

GROWTH IMPERATIVE, CITY-REGION AND THE STATE

Some lessons from the recent French territorial reform

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Introduction

✓ the “*stubborn locational rootedness of world capitalism*”
(Allen Scott 2000)

✓ The “*city-region*”, the “*globalization’s new urban form*”

✓ The “*city-region*”, the good scale for policy making?

=>a study of the recent French territorial reform

✓ Controversies about the political dimension of the city-region:

1. *Which role for the state?*
2. *Government or governance?*

Main findings

- 1/the reform led to the construction of a certain kind of city-region which can not be reduced to the “competitive city-region”
- 2/the rationale of this construction is not only the “economic growth boosting”, it is “growth” + a new solidarity principle
- 3/this is not the result of a strategic actor intention but the outcome of an interactive political process.

=> a political drama with the “metropolis” as the main character (not the city-region)

Model 1: the *metropolitan government model*

✓ new public authority at the metropolitan level:

two tier structure

Intermunicipal unit of more than 400000 inhabitants in a metropolitan area of more than 650000 inhabitants (statistical functional definition using commuting)

⇒15 metropolises in France in 2016 : Nancy, Nice, Lyon, Bordeaux, Brest, Grenoble, Lille, Montpellier, Nantes, Rennes, Rouen, Strasbourg, Toulouse, (Grand) Paris, Aix Marseille

✓ *“Metropolises are the main growth places”*

spatial agglomeration is an economic growth factor/urban policies/efficiency loss when political fragmentation

✓ OECD

Ahrend et alii 2014 “What makes cities more productive? Evidence on the role of urban governance from five OECD countries”, OECD Regional Development Working Papers.

“Better urban governance structures have been shown to be associated with more efficient transport systems and land use, and may hence be expected to affect economic productivity”

“administrative fragmentation can obstruct transport infrastructure investments and effective land use planning, thereby increasing congestion and reducing a city’s attractiveness for individuals and businesses”

Model 2: the *regional governance model*

✓ parliamentary discussions : how the metropolis economic dynamism will spread over its regional environment?

the ability for metropolises to contribute to a system of solidarity and cohesion including the territories surrounding them

✓ Response: a new multilevel governance instrument : the Territorial Conference of Public Action.

Aim: coordinating different local authorities of different administrative levels: region, department -eq .of the county, metropolis, and other non metropolitan (inter)municipal authorities

✓ *“Metropolises are growth engines”*

driving forces in the metropolitan economy / the “higher tertiary functions” /statistical works developed since the 90s by the French national statistical institute

=>high skilled jobs in the functions of business leadership, marketing, research & development, engineering, but also culture

✓ a new public instrument that should ensure the spillovers at the regional level (metropolis surrounding)

Conclusion

✓ The state, a stage for city-region politics

✓ A French city-region

=> metropolitan government + regional governance structure

✓ Which goal /rationale for the city-region political construction?

=> competitiveness in a global economy + new solidarity principle (in a post-keynesian world)

