

POLYNET Action 3.1

Analysis of policy documents & policy focus groups

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the report: firms' functional geography and public spatial strategies

The Polynet first research actions aimed at studying the functional geography of the Paris Mega-City Region and to highlight the relationships with the morphological urban geography. The Paris Mega-City Region is larger than the Ile-de-France administrative region as it encompasses the neighbouring *départements* and integrates at least the agglomerations of Meaux, Mantes, Beauvais, Creil, Compiègne and Chartres and has sometimes been argued to go as far as Rouen, Amiens, Reims, etc. Action 1 study on Functional Urban Regions¹ economic structures and commuting flows indicates some interdependencies, at least between Paris and the other closed surrounding FURs, and testifies both the reality of a centre-periphery pattern (Gilli, 2002) and of more polycentric sub-regional systems. However, action 2 analysis shows a different model as firms' spatial networks and business connectivities illustrate limitations to polycentricity in the Paris Mega-City Region: firms' strategies focus mainly on a dominant central area (especially the dense central metropolitan triangle of Paris and the Hauts-de-Seine *département*); little polycentric interactions have been observed among the advanced business services. The weakness of non centre-periphery business flows is probably linked to internal economic reconfiguration within the Paris agglomeration. We argue that such a transformation is dependant not only to the development of an information and knowledge economy which stresses the importance of dense and accessible central areas that work as regional and global gateways, but also, in the Ile-de-France planning context, because of public policies trying to achieve a concentrated deconcentration strategy within what has become today the *agglomeration* perimeter.

Action 3 tries therefore to evaluate how policy-makers understand and influence the functional geographies of the Mega-City region. This is all the more important as the current Ile-de-France regional planning document is under revision and has opened a passionate debate on the future of the region. This paper hopes to inform through the results of the Polynet research actions emerging policy issues that could be fruitfully taken into account in terms of spatial planning and economic development policies.

1.2 Methodology: No policy documents or too many?

No current policy document exists at the Paris Mega-City Region's² level. Yet, many documents are dealing with spatial planning issues linked to this region.

The European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) and the North-West European Spatial Vision include the Bassin Parisien as part of the central economic core of the European Union. In the context of a more balanced and sustainable development objective for the European territory, the two documents propose to divert economic growth from this region to more peripheral areas.

Some documents are of national scope such as the *Schémas des Services Collectifs (Schemes for Collective Services)* which depict the broad line of the governmental spatial strategy in terms of transportation infrastructures, higher education and research, culture and environment, or as the *Plans d'Action Stratégique de l'Etat en Régions (PASER, State's Strategic Action Plan in the Regions)* which highlight four to five main governmental strategic objectives in each French region.

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Other documents reflect mixed national-regional partnerships such as the Contrats de Plan *Etat-région* (CPER, *State-Region Plan Contracts*) which are six years long key regional planning contracts as both national government and regional bodies commit themselves to financing common projects dealing for some with spatial and economic development issues.

Administrative regions have their own planning documents such as the *Schéma Régional d'Aménagement et de Développement du Territoire* (SRADT, *Regional Planning and Territorial Development Scheme*) which is written after a large scale consultation of other regional public bodies (*départements*, municipalities and inter-municipalities)³. The Ile-de-France has its own particular planning document. The *Schéma Directeur* – which used to be a State-written document in the former versions (1965, 1976 and 1994) – is now part of the Ile-de-France Region's competence, even though State keeps an important advisory role. One may notice that much more than the SRADT, the *Schéma Directeur* can be a powerful tool as it is legally binding and can be opposed to other local public documents.

Among such local documents dealing with planning issues, some like the *Schéma de Cohérence Territoriale* (SCOT) are based on the agglomeration level and can be of relevant use for Polynet Action 3, especially in FURs located outside the Ile-de-France region.

It appears impossible to cover all the public planning documents. Yet their number already indicates the complexity of public actions in the Paris Mega-City Region both because of the multiple intervening bodies (European, national, regional, local) and of administrative horizontal fragmentation as many bodies with planning and economic development powers coexist (municipal assemblies, inter-municipal bodies, *départements* and *Régions*). At least 8 regions have direct interests for instance in the Paris Mega-City Region's perimeter.

In this context, two key bodies concentrate important responsibilities in the spatial planning of the Mega-City Region. The central administration (and its regional services) has long kept the initiative and the final decision in the Paris Ile-de-France region because of the national interest of a political and economic capital. However, political deconcentration (known as "*décentralisation*"), first under the socialist government in the first half of the 1980's and currently under the conservatives' government has increased the powers of local administrations, and especially the Regions'. A noticeable evidence of that is the leading role granted to the Ile-de-France region in the current revision of the *Schéma Directeur*.

Because of such a fragmented and complex political reality, we focus in this paper mainly on the administrative regional level which is both the closest relevant scale to the Mega-City Region's perimeter and a synthesis between State's and Ile-de-France region's strategies. In main French urban areas, and especially in the Paris region, ever since the beginning of the *Politique d'Aménagement du Territoire* (the national planning policy), public actions has indeed concerned these two levels: the regional one as such large size agglomerations organise their regional environment, especially with increasing commuting flows; the national one as the influence of regional urban systems is believed to be of crucial importance for national development in a global and competitive economy⁴.

1.3 Structure of the report

We first studied the different *Schémas Directeurs de la Région Ile-de-France* (SDRIF), the SDRATs and all other regional documents, as well as the Contrats de Plan Etat-Région (CPER) and all inter-regional issues addressed in different available documents. Yet, because of the current revision of the SDRIF, such an analysis was menaced to miss the emerging political issues on regional planning and economic development highlighted in the ongoing public debate. The Policy Focus Group meetings, which most major public bodies attended, proved to be helpful to take into account these emerging issues and complement the policy document analysis.

2. Analysis of Policy Frameworks for the Mega-City Region

2.1 Spatial Planning and Development

Stretched between two levels of public actions, i.e. the national “*politique d'aménagement du territoire*” and the region planning policy, the Mega-City region is indirectly considered as a relevant spatial scale by various policy documents, even though the definition of its perimeter is not officially recognised. Yet the lack of effective document focusing on the Mega-City Region scale may also be seen as the evidence that the concern is not strong enough to promote a truly metropolitan policy which would go past the administrative boundaries as easily as inhabitants or firms do.

a) The Mega-City region: policy relevant or not?

However, an attempt to create a global trans-regional strategy for the Paris metropolitan region has existed with the 1994-1999 *Contrat de Plan Interrégional du Bassin Parisien (CPIBP – Bassin Parisien Interregional Planning Contract)*. The document was the first implementation phase of the *Charte du Bassin Parisien* which was the formal output of intense discussions between the national government and the 8 constitutive regions of the Bassin Parisien. Two development scenarios depicted in the 1992 White Papers were proposed. The “multipolar and centralised scenario” insisted on the “natural” dynamics observed at this time with the reinforcement of the Ile-de-France region and of a monocentric pattern limiting the development of more peripheral cities. The second scenario was referred to as “the metropolitan network scenario”. The Bassin Parisien’s cities were to reach a greater autonomy vis-à-vis the capital region and access to the rank of European metropolis. This later scenario, which was privileged by both the State and the 8 regions that signed the *Charte du Bassin Parisien* in 1994, was favouring a redistributive logic aiming at reducing spatial inequities through the promotion of a more polycentric geography. The document is supporting one of the overarching Polynet hypotheses which states that polycentricity tends to be reinforced in Mega-City Regions. The implementation phase initiated by the *Contrat de Plan Interrégional du Bassin Parisien (CPIBP)* seemed to have followed the metropolitan network objective and concentrated for instance transportation investments on tangential highways that would increase Bassin Parisien cities’ connectivity.

However the CPIBP has been the only attempt to create a trans-regional policy document since it was not reconducted in the 2000-06 generation of *Contrats de Plan Etat-Région*. Interregional projects are now restricted to particular agreements on well delimited projects rather than included in a global approach. It is the case with some trans-regional infrastructures such as the railway line from Normandy to La Défense, Paris and Roissy airport or the improvement of the railway line between from Orléans to Paris.

Despite this, there are still some evidences of interests in spatial planning at the metropolitan scale. The Decembre 2003 Governmental Committee for Spatial Planning and Territorial Development (*CIADT - Comité Interministériel d'Aménagement et de Développement du Territoire*) stressed the crucial role of metropolitan cities in the international competition and proposed to develop a metropolitan networks policy, focusing for instance in our case on the three urban networks of Normandy, Champagne (Reims region) and the Loire Valley (Orléans – Tours). The case of the Mega-City Region was not addressed directly in the first call for tenders. However, the Datar which is at the origin of the project has expressed a special concern on the Paris region and the surrounding *départements*.

The lack of Mega-City Region scale related policy documents does not mean that other spatial planning documents are not referring to the metropolitan level. To name but one example, the 1994 *SDRIF* which was written at the same time as the *Charte du Bassin Parisien* allocates a chapter to the metropolitan issues that goes past the regional administrative boundaries. It is said for instance that in a context of growing international economic competition and increasing European integration, the Bassin Parisien is Paris’ hinterland and can therefore help the Ile-de-France region keep its dominant place in the “network of major European flows”. It is argued there that without the Bassin Parisien, the Ile-de-France faces the risk of being marginalised from the central polygon. Therefore, the 1994 *Schéma Directeur* insists on the necessity to favour Bassin Parisien’s economic development by promoting functional com-

plementarities with the Ile-de-France region. Following the “metropolitan network” scenario, *cathedral cities* are to be linked by highways and speed trains both towards Paris strategic equipments and infrastructures (central Paris, airports, etc.) as well as with each other. Meanwhile smaller medium sized cities within and around the Ile-de-France (Mantes, Meaux, Chartres, Beauvais, etc.) are to concentrate deconcentration dynamics and therefore limit what are perceived as the negative consequences of urban sprawl. Once again, the logic is redistributive: Paris region’s development must be reduced so that the rest of the Mega-City Region can benefit stronger economic growth.

Today’s observation is however one of a relative failure. Despite some economic development, the secondary networks in Champagne, Normandy and the Loire Valley do not seem to have reached enough momentum to be ranked among the European metropolitan regions. On the contrary, according to the Polynet’s results, the first scenario which was one of multipolarity and centralisation seems to be much more effective. Some of the Bassin Parisien’s cities, either small agglomerations closed to Paris or further *cathedral cities*, benefit from strong employment and demographic growth partly linked to deconcentration from the Paris FUR as well as to more endogenous development. Meanwhile the central Paris area concentrates most strategic functions and advanced services organizing a pattern of flows which is more centre-periphery than polycentric. This is probably what has motivated a change in the philosophy of the last *Contrat de Plan Etat-Région d’Ile-de-France* (2000-06). This document which expresses common views of national government and Ile-de-France region not only insists on the importance of working at an enlarged metropolitan scale regardless of administrative limits, but it also proposes to abandon a “*redistributive logic between regions*”, i.e. the Ile-de-France versus the rest of the Bassin Parisien, in favour of a

“shared development, based on the promotion of complementarities and a common management of inter-regional issues.” (p. 66).

A methodology is proposed in the Article 22: “*a shared and balanced development between the Ile-de-France and the neighbouring regions*” can be achieved through “*interregional cooperation*”, for instance in the fields of environment, research and higher education networks, focused actions on the FURs newly integrated into the Mega-City Region as well as trans-regional transportation infrastructures.

b) Polycentricity: a Mega-City Region or a Parisian agglomeration issue?

One of the Polynet overarching questions is that polycentricism has become a transversal concept on which many if not all spatial planning institutions can – and do – rely. The ESDP and North-West Europe spatial Vision promotes a polycentric system; the 1990’ interregional Bassin Parisien documents favoured a polycentric metropolitan system scenario; the Ile-de-France regional documents have made polycentricity the motto for the last forty years at least:

“The principle of polycentrism already present in the 1965 and 1976 Schémas is the basis for the urban organisation to be developed” p. 33).

However, the meanings and implementations of the notion vary utterly from one case to this other. If polycentricism at the European level can be interpreted as diverting economic growth from the pentagon to peripheral regions, the same notion applied to the Bassin Parisien consists into promoting the development of medium sized agglomerations that are in fact part or at least on the very near outskirts of the Pentagon. Moreover, the implementation at the Ile-de-France region level is conflicting both with European Union and Bassin Parisien logics as polycentrism understood as limiting Paris City’s growth in favour of New Towns does and closely located secondary economic centre strengthen in fact the Parisian agglomeration. Indeed, the Ile-de-France regional polycentric spatial planning principle is one of a very limited deconcentration. Inspired from the British New Towns, the French Villes Nouvelles have a much closer location to Paris (around 25 to 35 km) which because of urban deconcentration dynamics has progressively been integrated in the *agglomeration* perimeter.

The difficulty is therefore to understand which policy strategy has gained advantage in the Parisian metropolitan area. Polynet’s results as well as other researches on virtual flows (Halbert, 2004a) show that, in terms of advanced producer services’ spatial strategy, economic polycentricity is limited to the Parisian agglomeration and is not ex-

tended to the Mega-City Region neither to the Bassin Parisien. The firms' spatial strategies have found in the short distance concentrated deconcentration policy of the *Schémas Directeurs* and the *Contrats de Plan Etat-région* an urban system on which they could develop a regional division of labour (Halbert, 2004b). It seems therefore that polycentricism applied at the Ile-de-France level has been the most efficient, probably because it converged to some respect with firms' and inhabitants spatial location strategy.

2.2 Economic development, skills, regulation

Economic development both in the Mega-City Region and in the Ile-de-France is often understood in the more general context of balanced spatial development. For instance, the national *Politique d'Aménagement du Territoire* has until recently been in favour of diverting the Ile-de-France's economic growth to the Bassin Parisien's cities. In the Ile-de-France too, the objective was also to reduce spatial inequalities in terms of employment location in the region. The *SDRIF* limits the central employment poles' growth (Hauts-de-Seine *départements* for example) in order to increase the employment/inhabitant ratio in less dynamic areas. The importance of such a dense central area in the information economy demonstrated in Polynet works is not unknown to policy-makers. However, the *SDRIF* privileged redevelopment and deconcentration on secondary economic poles (rather than within the central area) as it was believed to be an efficient tool to limit urban sprawl via concentrated deconcentration. To achieve this, office space development authorized in the dense area (Paris city and some of the Hauts-de-Seine municipalities) has for instance been strictly limited by different regional and national policies. In many central municipalities, a ratio of office floors in new land developments is to be respected, thus limiting potential development in the economic core.

The *SDRIF* however is not addressing spatial planning and economic development issues only in terms of reducing the weight of Paris. It promotes as well a selective spatial strategy aiming at attracting high order activities in the "European scope-oriented poles" ("*Pôles d'envergure européenne*"). Advanced producer services and high-tech activities are considered as the basis of the knowledge and information regional economy and require a special care in a context of growing competition between world cities. Paris and La Défense are internationally-known business districts; Roissy airport is a global gateway to the world; the South-west Plateau de Saclay and Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines concentrate many international R&D laboratories; Marne la Vallée is consolidating its European profile (university research centre, international tourism with Disneyland Paris).

The 2000-06 Ile-de-France *Contrat de Plan Etat-région* accentuates the selective approach in term of economic development. The region has some valuable qualities (broad-band networks, economic density, and market's size) that need to be enhanced. A list of actions is proposed to strengthen this position: to increase labour force skills and propose a highly qualified regional economy to international firms; to favour technological innovation⁵, to encourage globalisation of local firms and to promote research networks. Acknowledging that being one of the greatest world concentrations of scientists and students is an opportunity to enhance economic development, Article 11 in the CPER for instance defines a strategy of "*excellence poles*". The aim is to favour partnerships in large scale research and education networks, both in the region, in the Bassin Parisien and at international level, especially in the advanced scientific fields of health, optics, environment and ICTs.

Such a spatial strategy to promote the knowledge economy, especially through an increasing effort in terms of research and education for a better qualified workforce supports the firms' interviews of Polynet action 2.1. However, none of the *SDRIF*, the *CPER* or the *PASER* puts any emphasis on advanced producer services taken as a distinct type of high order activities. Yet, Polynet's results show a spatial logic that is specific to these functions. This lack of differentiation between research and high-tech industries-oriented activities and advanced services may highlight a deficiency in the understanding of the regional information economy.

One could also see in the world cities' competition narrative a second difference between the policy documents and the results of our firms' interviews. However, it is true that some economic development matters are shed in the light of a more cooperative strategy. The Article 8 of the CPER insists on promoting cooperation with other countries especially in the field of research and higher education. Such a cooperative policy seems to be mostly oriented towards less developed regions (Africa, Asia). In terms of economic development the dominant approach is still one of competition.

2.3 Transport, accessibility, E-connectivity

Transports and telecommunication infrastructures' investments are an important element of spatial planning and economic development policies. In an economy of flows, connectivity and information exchanges, they influence the location of firms and the shape of urban organisations. The development of e-connectivity is a general issue that has become a priority at the national scale. By 2007, most of the French territory is to have broad-band access. One may consider that a good overall quality of telecommunication is about to be achieved. The regional planning documents however do not insist on major actions to be done but maybe in some more rural areas as if considering the market economy able to generate the level of equipments required by firms.

On the contrary the freight and people transportation infrastructures issue is an especially important one in all documents, probably because it engages major public investments. At the interregional scale, the priority is given to developing a tangential loop linking Bassin Parisien cities in a large ring around the Ile-de-France region. Following the network metropolitan scenario, the cathedral cities road is now well advanced and will be completed by the year 2025 with the planned infrastructures between Rouen and Orleans via Chartres and between Orléans and Troyes. The freight railway system should follow the same pattern with the north branch going from Normandy to Amiens and the East of France. Yet, at the same time another logics is followed with the reinforcement of connectivity from all urban areas to the Paris agglomeration. It is especially true with the railway transport system with improved or new links from Normandy, Orléans or Reims (eastern TGV line) to the centre of the Ile-de-France region. Polynet qualitative analysis of firms networks (action 2.1 interviews) tend to favour the latter choice as fast and reliable access to the central part of the Paris agglomeration is valued as a key element for most Bassin Parisien advanced producer services firms.

Infrastructures routieres en 2025



- Autoroutes existantes améliorées, en travaux ou nouvelles
- Autoroutes en projet
- Circuits nouveaux réalisés
- Grands Lignes d'Aménagement du Territoire (GLAT) en cours d'aménagement (*)
- Projets à diffuser
- ★ Programme de transport dans le cadre du RNE et sur les infrastructures

La représentation des faisceaux sur cette carte ne préjuge pas des tracés futurs, en particulier pour l'ensemble des liaisons autoroutières nouvelles.

Les GLAT correspondent à des itinéraires à fort trafic international ou intercontinental, soit à des liaisons entre les principales métropoles régionales et les principaux ports ou aéroports français.

Infrastructures ferroviaires, portuaires, fluviales et maritimes a long terme



However, the transport issue is more complex than cross-regional infrastructures. The Polynet results show that the regional knowledge economy benefits from increased accessibility *within* the central area of the Mega-City Region.

As early as the 1950's, regional policy documents have insisted on the necessity of a fast and reliable transport system to travel inside the region (see R.E.R. lines network). The result is that of an efficient system with largely dominant radials (both highways and railways) and tangential highways linking all main secondary economic centres in the agglomeration (the A86 and the *Francilienne* tangential highways). The policy documents (*SDRIF* and *CPEP*) assign a priority to tangential infrastructures. However, the implementation shows a selective development. The priority seems to have been given to reinforcing connectivity in the outer suburbs rather than in the dense central part of the agglomeration. For instance, the planned *Orbitale* project which consisted on a fast underground train around the Paris City and servicing municipalities in the three dense surrounding *départements* has not been achieved. This choice can be argued regarding Polynet's results and advanced producer services' expectations.

The first consequence is to privilege indirectly road transportation against railway – the former is more efficient and cost-effective in low density areas of the outer suburbs – and therefore to reduce the use of more environmentally respectful public transport. Second, advanced producer services firms ask for a dense central and accessible area where connectivity is at its maximum and face-to-face contacts easy. To develop efficient transport in the dense part of the agglomeration (such as the *Orbitale* project) should participate to the development of the regional information and knowledge economy.

2.4 Housing and Environment

The *Contrat de Plan Etat-Région d'Ile-de-France* acknowledges a regional fragility resulting from growing internal spatial and social imbalances. The policy document proposes to address these difficulties in promoting “*a harmonious, balanced and sustainable development of the Ile-de-France*”⁶. Among the different actions required to achieve such a goal, one proposal is to fight against social and spatial dualisation. Indeed, if the knowledge and information economy is often considered to enable economic development, the *CPER* states – and so does the more scientific literature – that social inequities are reinforced by economic globalisation. Social policies, especially housing policy, are all the more important as not only a minority of the poorest class of the population is being marginalised but as even middle-class workers face difficulties to find housing in the central area of the agglomeration.

Sustainable development is also addressed in the policy documents. An accent is placed on environmental issues. The preservation of rural areas (considered as a unique advantage in economic terms as it is perceived as a key item to attract international highly-skilled workers) and the subsequent limitation of urban sprawl is a key element to understand the concentrated deconcentration planning policy. However, the issue of environment is not developed regarding the distinct expectations of social actors (firms, inhabitants, especially the role of social status, etc.). The Polynet research shows that quality of life and environment utterly differs in their content from a respondent to another. The space of living and the space of work may for instance require different spatial features: to caricature, if some workers are sensitive to low density residential neighbourhood with selected schools and easy access to cultural and social life equipments, firms' location strategy privileges busy, accessible and high density business districts. To go past such a caricature obviously requires more in depth work. Yet, one conclusion is that environmental issues, even though important, or perhaps especially because they are increasingly important in individual and collective decisions, have to be taken into account with much more details in the policy documents.

2.5 Cross-thematic issues

Three main issues emerge in conclusion of this analysis. The first one is the importance of the **polycentricity** issue. Central in most planning documents at all scales (from local to European), the concept **needs careful evaluation**. Polynet illustrates that there can be a disconnection between functional polycentricity that structures metropolitan areas and the actual urban morphological system. Firms' interviews attest as well that polycentricity may not be efficient for the development of the regional information economy. Numerous contributions in the literature point out limitations of the implementation of this notion in the social and environmental fields. In the context of the SDRIF revision and despite the fact that after forty years of polycentric spatial planning policy-makers have managed to create a more polycentric Parisian agglomeration, it is important to focus on evaluating strengths and weaknesses of polycentricism.

Second, the national *Politique d'Aménagement du Territoire* has long been one of slowing down the buoyant Paris' economy to help the development of less dynamic regions. The 1994 *SDRIF* was conceived in this perspective. However, both the economic difficulties encountered by the Ile-de-France and the role of major metropolitan areas in the global competition plead for a change which can be sensed in the latest *Contrat de Plan Etat-Région* (2000-06). This should probably be reinforced in coming planning documents. French Malthusianism applied on the Paris capital region may prove to be not only inefficient at the Mega-City Region scale but also at the national and European levels.

Third, and based on this second point, we add that the limitation of economic development in the central area of the Paris' agglomeration goes against the interests of the regional economy according to our results. In a competitive economy where champion cities are crucial into joining the league of global metropolitan area, it seems perilous to reduce the weight and dynamism of the main economic centre. If planning documents often refer to the concepts analysed by the Polynet teams such as flows, business travel, skills in a knowledge and information-based economy, the interpretations and the subsequent implementations of such notions seem not to fit in with some firms' expectations.

3. Outcomes of the Policy Focus Group Meetings

Four Policy Focus Group meetings were held in collaboration with the Ile-de-France Regional Planning Institute (*IAURIF- Institut d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme de la Région Ile-de-France*) and the Prospective and Study department of the Datar. The aim was to contribute to the debate on the revision of the SDRIF by proposing regular meetings where scientists and policy-makers could exchange views on spatial planning and economic development in the Ile-de-France region and the surrounding FURs of the Mega-City region. AS said in the introduction, these meetings were scientifically relevant for Polynet Action 3.1 as the current *SDRIF* is known to be out-dated. It was a way to approach emerging issues that needed to be taken into account in the current report.

Around 50 persons attended the various meetings. All major policy-making institutions were represented from national to local. The four meetings addressed issues according to the three different scales highlighted by other Polynet actions. After an introductory meeting presenting our main results, the three other workshops focused first on the relationships between the Mega-City region and the Bassin Parisien, then on the interdependencies between the Mega-City region and the Ile-de-Region and in a last conference foreign Polynet partners came to discuss issues regarding the articulation between the regional metropolitan scale and the European level.

i) Polycentricity: descriptive value, planning efficiency

The first issue addressed by the Policy Focus Group was the very existence of the Mega-City Region. Interdependencies between the Bassin Parisien and the Ile-de-France region are so important that participants quickly came to an agreement on the existence of the Mega-City Region. However, its perimeter has to be carefully defined. The geomorphologic Bassin Parisien for instance is judged as too large a perimeter.

Commuters' flows are a useful indicator to determine the changing limits of the Mega-City Region. The Ile-de-France region and the neighbouring FURs, excluding therefore some important but further cities such as Rouen, Reims, Le Mans and Tours are considered as part of the metropolitan perimeter which stretches on a region that includes all cities in a radius of up to 120 km around Paris city. Commuters' flows reflect at least two spatial logics. One is a **centre-periphery structure** which is dominant and emphasis the polarising role of the Paris agglomeration; the second is one of **sub-regional networks** connecting small to medium size cities such as the Oise triangle⁷ (Beauvais, Creil, Compiègne). The pattern however has been described in the meetings as much **more complex**. Is the Mega-City Region's geography best described by rings, corridors, multipolar centres? It remains utterly difficult to propose a definitive pattern.

Polynet quantitative and qualitative analysis gives a more simple answer as advanced producer services information flows tend to follow a centre-periphery model, therefore limiting the functional polycentricity hypothesis. In this regard, the Policy Focus Group agrees that **morphological polycentricity may not result into functional polycentricity**.

The scientific methodology has been discussed at this point. Business flows cannot be approximated only by advanced producer services connectivity. It is necessary to enlarge the study from a sectoral approach – limited to advanced producer services – to a more trans-sectoral analysis, including economic flows occurring within industrial firms. In doing so, other types of functional complementarities may appear such as more intense connections between Bassin Parisien's cities and the Paris agglomeration.

In terms of spatial planning, the Polynet results have been used to evaluate the efficiency of polycentricity as a strategy to promote a balanced and sustainable development. Both *ESDP* and *Contrat de Plan Etat-région Ile-de-France* set this objective as a priority. However, the Policy Focus Group argues that the two political levels may be conflicting as polycentricity is demonstrated to be scale-dependant.

In conclusion, the notion appears to be a tool of limited efficiency for spatial analysis (the Mega-City Region's reality is more complex) and as a planning principle (uncertain sustainability): polycentricity needs to be more **thoroughly discussed and defined** (in terms of scales, objectives and implementations) before being put into practice.

ii) Paris Mega-City Region's functional geography: competition/cooperation?

The second question addressed by the Policy Focus Group questioned the functional relationships occurring in the Mega-City Region considered as a coherent urban system structured by intense interactions.

We first asked the **nature and intensity of independencies between the Paris agglomeration and the rest of the Mega-City region** or even with the rest of the Bassin Parisien. In a context of globalisation and increasing interactions between metropolitan areas, two scenarios have been proposed.

One would be a growing disconnection between the central Parisian economic core and other agglomerations, the latter group suffering from the proximity of a too dynamic a neighbour that deprives them from potential economic development opportunities. This would be testified by the long inherited gap between the Ile-de-France and the surrounding regions' economic structures (i.e. concentration of advanced producer services in the Paris economy vs. manufacturing and services to household-oriented economy elsewhere)

The second scenario is one of increasing complementarities within the Mega-City Region. People and jobs' deconcentration from the Paris agglomeration to other cities result into connecting the latter group to the French capital's "hinterworld" and help them to access to the global economy as well as to build a more endogenous development. The strong growth of the neighbouring cities around the Ile-de-France region, in contrast with further Bassin Parisien's cities may be a sign of metropolitan integration. Consequences on spatial planning would therefore consist into enhancing relations between these surrounding FURs and the central Parisian area. This may be extended to further Bassin Parisien cities which firms' rely always more on the first French global market as pointed out in Action 2.1 report.

The second spatial issue discussed by the Policy Focus Group was the **role of the central area as being the engine of the Mega-City Region**. If the hypothesis is validated, is it efficient – as planning documents have done so far – to limit the growth of the dense central area? An unsettled discussion occurred within the Group, echoing in so the debate on the *SDRIF* revision. Some proposed that a polycentric strategy was all the more necessary as the last forty years have successfully manage to first create and later consolidate secondary economic poles such as the Villes Nouvelles. Deconcentration dynamics have been intense in the last thirty years. Policy-makers can only at most prevent urban sprawl through concentrated deconcentration. Other insisted on the emergency of limiting deconcentration trends. Polycentricism may not be so environmentally sustainable; it is probably increasing social and spatial fragmentation, it does not seem to fit with some firms' strategies which promote economic concentration. The spatial policy would therefore do better to aim at increasing density and accessibility in the central area.

iii) Key sectoral priorities: research and higher education and transport investments

Both at the Mega-City region level and at the Paris agglomeration scale, some sectoral policy issues have been stressed as important tool for implementation. For instance, the locations of **University and public research** activities can influence both innovation and skills in the regional economy. The intense concentration of prestigious public laboratories and Universities in the central part of the Paris agglomeration seems to prevent the development of other peripheral cities, both the *Villes Nouvelles* and other surrounding Bassin Parisien cities. It has been pointed out for instance that no equivalent to Oxford or Cambridge can be found in the Mega-City Region whereas some experiences for instance in Compiègne proves that successful higher education institutions may sustain local development.

Transportation policy is a second sectoral policy issue that has been largely discussed throughout the Policy Focus Group meetings. Where should major investments be made? Is it in the central area of the Paris agglomeration (especially with the Orbitale railway project), in its peripheries to increase the Ile-de-France's agglomeration polycentricity, in the Mega-City-Region or even in the Bassin Parisien?

iv) Metropolitan governance: the deficiencies

The sectoral issues highlight indirectly a third concern pointed by the Policy Focus Group meetings. Many public policies need to be undertaken either at the Mega-City Region or at the central area levels. However, in both cases, there is a strong deficiency of *planning documents*.

Polynet as well as other studies argue that complementarities and interdependencies are strong. A **strategic** document (much more than a planning document) that would serve as a guideline for all institutions is missing. This may reflect indirectly a broader political deficiency which can be summarised as the **weakness of metropolitan governance**. Policy Focus Group meetings insisted on the necessity for more horizontal and vertical governance to deal with metropolitan issues.

The obvious consequence is the emergency for **greater cooperation**. Quite paradoxically, we come back here to the polycentricity concept. If we have highlighted the limits of the notion as an efficient planning principle, the Policy Focus Group came to the conclusion that **political polycentricity** associating planning institutions at all levels from local to European can be useful to promote more cooperation. In this context, a metropolitan project is needed. It will probably have to be addressed in a multiscale and global strategic approach that would propose common objectives and shared priorities for all partners.

It is pointless to create another administrative layer to match the Mega-City Region scale. The urgency is rather to open a political space where all institutions can discuss transversal issues; a political space that would try to solve dilemmas highlighted by Polynet as resulting from the conflicting dynamics between the spaces of flows and of places.

Key issues:

- More evaluation needed on the concept of polycentricity: which descriptive value? Which planning relevance in the context of sustainable development?
- Balanced development questioned too. Can economic development be balanced? Territorial equity differs from spatial equality?
- Relationship between Ile-de-France and rest of Mega-City Region and Bassin Parisien are problematic: fragmentation with increasing hierarchical division of labour or growing metropolitan integration?
- Accessibility is crucial? Where should investments be focused in the Mega-City Region? Within the central area, between central area and other cities, between secondary cities? Transportation and telecommunication infrastructures and services are a major issue
- University and research an important issue both for the high skill demanding information economy and for more balanced territorial development
- Political polycentrism useful to promote a global and multiscale two ways (top-down / bottom-up) metropolitan governance
- Spatial issues mainly at Mega-City region and at Paris agglomeration central dense area
- Lack of planning document and political co-operation in both cases

4. Conclusions of the Policy Response Analysis

i) Spatial and governance emerging issues

a) Polycentricity in question

The *ESDP* and *North West Europe Spatial Vision* both intend to favour a sustainable, balanced and polycentric development of the European Union. Quite remarkably, such goals are being shared in most documents studied in the Polynet Action 3.1. The convergences between the *ESDP* and the French governmental *Politique d'Aménagement du Territoire* are strong as both propose to divert economic growth from core cities such as the Paris metropolitan region to other less dynamic areas. Polynet's works argue that this can be possible by increasing business interactions with other *metropolitan* areas: today's information economy relies on large size cities. Consequently this is a first **limit to spatial equality-oriented policies** which have to remain spatially selective to be efficient. Moreover, the implementation of the polycentricity concept into effective planning policies is uncertain as we have highlighted to which extent it is scale-dependent. Polycentricity at the Mega-City region level conflicts for instance with national and European polycentricism as a limited regional deconcentration would deprive areas located further away from potential growth.

If spatial policies following the same polycentric objectives – but implemented at different public policy scales – can be conflicting, the planning documents analysis shows as well divergences between the objectives of a balanced and sustainable development and the information economy's day-to-day functioning. Polynet's works indicate the latter to be highly spatially selective. To promote deconcentration of advanced producer services as one may interpret regional planning documents' objectives such as the SDRIF (central area's office development restrictive policy) or even the governmental *Politique d'Aménagement du Territoire* ("industrial decentralisation") is therefore working against the interests of the information economy.

Emerging spatial and governance issues are hence to go past conflicting issues first between different levels of policies, second between spatially balanced-oriented policies and the global information and knowledge-driven economy. On this latter point, some sectoral issues must be addressed.

Accessibility. It is a priority for advanced producer services and more generally to the productive system. Investments in transport and telecommunication infrastructures as well as in efficient services should therefore aim at promoting accessibility i) **within the central area** of the Paris Mega-City Region where information flows are both the most important in volume and the highest value-added, ii) **from secondary regional economic centres to this central area** as binomial relations enable economic integration, iii) **to other national and European metropolitan regions** which constitute THE information economy network.

Workforce qualification. To sustain the development of the knowledge-intensive economy, policy-makers need to better the qualification of the workforce as depth and abundance of skills offered by a region is a major location factor for international and national firms. Workforce qualification is the first resource of a territory.

Social and housing policies. As most planning documents notice sustainable development is not only a matter of economic efficiency. The development of the global information economy seems to go with an increasing social dualisation that must be addressed both in the central part of the Paris agglomeration where gentrification is at work and in the rest of the Mega-City Region as the lower and middle-class workers are forced to leave the central area for more peripheral locations.

These sectoral issues are to be understood in the context of a changing metropolitan region where people and jobs deconcentration is intense. As urban sprawl is rejected in all planning documents as not a sustainable spatial model, two scenarios are under consideration.

The regional documents favour **concentrated deconcentration**. The general idea is to contain urban sprawl by directing flows on the already existent network of secondary cities from the *Villes Nouvelles* to the internal and

external fringes cities of the Mega-City Region. However, this principle has faced some limits. First, as said earlier, the lower and middle-classes are the most severely affected by suburbanisation's consequence on job availability. The literature demonstrates that the lower the purchase power of a worker, the further his/her residential location from the central area, the lesser the number of potential jobs available (Wenglensky, 2003). Second, urban sprawl cannot easily be canalised: suburbanisation is a pervasive process which has occurred in interstitial areas and is currently fuelled by the secondary cities which have now their own commuters and thus risk increasing further urban sprawl (this explains the extending radius of the Mega-City Region). Moreover, polycentricity – which was seen as an environmentally friendly planning principle to reduce commuting distance – may in fact have the reverse effect. It has not reduced commuter flows so far and favours on the contrary the use of private cars rather than public transport. Third, there is no evidence from the Polynet works that the information economy's efficiency is increased by a spatially more deconcentrated urbanisation. If enough office spaces were offered in the central area, would the spatial division of labour observed in the Paris agglomeration be so intense (Halbert, 2004)? The reason for jobs' deconcentration may in fact be partly resulting from an office shortage. The success of central and peri-central major office developments such as Boulogne/Issy-les-Moulineaux in the Hauts-de-Seine département and of the traditionally industrial district of Saint-Denis are examples of firms' strong demand for central locations. The *Villes Nouvelles*' slackening office markets in the last ten years is another puzzling indicator to the limits of economic deconcentration.

The second scenario would therefore be one of **re-densification** of the central area including not only the Paris City but also the three surrounding *départements* constituting the Inner Suburbs. From Polynet's results on advanced producer services spatial strategy, it proves to be economically more efficient, meeting in so the firms' will to locate in the central area. Environmentally, the dense central area – and especially the three inner suburbs' *départements* – has an important potential for public transport development: density enables cost-effective investments. In this regard, the long-planned and yet abandoned Orbitale project could be a major project to structure public transport in the central area and thus increase accessibility in the economic heart of the Mega-City Region. In this scenario, the social issues remain utterly important. The Policy Focus Group meeting discussed for instance the possibilities to use urban regeneration associated both to new railway stations and to office development to finance social housing. In favouring mix-used projects in dense areas (office, commercial, housing and social housing), policy-makers may indirectly contribute to an increasing functional diversity and a more sustainable urban development.

ii) Policy inconsistencies and deficiencies.

The literature as well as Polynet's contribution insist on two relevant scales for policy implementations. The first one is the Mega-City Region. So far, there is a lack of joined-up thinking and public action at this level. Yet, a **global and multiscalar** approach is required to address issues (transport, economic development, housing, urban sprawl, environmental preservation) resulting from a global information economy that links regional cities into one functional system. A common strategy involving all partners is needed. The lack of a strategic document and before this, of a place where to debate the content of shared issues is an utterly problematic aspect of the Mega-City region's metropolitan governance.

The second level is the Ile-de-France's central area. If it is hard to assess whether it is the entire agglomeration or only the four central *départements* that should be included in this perimeter, Polynet results show that an economic development strategy and more generally a systemic sustainable development approach shared by all major planning bodies is missing. Despite its major role as the regional and national gateway to the global economy, the dense central area of the first French metropolitan region has no specific planning document, no strategy and, what is more prejudicial, no political existence.

These two policy deficiencies question strategic planning and the effective competences of various planning bodies. The State and the Région *Ile-de-France*'s responsibilities are at stake. The first one can propose a global point of view taking into account national and European priorities but the political decentralisation may have reduced some of its legitimacy. The *Région* have both a too limited perspective to embrace the Mega-City Region perimeter and a too wide a scope to offer a focused strategy for the central area of the Ile-de-France. However, as creating more administrative layers matching new relevant scales seem unconceivable, one may think that the *Région* is in

best position to become the Mega-City Region 's leading policy-maker: first, the political decentralisation increases its competences; second the revision of the *SDRIF* is now under its responsibility. However some obstacles will have to be faced in the way toward a more global and strategic planning. The *Région* Ile-de-France will have to find the balance between co-ordination associating all partners and the strategist's will to conduct an ambitious policy for the Mega-City region and its core area. In this regard, if the *SDRIF* is not at the relevant scale it offers the opportunity to answer both the need for co-ordination and for decision in proposing a debate on the regional strategy that will include the non-Ile-de-France surrounding cities of the Mega-City Region perimeter and that will give a special focus on the dense central area.

5. Key Policy Issues for the Mega-City Region

Executive Summary:

Spatial and functional issues:

- The **polycentricity** concept is scale and content dependant. It deserves a better evaluation of its scientific descriptive value and rethinking of its spatial planning efficiency in terms of promoting sustainable development, especially when applied indifferently at all scales (from regional to European),
- Better understanding and awareness of interdependencies and differences between morphological urban organisations and functional geographies of flows
- Increasing role of **accessibility** and **knowledge** in the information economy implies focusing public policies on transport and telecommunication infrastructures and services and on increasing the labour force's skills (depth and diversity)
- Importance of **density** vs. deconcentration in terms of sustainable development.

Policy deficiencies:

- Lack of co-ordination and common strategy both at MCR level and within the central part the Ile-de-France region.

New approaches required:

- Joined-up policies both vertical and horizontal (at MCR level and within Paris agglomeration)
- Co-ordination and partnership for a shared strategy involving all potential partners such as State, *Régions*, *départements*, municipalities and intermunicipalities.
- Need for a balance between co-ordination and decision: Ile-de-France Region may be in best position to become the key institution leading the Mega-City Region's strategy.

A transnational co-operative network between Mega-city Regions in North West Europe :

Could be useful for three purposes:

- Study purpose: To support scientific analysis on North-West European metropolitan regions and converging

difficulties/opportunities

- Strategic purpose: To address common issues because of growing metropolitan economic integration at a European level
- Operational purpose: To improve metropolitan governance by sharing best practices

Appendices

Appendix 1: List of documents analysed

“Core” documents:

- Schéma Directeur de la Région Ile-de-France (1994)
- Contrat de Plan Etat-Région d’Ile-de-France (2000-06)
- Contrat de Plan Interrégional du Bassin Parisien (1994-99)
- Charte du Bassin Parisien (1994)
- European Spatial Development Perspective
- North-West Europe Spatial Vision

Other National or Regional planning documents:

- Schéma Directeur de la Région Ile-de-France (1976)
- Schéma Directeur d’Aménagement de la Région Urbaine de Paris (1965)
- Contrat de Plan Etat-Région de Picardie (2000-06)
- Contrat de Plan Etat-Région de Champagne-Ardenne (2000-06)
- Contrat de Plan Etat-Région de la Région Centre (2000-06)
- Contrat de Plan Etat-Région de Haute-Normandie (2000-06)
- Contrat de Plan Etat-Région de Basse-Normandie (2000-06)
- Contrat de Plan Etat-Région de Bourgogne (2000-06)
- Plan d’Action Stratégique de l’Etat en Région Ile-de-France (2004-06)
- Plan d’Action Stratégique de l’Etat en Région Picardie (2004-06)
- Plan d’Action Stratégique de l’Etat en Région Champagne-Ardenne (2004-06)
- Plan d’Action Stratégique de l’Etat en Région Centre (2004-06)

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- Plan d'Action Stratégique de l'Etat en Région Basse-Normandie (2004-06)
 - Plan d'Action Stratégique de l'Etat en Région Haute-Normandie (2004-06)
 - Plan d'Action Stratégique de l'Etat en Région Bourgogne (2004-06)
 - Schéma Régional d'Aménagement et de Développement du Territoire Champagne-Ardenne,
 - Schéma Régional d'Aménagement et de Développement du Territoire Picardie
 - Schéma de Développement Economique de Haute-Normandie
 - Schéma de Services Collectifs Culturels
 - Schéma de Services Collectifs des Espaces naturels et ruraux
 - Schéma de Services Collectifs du Transport de voyageurs et du Transport de marchandises
 - Schéma de Services Collectifs de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche
 - Schéma de Services Collectifs de l'Information et de la Communication
 - CIADT du 18 décembre 2003

Local planning documents:

- Schémas de Cohérence Territoriale (SCOT),
- Plan Local d'Urbanisme (PLU)
- Plan d'Aménagement et de Développement Durable (PADD)

of Mega-City region's cities such as Reims, Orléans, Chartres, Beauvais, Rouen, Amiens, Compiègne, Paris, etc.

Other documents (non official planning documents):

- Datar, 2000, *Territoires 2020*, Vol 1, La Documentation française, Paris.
- F. Gilli, 2002, *Note d'étude : la Bassin Parisien, une région métropolitaine?*, Insee Picardie, 17 p.
- A. Frémont, 2002, *Une organisation métropolitaine pour le Bassin Parisien*, MIIAT Bassin Parisien, 81 p.
- Sénat, 2003, *Rapport Poncet*, Sénat, Paris, 288 p.

Footnotes

- 1 Functional Urban Regions (FURs) are defined as an economic core and a ring of municipalities sending at least 10% of its resident workforce to this core.
- 2 Defined as the group of all contiguous FURs around Paris.
- 3 Economic issues are either dealt in the SRADT or part of another policy document called a Schéma Régional de Développement Economique (Regional Economic Development Scheme) which complements the SRADT. Note that all French regions have not voted their SRADT yet. In the Paris Mega-City Region's case, only two SRADT exist so far in the Champagne-Ardenne and the Picardie regions (north and east of Ile-de-France).
- 4 In the 1960's, the DATAR (the Governmental planning institution) was trying to reduce the weight of Paris to favour the development of the rest of the territory and proposed to help secondary metropolitan areas ("*métropoles d'équilibre*") in order to achieve a more balanced polycentric national territory. In 2003, a governmental planning and development conference argued that the French economy needed to rely more on its metropolitan areas, this time including Paris, and proposed to focus again public policies on metropolitan areas through what is known as *metropolitan contracts*.
- 5 Most French institutions try not to differentiate advanced producer services and high-technology industries as they are part of the same knowledge and information economy dynamics.
- 6 As with the concept of polycentricity, the narrative here is very similar to the ESDP sustainable development notion.
- 7 Other sub-regional networks would be in the Champagne region (Reims, Châlons-en-Champagne), in Normandy (Caen, Rouen, Le Havre) and in the Loire Valley (Orléans, Blois, Tours).

Appendix 2: Participants of the Policy Focus Group meetings

Institution	Administrative level
Datar	National
Plan Urbanisme Construction Architecture (PUCA). Ministry of Equipment	National
Ministère des Finances et de l'Economie	National
Mission Interministérielle d'Aménagement du Territoire du Bassin Parisien	Interregional
Direction Régional Ile-de-France	Regional
Région Ile-de-France	Regional
Agence Régionale de Développement	Regional
Conseil Economique et Social de la Région Centre	Regional
SISER	Regional
Conseil Général du Loiret	Local
Agence d'Urbanisme de Reims	Local
Agence d'Urbanisme d'Oise la Vallée	Local
AUDES0	Local
Agence d'Urbanisme d'Orléans	Local
Atelier Parisien d'Urbanisme	Local
CBRE-Bourdaïs	Firm
Université Paris-I	Scientific community
Université Paris-XII	Scientific community