistencies in how the government subdivided the MGP into Territories. The main concern was to equally distribute the overall demographic weight - instead of relying on existing socio-economic pools or, indeed, on lived territories - in order to overcome divisions between rich and poor areas and establish greater coherence based on the communities of common destiny that were already in place. ⁴⁰



To create the equivalent of the Territories in the outer ring of the Parisian suburbs, the MAPTAM Act prescribes the procedure for completing the intercommunal map (Regional Scheme of Intercommunal Cooperation, or SRCI for Schéma régional de coopération intercommunale). This map was created by conserving the predominant criterion of demographic weight which requires new intercommunalities to have at least 200,000 inhabitants. With sparsely populated outer suburbs, this method has led to the establishment of extended intercommunalities - which, by the way, are also the result of extensions or groupings based on political affinities - all the while preventing them from straddling departmental boundaries ⁴¹, causing a territorial breakdown that is far removed from the original goal.

In total, the intercommunalities - of which the historical evolution is overviewed in Appendix A2 - are increasingly distant from the daily concerns of their inhabitants and correspond less and less to lived territories. In Île-de-France, this problem is more pervasive than in the other regions, as it is compounded by excessive job concentration and territorial imbalance.

Necessary changes in intercommunal structures

The specificity of Île-de-France, being a metropolised megacity⁴², implies the need for a truly intermediate institutional level, which has the power to achieve its own relative autonomy, in order to forge "communities of common destiny" around the existing socio-economic pools. This applies to the Territories, as well as to the intercommunalities of the outer ring of suburbs.

It is at this inter-communal scale that democratic debate must take place: this is the preferred space for people to live together, where coherent areas can develop. However, one major weakness of the MAPTAM Act is to subjugate the Territories to the MGP.⁴³ As such, their sole purpose is to implement metropolitan objectives. For the Territories to achieve any degree of autonomy, they must be provided with their own fiscal resources, giving them the means to pursue their own urban planning. However, this condition isn't equally necessary among the territories, as they cannot be expected to develop uniformly.

Means of action to encourage the creation of coherent areas

The inter-communal territories' objective to achieve greater autonomy requires a change in the institutional configuration, encompassing tax reforms.⁴⁴

From an administrative standpoint, it's important to specify the purpose of each Territory in the MGP, to reduce internal social inequalities and to allow any point of a Territory to be properly connected to any other point of the same Territory by lightweight means of local service. This requires reviewing how transport is organised and how the corresponding financial resources are allocated to the Territories. Preserving the balance between housing and employment should also be part of the structuring endeavour of the Territories, and not just of the MGP; the latter's management is excessively governed by the market and therefore the major cause of the current dysfunctions.

The elected representatives of each Territory should establish a SCoT (Territorial Coherence Plan, or Schéma de cohérence territoriale) to define priorities in the construction of its "community of common destiny," as well as a PLUi (Local Intercommunal Urban Development Plan, or Plan local d'urbanisme intercommunal). In their plan, they shouldn't only cover urbanisation, but also provide for the preservation or creation of natural and agricultural spaces.⁴⁵ Of course, this development should be done in consultation with the metropolitan level, so that each Territory's objectives are in line with those of the MGP's by confronting their respective purposes, with the primary goal of metropolitan power being to reduce territorial inequalities.

To encourage the formation of coherent areas, governments must be able to influence where jobs are located. To do this, the major lever would be a reform of territorial taxation, penalising the dissociation of housing and employment and correcting the current misallocation of populations, jobs, and equipment. Everything that contributes to an excessive concentration should be taxed; this is the case with the location of office jobs, executive positions, and higher tertiary functions.

Of course, this would also apply to localisation operations for previously offshored industrial activities, not to mention support programs for entrepreneurs and emerging sectors. This would thereby reduce the need for - and thus the cost of - policies to correct this dissociation (transportation, social housing, urban policies). Already in the 1970s, the government had introduced a triple bonus-malus system: inciting companies to implement decongestion measures in new cities, decentralising economic activities to the regions and imposing a charge to deter companies from locating in the heart of urban areas. In the same spirit, we should consider incentive taxation, differentiated according to the location of jobs and their suitability for the resident workforce. As part of the necessary tax reform, business taxation could be adjusted according to a "territorial coherence index" reflecting the relative weight of local jobs held by the resident labour force.⁴⁶ The corresponding revenues should then be used to finance urban planning.

While waiting for such a tax reform - which is likely to take a long time to design and implement - there are currently mechanisms that can already be used to influence the location of companies.

The "Tax for the creation of offices and shops in Île-de-France" (TCB-IDF, Taxe pour la création de bureaux et commerces en Île-de-France)

Specific to the Île-de-France region, it is levied on the construction, reconstruction, renovation, transformation or expansion of offices, commercial premises, or storage facilities. It is due by the owner of the premises (whether an individual, a company or a public organisation), taxable in full ownership, co-ownership or undivided ownership, or by the holder of a real right to the premises.

This tax, the amount of which depends on the location, was created to compensate for the territorial imbalance. However, the gap between the rates applied at each location is far too small to deter developers from building in the most attractive areas.⁴⁷

"Building Permits" (Autorisations à construire)

Office buildings are subject to government approval. In recent years, more than half of all the square meters that have been granted building permits have been located in Hauts-de-Seine. Although the pandemic and subsequent economic crisis may reshuffle the deck, it's worth noting that the government doesn't need to keep on aggravating the territorial imbalance in this way.⁴⁸

"Commercial Operating Permits" (Autorisations d'exploitation commerciales)

In order to promote local life and social cohesion within a coherent area and to reduce the need for travel, regulations are needed on commercial urban planning in order to favour local trade instead of shopping areas and supermarkets, which are located in the outskirts of cities and are, it's worth mentioning, on the decline. Today, commercial operating permits for sales areas of over 1,000 m² are issued by the Departmental Commercial Planning Commissions (CDAC, for Commissions départementales d'aménagement commercial), with the possibility to appeal before the National Commercial Planning Commission (CNAC, Commission nationale d'aménagement commercial). The functioning of this structure is governed by the ACTPE Act⁴⁹ (known as the Pinel Act). Although it has made improvements on paper, it leaves much to be desired in practice, as the issuance of Commercial Operating Permits by CDACs is undemocratic and quasi-automatic (90% of the submitted applications are accepted), without consideration of "territorial solidarity" and without any thought for the impact on small business owners who are excluded from decisions. In addition, departments aren't the most appropriate level to manage these issues, which should first be dealt with at the inter-communal level, in agreement with the SCoT and PLUi, and then be arbitrated at the regional level.

Appendixes - Some historical reference points in terms of territorial organisation

A1. The various works and initiatives relating to territorial pools in France that led to the concept of a coherent area

There are various initiatives - at the national and regional levels - of supra-communal rezoning based on the notion of "lived territories" and seeking territorial coherence.

The "labour pools" of the Centre for Labour Studies

The works carried out by a team led by Michel Destefanis of the Centre for Labour Studies (Centre d'études de l'emploi) - an agency attached to both the Ministry of Research and the Ministry of Labour - are the first attempts in France to determine territories based on the criterion of the "labour force." The studied pools were chosen because of their simple borders and subdivisions: the area of Annecy⁵⁰, which is demarcated by the geography (1974), and the

industrial zone of Compiègne⁵¹, isolated in a rural area (1977). However, the analyses focus only on the socio-economic content of the territory (labour force characteristics, employment structure, labour organisation, staff policies), without addressing its spatial organisation (polarisation, attraction, diffusion, commuting flows). Mobility is only taken into account for internal movements within companies (qualification, promotion, training) and inter-company movements as an instrument of wage negotiations, in the context at the time of labour shortages.

A rare phenomenon should be noted, however: the main criterion of the analysis is the point of view of the workforce. The worker makes a "work offer" and the company a "work request." This is a complete reversal of the approach that will later become the norm, i.e. the univocal and restrictive idea of an unemployed "job seeker" facing an almighty "job offerer." Moreover, these studies address the issue of the "territorial segmentation" of differentiated local labour markets that determine specific pools. This contrasts with the erroneous vision of "fluidity" with regards to a deterritorialised and accessible labour market and a unique employment pool at the level of a large conurbation or region. This is the vision that still prevails among the proponents of a Grand Paris Express, supposed to link all the territories of Île-de-France as if they were open socio-economic spaces. This simplistic approach is also predominantly held among elected officials and developers, who are competing for activities to locate in their territory combined with a transport supply, without any consideration for the qualifications, skills, vocational training, residential areas, or degree of mobility of the local workforce.

The "solidarity zones" of the IAURIF

Meanwhile, in the 1970s, the IAURIF⁵² began research on identifying local territories in the Île-de-France region. A first team looked at industrial pools or zones and established international comparisons, with for example Antwerp, Rotterdam, Stuttgart and Baden-Wuerttemberg. The concept of territory "polarisation" was based at the time on the theoretical work of François Perroux, who pioneered the concept of "growth centres"⁵³. In addition, another team under the direction of transport engineer Jean-Jacques Ronsac attempted to subdivide the region into "solidarity zones" based on alternating migrations between housing and employment.⁵⁴ The results were obtained by combining two statistical analyses of home-to-work flows, conducted according to a principle of upward hierarchical classification: an analysis of "origin-destination" trips to identify clusters and their areas of attraction; and an "exchange zone" analysis, taking into account flows in both directions, delimiting areas with relative housing-employment autonomy. The advantage of this method is that it highlights spatial subsets, by ignoring the predominant influence of Paris which, by its weight, tends to polarise most of the urban area; it also allows for an analysis that isn't restricted by departmental boundaries. Two perimeters were established, based on the census data, one in 1975, the other in 1982, allowing researchers to analyse the evolutions.⁵⁵ These works thus constitute the first mapping of lived territories in Île-de-France. At the time, commuter flows were almost entirely (97%) contained within Île-de-France. Such a geographical delimitation would no longer be relevant today, for example for specialised centres such as the Orly and Roissy airports, of which the area of influence spans the entire region and several departments of the Paris Basin.

INSEE's "employment zones"

In the 1980s, the government wanted a tool to conduct studies on the local functioning of the labour market and to implement territorial policies related to employment, on an infra-departmental and supra-communal scale. Hence the concept of an "employment zone" (EZ) originally defined as "a geographical area within which its residents find work and its companies find the necessary labour force, in quantity and quality, to fill the jobs they provide."

Going in this direction, in 1983, INSEE and DARES (the statistical office of the Ministry of Labour) divided the 22 French regions into 365 employment zones, based on data from the 1982 census. Home-to-work commutes were the basic variable for defining the perimeters, using INSEE's MIRABEL software that established communal groupings based on the strongest attraction criterion. The departmental boundaries were most often preserved, especially in Île-de-France. Each zone was expected to have a labour force of at least 25,000. The considered variables differed from region to region.

Let us point out that the initial definition of the EZ, which effectively adds a criterion based on the match between employment and labour, seems rather similar to that of a "coherent area," but quite different to that of an "employment pool." Usually, the term "employment pool" is incorrectly used to describe what is in fact an "employment zone": while the former is a lived territory, the latter is an administrative zoning division. We should also add to this the importance of a criterion of "duration" which is dear to statisticians: by maintaining the same perimeter for a sufficiently long period, they can study socio-economic characteristics and evolution trends within a constant space and perform comparisons between zones at the external level. This has the disadvantage of not integrating territorial changes: overestimating the older activity centres (most often industrial and/or in recession) and underestimating recent urbanisations (new towns, technological and/or upper tertiary clusters, tourism...) This zoning was partially revised in 1994, on the basis of the 1990 census, for some regions including Île-de-France. It was extended to overseas departments in 2007. Once again, the administrative territorial divisions were revised in 2010, based on the criterion of home-to-work commutes from the 2006 census. The new zones are, to some extent, not constrained by administrative boundaries. The EZ is redefined as "a geographical area within which most of the labour force lives and works (and within which institutions can find the bulk of the labour needed to fill the available jobs)." Thus, a criterion based on the match between housing and employment is now taken into account, with the criterion of labour being relegated to a parenthesis, or even omitted by users. This definition is ill-suited to urban areas experiencing a growing dissociation between residential areas and employment areas, particularly in the Île-de-France region. At the beginning of 2011, the perimeters of 322 EZs (including 18 in the overseas territories) were validated.

In 2020, INSEE and DARES revised the zoning to achieve greater national harmonisation and align with a methodology developed by Eurostat, to facilitate comparisons at the European level.⁵⁶ However, some regions, including Île-de-France, were so ill-suited to the statistical criteria that they required specific treatment. The definition of an employment zone is left unchanged and home-to-work commutes are the basic element of the analysis; the labour criterion is therefore still absent. In the case of Île-de-France, there are 15 EZs⁵⁷ (out of 306 nationally), but the results of the algorithm have sometimes been modified to meet the current limits of the EPCIs (Public institutions of intercommunal cooperation) or of the Territories (EPTs). One can wonder about the operational nature of Paris's EZ, which includes only 11 of the 12 Territories of the MGP, as the "Paris-Terres d'envol" conurbation belongs to Roissy's EZ so as to respect the perimeter of the Grand Roissy-Le Bourget. The analysis distinguishes 15 "employment functions" based on a classification into professional families⁵⁸, 5 of which are classified as "metropolitan functions".

The Network of "Employment Pool Committees" (CBE, for Comité de Bassin d'Emploi)

Local actors and the government were interested in identifying an intermediate level between the department and the municipality to analyse "employment territories." This is how Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy, by decree of July 12, 1984⁵⁹, institutionalised what were informal initiatives of social dialogue known as "Local Employment Committees," which brought together various partners working in the field of local employment: local authorities, businesses, labour unions, decentralised services of the state. For example, some 300 Employment Pool Committees were validated as "local institutions for social dialogue, consultation and action, with the aim to contribute to the improvement of local employment and the local development of the territories." In 1998, there were 130 left. These committees initially had to include three colleges (one made up of elected officials, one from business, one from labour unions), later supplemented by a fourth college open to the civil society. The stated aims: promote the signing of solidarity contracts between the government and companies, address the concrete challenges of local employment and promote initiatives that create new activities. However, it should be noted that only in rural areas did the perimeters of these committees correspond to lived territories. The particular originality of these committees is that they instituted a local partnership approach combining the professionalism of economic facilitation, the knowledge of the workforce through trade unions and the militant involvement of actors from civil society. These committees raised awareness about the global issues and generated a genuine pedagogy about territorial coherence, resulting from a bottom-up approach based on a diagnosis of local economic and social life and the establishment of pragmatic initiatives, in contrast to top-down state intervention.

The urban planner Michel Micheau, as part of his thesis work, first studied the period of informal creation of local employment committees⁶⁰, and then analysed them over a decade, as an instrument of land-use planning.⁶¹

The committees led many remarkable initiatives that helped reform land-use planning. Some examples among many others: Châteaubriant and the Laon basin, both under the leadership of local elected officials; Bressuire and the Pays de Vierzon, under the leadership of businesses; the Longwy basin, a CGT-led program of action; the Vendôme basin, led by a "developer" subprefect.⁶²

The network of committees was led by a central hub in the Ministry of Labour, called the CLCBE (Comité de liaison des comités de bassins d'emploi, or Liaison Committee for the Employment Pool Committees), created by decree in July 1984, completed in January 1988. In 2003, François Fillon, then Minister of Labour, dismantled the organisation by depriving it of funding and personnel. Ten years later, it was officially abolished by a decree of the Ministry of State Reform, Decentralisation and Public Service. Today, many Employment Pool Committees are still active but working in isolation. Gérard Delfau, who presided the CLCBE from 1990 to 1999, spoke of his activity.⁶³

Territorial studies and initiatives by the National Employment Agency (ANPE)

The ANPE, which held the mission of connecting the available members of the labour force (looking for a job) to companies offering employment, was especially interested in identifying "labour territories" alongside "employment territories."

In 1986-1987, the ANPE Île-de-France wanted to replace its network of 140 Local Employment Agencies (Agences locales pour l'emploi, or ALEs) located in areas with high unemployment, with large Employment Pool Agencies, which would be able to manage, in a sufficiently large territory, the entire local labour force (not just the unemployed, but also employed workers) and all the available jobs. This initiative resulted in a detailed feasibility study report, identifying some 50 employment pools throughout Île-de-France with the territorial characteristics of their companies (industry and business sectors and professional families) and of their labour force (qualifications and trades).⁶⁴ Unfortunately, by refusing to recognise the specificity of the capital region, the ANPE's national directorate opted against such a territorial organisation. However, these works later served as the basis for establishing local employment/labour-related policies in many territorial areas. We can mention, in Île-de-France, an action research carried out for the Plaine Renaissance union on the revitalisation and economic changes of the Saint-Denis/Saint-Ouen/Aubervilliers cluster in 1987-1988.⁶⁵ Or yet the designing and assembly of the support system created by the ANPE Île-de-France along with the creation of EuroDisneyland in Seine-et-Marne (1989-1992), to recruit and train staff both for the construction phase and the operating phase of the amusement park.⁶⁶

In addition, in 1990, a territorial employment policy was introduced in all French ANPE agencies (including in overseas territories) that were required to set up a "Local Employment Action Plan" (PALE, for Plan d'action local pour l'emploi). It is in this context that Jacqueline Lorthiois produced two learning kits⁶⁷, designed during training classes throughout all regions, intended for the head management of local agencies for the implementation of these action plans. These tools were used to review all the required elements to assemble a PALE. One of the volumes included all the key knowledge to determine the "relevant territory" within which to conduct the action plan, including how to identify the employment pool, the labour pool and how strongly they match, but also how to account for the various administrative subdivisions at play within the local agency's perimeter. Jacqueline Lorthiois then supported local authorities, trade unions, integration organisations, land-use/urban planning and training organisations to determine the relevant territories of action. Within the ANPEs, these tools have strongly popularised the concept of a "labour pool" as being complementary to an "employment pool," and the methods for determining both. Unfortunately, this work has not been widely disseminated to the general public, apart from a 1994 article in the journal *Territoires [Territories]*⁶⁸ and a chapter in her book *Diagnostic local de ressources [Local Diagnosis of Resources]* entitled "D'abord, définir le territoire" [First, defining the territory]. The term "labour pool" remains scarcely used in the French-speaking world, except in Quebec.

A2. Institutional intercommunalities

In 1995, the Territorial Planning and Development Act (known as the Pasqua Act, or LOADT⁶⁹), introduced the concept of "pays" (in English: country) based on a pool of facilities and community services that could meet the daily needs of its inhabitants. These pays were a scale of action, not a new administrative level⁷⁰. In 1997, Dominique Voynet, then Minister of Environment and Territorial Planning, was tasked with introducing the goal of "sustainable development" into the Pasqua Act. The so-called "Voynet Act" of 1999 (also called LOADDT⁷¹) further pushes this desire to promote the creation of large "coherent" territories, based on the notion of "communities of common destiny" (this expression, which was initially used, wasn't kept in the final version of the text, although it remains implicit). In addition to rural "pays" with "geographic, historical, cultural, economic and social cohesion," conurbations and collective service plans appeared in urban settings. Unfortunately, this initiative was undermined by the reluctance of some groups of elected representatives who feared losing their political prerogatives in territories that were necessarily plural. The Chevènement Act of 1999, published a few days later⁷², offered a framework for inter-communal cooperation through various types of extra-municipal urban districts which allowed for much smaller perimeters, favouring groupings driven by political affinities, or the renewal of institutional spaces such as adding cantons (administrative subdivision).

With these overlapping laws, the result was an unintelligible territorial map, shattered into small defensive structures, with empty zones and incoherent, overlapping areas. Considered too small, many of these areas were then forced to merge and integrate so-called "orphan" municipalities. If there was no local will, the departments' prefects carried out inter-communal groupings based on demographic criteria alone, establishing "equal population packages." This "rationalisation" was carried out in two stages: with the Local Authority Reform Act of 2010⁷³, meant to complete the intercommunal map by January 1, 2014 and establishing the concept of "metropolises"; and then with the MAPTAM and NOTRe Acts, which strengthened the metropolises and clarified the powers of the institutions concerned.

Over time, intercommunalities have become increasingly disconnected from the lived territories, as they have become far too large and removed from the daily concerns of inhabitants. Employment pools and labour pools have dissipated as homes and workplaces have grown further apart. Meanwhile the living pools, corresponding to trips that are mostly desired, have seen their perimeter reduced, because the "transport hassle" endured on weekdays pushes inhabitants to prefer services located in a desired area of proximity.

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Notes

1 This concept of a community of common destiny refers to all the inhabitants living in a territory in the Anglo-Saxon sense of the term "community." It was greatly developed in the work of Hugues de Varine, notably in his book L'initiative communautaire [The Communitarian Initiative] (see bibliography), but has never taken root in France due to the word's ambiguity, covering many different realities (ethnic, religious, sects, European Community...). Mostly used in debates about minorities or "communitarianism," it has a negative connotation in France, thus limiting its use, unlike in Quebec.

2 In a large urban area, we can distinguish three levels of mobility: local mobility (at the scale of a living area), for access to services, shops, leisure, schools... with an average range of 3 to 4 km one-way, that varies according to density; urban mobility (at the scale of an employment pool or a labour pool), for access to work, higher education..., with an average range of 15 km one-way; and finally metropolitan mobility, for access to rare shops and services, as well as inter-company trips, which are few but potentially strategic.

3 As used here, this concept is the one that INSEE abandoned in 2012: the space corresponding to home-to-work commutes was included, which has not been the case since then. Thus, INSEE now defines a living area as "the smallest territory on which inhabitants have access to the most common facilities and services," a definition similar to that proposed as early as 1996 by Jacqueline Lorthiois: "the area supposed to provide all the necessary elements for the daily life of its inhabitants"; these include: services to individuals; businesses; education; health; sports, leisure and culture; transport.

- 4 This formulation is borrowed from the geography expertise website Geoconfluences, which in turn relies on Armand Frémont's definition from his book *La région, espace vécu* [The Region, Lived Space] (see bibliography).
- 5 During the symposium of the Association of French Ruralists called "Prescribed territories, lived territories: inter-territoriality at the heart of restructuring rural spaces" (see bibliography).
- 6 A modernised version of the Larzac's slogan in 1980.
- 7 These concentrations take place in the context of a globalization that leads to strong spatial transformations as well as uprooting of populations while fueling the ecological upheaval. This matter is elaborated by Guillaume Faburel in *Les métropoles barbares* and by Pierre Vermeren in *L'impasse de la métropolisation* (see bibliography).
- 8 As urban planner Jean-Marc Offner points out in *Anachronismes urbains* [Urban Anachronisms] (see bibliography), it is not a matter of fighting the existing periurban areas: they're here, de facto, and we must "imagine the arrangements (location, mobility) that would allow for a more desirable and virtuous use of the periurban space, both in terms of living conditions and environmental sobriety. This might sometimes involve considering an appropriate extension of this periurban space, so that it can reach a relative autonomy (implanting activities) and a critical size (for example in order to arrange new stops in the collective transport network, requiring a massification of flows)."
- 9 Data for this example is based on the 2008 INSEE home-work census. The UCS perimeter at that time is shown in light yellow on the maps. Since then, several municipalities joined the UCS and the latter was promoted to metropolitan status at the beginning of 2017 and was then renamed Strasbourg Eurometropolis.
- 10 The A355 motorway, also known as the West Strasbourg Bypass (COS).
- 11 The map also shows the route of the projected metro Line 18 of the Grand Paris Express (in green), which tangents the territory and is mainly oriented on a south-north axis, while the movements within the territory go from southwest to northeast. In addition, this line would connect the territory through the vast agricultural and natural area of the Saclay Plateau, to the employment pool that runs from Antony to Les Ulis via Massy and the Orly/Rungis pool. Yet, exchanges between these pools are minimal.
- 12 As documented in the study report *L'Agence Nationale pour l'Emploi face aux transformations socio-économiques de la région Île-de-France* [The National Employment Agency in the face of socio-economic transformations in the Île-de-France region] by Jacqueline Lorthiois and Jean-Louis Husson (see bibliography).
- 13 Designates the combined 1st, 2nd, 8th, 9th, 16th and 17th administrative subdivisions (arrondissements) of Paris¹.
- 14 By convention, formalised by the United Nations, a megacity means a conurbation with a population of over 10 million inhabitants. The concept of a metropolis is vaguer and its meaning varies depending on the chosen angle: economic, political, cultural... Economically, a metropolis enjoys a higher level of attractiveness and performance, thanks in particular to the quality and variety of professional skills available there and their potential interactivity. A metropolis isn't necessarily a megacity and not all megacities are metropolises. However, these two attributes of a large urban system sometimes get confused, for example in Guillaume Faburel's *Les métropoles barbares* [The Barbarian Metropolises] (see bibliography).
- 15 According to the SDRIF established in 2013.
- 16 The cited figures are those of the Global Transport Survey (Enquête Globale Transports, EGT) of 2020 (see bibliography).
- 17 This data appears in the article *Les écueils du Grand Paris Express* [The Pitfalls of the Grand Paris Express] by Jacqueline Lorthiois and Harm Smit, published by *Metropolitics* in June 2019 (see bibliography), in the form of a map (Figure 1 of said article) presenting these 19 towns.
- 18 Direction régionale et interdépartementale de l'équipement et de l'aménagement (DRIEA) [Regional and interdepartmental directorate for the equipment and land-use planning of Île-de-France], *Le marché de l'immobilier de bureaux en Île-de-France* [The office real estate market in Île-de-France], July 2019 (see bibliography).
- 19 According to a study by Deloitte, published in the summer of 2020 as *Grand Paris Office Crane Survey* (see bibliography), up until the Covid-19 crisis erupted, nothing seemed able to stop this market's growth.
- 20 For example, a study by Knight Frank called *Le marché des bureaux, Île-de-France, 2e trimestre 2020* [The Office Real Estate Market, Île-de-France, 2nd trimester 2020] (see bibliography) reports that, in the face of the Covid-19 crisis, French companies are planning to reduce their real estate spending by 43.2%.
- 21 At the same time, the Law 64-707 of July 10, 1964 on the reorganisation of the Parisian region, replaced the Seine department by the city of Paris, and split up the Seine-et-Oise department into those of Hauts-de-Seine, Seine-Saint-Denis, Val-de-Marne, Essonne, Yvelines and Val-d'Oise.
- 22 An overview of how the urban planning of Île-de-France evolved from the post-war period to the present day can be found in the Rapid Note no. 838 of the Paris Region Institute, *Décryptage de 70 ans d'occupation du sol en Île-de-France* [Deciphering 70 years of land occupation in Île-de-France] (see bibliography).
- 23 Already in 1949, the geographer Jean-François Gravier, in his book *Mise en valeur de la France* [Promoting France] - that complemented his book *Paris et le désert français* [Paris and the French Desert] - bemoaned that "Paris seems to be laid out for cars and not for men - much less for children" (see bibliography). In this book, he also calls for the creation of a Greater Paris with 5 million inhabitants.
- 24 This problem is developed in the article *Les écueils du Grand Paris Express* [The pitfalls of the Grand Paris Express] (see bibliography).
- 25 The vanity of this thesis was denounced as early as 1993 by Jean-Marc Offner in *Les « effets structurants » du transport : mythe politique, mystification scientifique* [The "structuring effects" of transport: political myth, scientific mystification] (see bibliography). This myth remains widespread in the minds of policy makers.
- 26 A phenomenon known as the "Zahavi Conjecture," named after the expert who observed it in the 1970s.
- 27 More generally, this doctrine relies on the "magical thought of densification" criticised by Jean-Marc Offner in *Anachronismes urbains* [Urban Anachronisms], as well as by the urban planner Jean-Charles Castel in several articles, such as *Étalement urbain : la grande illusion* [Urban Sprawl: The Grand Illusion] (see bibliography).
- 28 The intention to fluidify traffic is often illusory because it is thwarted by rebound effects. Car traffic tends to behave like a gas: it fills up all the space given to it.
- 29 Urban tolls are already successfully operated abroad, including in London, Stockholm and Singapore.

30 Note the contrast with proposals that appear from time to time, especially in pre-election periods, to introduce universal free transport. In this regard, the interview with transport economist Yves Crozet is instructive: La gratuité est souvent le choix de la facilité et du court terme [Free transport is often the easy, short-term choice] (see bibliography).

31 See, for example, this study by CEREMA: Chronoaménagement et autoroute autrement [Chrono-planning and using highways differently] (see bibliography). This type of view is rejected by transport professionals, who are obsessed with "saving time."

32 Law on the rights and freedoms of municipalities, departments and regions of March 2, 1982, known as the Defferre Act.

33 Regarding the current SDRIF, see this critical analysis of its interim assessment by Jacqueline Lorthiois: Bilan du SDRIF 2013-2030 – un désastre annoncé ! [Assessment of the SDRIF 2013-2030 - a disaster in the waiting!] (see bibliography). It should also be noted that the SDRIF chooses planning options without any concern for the possibility of funding them, let alone for the terms of this funding.

34 Law No. 2014-58 for the modernisation of territorial public action and the affirmation of metropolises (MAPTAM Act) of January 27, 2014, which came into effect on January 1, 2016.

35 Law No. 2015-991 for the new territorial organisation of the Republic (NOTRe Act) of August 7, 2015.

36 As Sibylle Vincendon summed it up in the article L'année où on l'a compris ce qu'est le Grand Paris [The year we understood what the Greater Paris is], published in 2013 on her blog Grand Paris et petits détours (see bibliography), before coming to the MAPTAM Act, the governance of Greater Paris was the subject of a bitter battle, the arbitration of which was anything but rational: "For years, basically, there have been two opposing views of the Greater Paris Metropolis. On the one hand, the proponents of a Greater Paris that is neat and tidy and well groomed, as defended by Nicolas Sarkozy (who advocated for an urban community as early as 2007) or Philippe Dallier and Claude Bartolone (in favour of merging departments). On the other, supporters of a small-steps policy, of voluntary reconciliations and intercommunalities based on the project. Those, in short, who took the time to create the joint study group Paris Métropole. (...) By presenting its project for Greater Paris during the parliamentary debate on metropolises, the government succeeded in its tour de force of giving credence to the latter first, before going with the former. Is everyone following?"

37 In this context, the MGP had to establish a territorial coherence scheme (SCoT), which has so far proved unfeasible. Moreover, the MGP's budget is similar to the Region's budget, but the lion's share of it is redistributed to the Territories. In total, the MGP seems to be a new layer to the administrative cake with no significant added value.

38 Published in March 2018 by the Paris Urbanism Workshop (APUR, Atelier parisien d'urbanisme) in Composition des 12 territoires de la Métropole du Grand Paris [Composition of the 12 Territories of the Greater Paris Metropolis (see bibliography).

39 This entity has been renamed "Public Territorial Institution" (in French: EPT, for Établissement public territorial) by the NOTRe Act. In place of this administrative-sounding denomination, we prefer the one provided by the MAPTAM Act.

40 For a more in-depth critique of the MGP's subdivision into Territories, see Jacqueline Lorthiois's La métropole du Grand Paris (MGP) en douze territoires [The Greater Paris Metropolis (MGP) in twelve territories] (see bibliography).

41 Apart from a few peripheral municipalities that have opted to belong to the MGP: Argenteuil in Territory T5, Paray-Vieille-Poste, Morangis, Athis-Mons, Épinay-sur-Orge, Juvisy-sur-Orge and Viry-Châtillon in Territory T12.

42 As explained by Marc Wiel in Le Grand Paris – Premier conflit né de la décentralisation [The Greater Paris - The First Conflict Born of Decentralisation] (see bibliography), this megapolitan dimension was completely ignored in the decentralisation law of 1982.

43 The current Territories/EPTs don't even have the status of an EPCI (établissement public de coopération intercommunale, or Public institution of intercommunal cooperation). It's a truly exceptional regime that implies several consequences such as the lack of INSEE statistics at the Territory level, despite their considerable demographic weight.

44 We don't discuss here the respective roles and relationships of the Region and the MGP, but it's clear that an institutional reform won't work without redefining these relationships.

45 To better preserve natural and agricultural areas, it would be preferable not to confine the land-use planning to urban development operations and not to entrust developers alone with a monopoly over territorial planning.

46 Such an index could be refined with other criteria, such as those of the Human Development Index (HDI), in order to develop a generalised index to differentiate between territorial policies.

47 The rate of this tax in 2020 is €417.49 per m² for Paris and most municipalities of Hauts-de-Seine, €93.95 for the other municipalities of the first ring of suburbs, €52.20 for the municipalities of the second ring of suburbs belonging to the urban unit of Paris, and nil for all the others.

48 Moreover, these crises are causing a sharp increase in vacant real estate, prompting developers to prioritise the most expensive premises.

49 Law no. 2014-626 on local craftsmen, trade and very small companies, June 18, 2014.

50 Michel Destefanis and Anne-Marie Vasseur, Le fonctionnement d'un marché du travail local : le bassin de main-d'œuvre d'Annecy [The functioning of a local labour market: Annecy's labour pool], 1974 (see bibliography).

51 Michel Destefanis and Laurence Foucher, Le fonctionnement d'un marché du travail local : le bassin de main-d'œuvre de Compiègne [The functioning of a local labour market: Compiègne's labour pool], 1977 (see bibliography).

52 Institute of Urban Planning and Development of Île-de-France (Institut d'aménagement et d'urbanisme de la région Île-de-France), which before 1976 was IAURP (Institute of Urban Planning and Development of the Paris Region), created in 1960. In 2008, IAURIF became IAU IdF (Institute of Urban Planning and Development of Île-de-France), then IPR (Institut Paris Region) in 2019.

53 See, among others, his book L'Économie du XXe siècle [The Economy of the 20th Century], 1961 (see bibliography).

54 Various books and articles bear witness to this, including the following (see bibliography): Jean-Jacques Ronsac, Les zones de solidarité en région Île-de-France [Solidarity zones in the Île-de-France region] (1982); Jean-Jacques Ronsac et alii, Habitat-emploi et transport, une nouvelle approche : les zones de solidarité en Île-de-France [Housing-employment and transport, a new approach: the solidarity zones in Île-de-France] (1983); Pascale Bessy, Migrations alternantes ; le chassé-croisé s'intensifie [Alternating Migrations; the criss-cross is intensifying] (1989).

55 Pascale Bessy and Jean-Jacques Ronsac, Zones d'échanges habitat-emploi – Contours en 1982 et évolution 1975-1982 [Housing-Employment Exchange Zones - Outlines in 1982 and Evolution 1975-1982], INSEE-IAURIF, December 1986.

56 For Île-de-France, the new division into employment zones is presented in the article Les nouvelles zones d'emploi franciliennes : principalement métropolitaines ou résidentielles [The new employment zones in France: mainly metropolitan or residential] (or even bibliography).

57 This number illustrates the large gap between the concepts of employment zone and employment pool, of which there are about fifty in Île-de-France.

58 This classification is based on a criterion of the individual activity of the workers, regardless of their qualification and position, and not on the collective activity of the company.

59 Completed on January 21, 1988, amended on May 3, 2002.

61 Key analyses in this regard by Michel Micheau (see bibliography): Les Comités de bassin d'emploi, bilan et questions [Employment Pool Committees, assessment and questions], Travail et Emploi (1982); Politique locale de l'emploi et Comités de bassin d'emploi. Une recherche, 10 ans après [Local Employment Policy and Employment Pool Committees. A research, 10 years later] (1991).

62 These and other examples are described in a special issue of the December 1991 journal Territoires [Territories], called Partenaires pour le développement économique local [Partners for Local Economic Development] (see bibliography).

63 Let's cite Le retour du citoyen – démocratie et territoires [The Return of the Citizen - Democracy and Territories] (1994). Bemoaning the undemocratic functioning of the institutions, he advocates for including citizens in the fundamental decisions, from those of the employment pool to those of the region, the nation and Europe, through what we would today call "citizen conventions."

64 Jacqueline Lorthiois and Jean-Louis Husson, L'Agence Nationale pour l'Emploi face aux transformations socio-économiques de la région Île-de-France [The National Employment Agency in the face of socio-economic transformations in the Île-de-France region] (see bibliography). Of particular note is Volume 2: Dynamique spatiale de l'Île-de-France et physionomie des bassins d'emploi. [Spatial dynamics of Île-de-France and the physiognomy of the employment pools.]

65 Jacqueline Lorthiois and Jean-Louis Husson, La Plaine Saint-Denis et la dynamique de localisation des activités au nord de l'Île-de-France [La Plaine Saint-Denis and the localisation of activities in the north of Île-de-France] (see bibliography). Especially volume 2, Pôles et bassins d'emploi [Employment pools and clusters], which covers the territories of Saint-Denis, Bobigny and Sarcelles and the northern quadrant of Paris.

66 Jacqueline Lorthiois, Jean-Louis Husson and Jean Buzy, EuroDisneyland, bilan prévisionnel de l'emploi [EuroDisneyland, provisional employment assessment], 1990 (see bibliography).

67 Jacqueline Lorthiois, Méthodologie de plan d'action local pour l'emploi [Methodology for the local employment action plan] (see bibliography).

68 Jacqueline Lorthiois, Observer l'emploi [Observe employment], Territoire, December 1994.

69 Territorial Planning and Development Act of February 4, 1995, in French: Loi n° 95-115 d'orientation pour l'aménagement et le développement du territoire (LOADT).

70 Jacqueline Lorthiois (ed.) Projets de territoire : quelles structures, quels financements, quelles ressources humaines ? [Territory projects: what structures, what funding, what human resources?], CNFPT, 1997.

71 Territorial Planning and Sustainable Development Act of June 25, 1999, in French: Loi n°99-533 d'orientation pour l'aménagement et le développement durable du territoire (LOADDT).

72 Law 99-586 of July 12, 1999 to strengthen and simplify inter-communal cooperation.

73 Law No. 2010-1563 for the reform of local authorities of December 16, 2010; in French: Loi n° 2010-1563 de réforme des collectivités territoriales du 16 décembre 2010.

Coherent area

A "coherent area" refers to an inter-communal space determined by the overlap of an "employment pool" and a "labour pool"; it thus enjoys a certain autonomy, thanks to an optimal match between the resident labour force and local jobs. This has the effect of limiting the range of movements, promoting the population's spatial integration and strengthening a sense of territorial belonging.

En savoir plus x

Mobility

For the Mobile Lives Forum, mobility is understood as the process of how individuals travel across distances in order to deploy through time and space the activities that make up their lifestyles. These travel practices are embedded in socio-technical systems, produced by transport and communication industries and techniques, and by normative discourses on these practices, with considerable social, environmental and spatial impacts.

En savoir plus x

Movement

Movement is the crossing of space by people, objects, capital, ideas and other information. It is either oriented, and therefore occurs between an origin and one or more destinations, or it is more akin to the idea of simply wandering, with no real origin or destination.

En savoir plus x

Associated Thematics :

Lifestyles

- Living environments
- Proximity
- Work

Policies

- Paris and Île-de-France
- Public transport
- Cities & Territories

Theories

- Concepts
-



Jacqueline Lorthiois

urban planner and socio-economist

Jacqueline Lorthiois is an urban planner and socio-economist who has been a specialist in the relationship between employment and labour in the regions, including the Île-de-France, for forty years. She is a co-founder of the CPTG (Collectif pour le Triangle de Gonesse) and COSTIF (Coordination contre les grands projets inutiles d'Île-de-France). She has studied each of the region's employment areas for the Public Employment Service and several hundred local authorities. In the public sector, she has been a technical advisor in several ministerial cabinets (Matignon, Environment/Territorial Planning, Employment, Solidarity Economy), and in various delegations (Employment/Labour/Social Affairs). She has also taught at Paris-8 and Paris-13. She maintains a website on regional planning and a blog on Mediapart about the major useless projects in Île-de-France.



Harm Smit

Association Manager

Harm Smit, a physical engineer by training, is a specialist in networks, particularly computer networks. In the fields of urban planning and mobility - and the close links between them - he has accumulated more than forty years of experience in the field, which owes much to his relations with experts such as Jean-Pierre Orfeuil and especially Marc Wiel; he assisted the latter in writing his last three books. He is a member of various associations in the Île-de-France region, including the coordination of the OIN Saclay Collective since 2010; in this capacity, he contributed to the book *Citoyens de terre contre État de fer*.

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