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The Power of France in the Urbi and Orbi of Europe- Paris Case Study

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Référence à la session / reference to the session

T3- Les politiques urbaines et régionales en Europe

Résumé / Summary

The Great, the Greater Paris

The title and the theme of this reflection find their source in a discourse and in an imaginary relative to the perception of the Paris conglomeration. To see Paris from the inside, we have to unveil it and to study it from the outside.

The power of the great Paris, as an expression, most often takes the form of a denunciation of the development of this agglomeration and its excess. Paris would be too big, and stronger! It seems...

The most interesting thing to me is to investigate in the origins of this assertion that it is rather recurrent. It is found among members of the political class, whose statements are taken up by the media, but also, and more surprisingly, within the scientific community.

A nostalgic belonging point of view - often justified by a patrimonial reference - to the denunciation of the urban development of the last fifty years in this city, in the country which is on the edge of a deterministic political chaos.

This discourse is easy to adopt because it combines well with an accepted idea that the extent and the power of the city are the origin of its evils and deficiencies, whatever their natures: the degradation of urban landscape and the difficulties of motor traffic is the register of physical problems.

In the political sphere, the influence of the city and above all the speed of its recent development would render the activities of the editors inoperative or, at the very least, the cause of their failures.

From a social point of view, the big city is also perceived, negatively, as a mixing space of the population from which it becomes increasingly difficult to control renewal, before that it became with the segregation factors in a discriminative point of view. The risk of ignorance of neighbors and of their social and cultural environment is perceived as a danger to the slippage that may result from different ways of life and codes of conduct.

In the absence of a population conscious about the real situation of Paris peripheries, a denouncing urban development generates a disorders more generally advanced by the new residents of the Greater Paris. Considering, on the one hand, that the urban growth of the last five decades is mainly due to the population

displacements caused by the multiple episodes of migrations- which is partly verified - and, on the other hand, that the origin of the flow of migrations "falls on the" French population"- in general, these "others" are not identified or designated precisely, they are opposed to "we", we infer that the "others" tolerate a responsibility for the problems engendered by imposed development of urbanization. By inference, one denounces one's denunciation in the name of a rupture, provoked by these "others".

On the social and community divisions scale and the spatial segregation to which they give rise, the fundamental source of the most important differences in perception of the boundaries of Greater Paris are undoubtedly, where the new communities called by "the others" impose their laws on the land owners.

This construction is all the more echoed by the fact that it makes it possible to account, not without a certain facility, for many problems by avoiding asking questions that could disturb and challenge "acquired advantages" the social cohesion structure in the sake of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity".

The Metropolitan Region of Paris has a clear administrative definition; we know where it begins and where it ends, its limits, which follow those of the sectors, are without thickness; they can be represented on a map by a continuous line whose position is defined unambiguously.

In this context, it is largely the topography of the terrain and the discontinuity of the agglomeration that it provokes that legitimizes most strongly the differences between the definitions of Greater Paris and explain the Îles de France territory. However, if topography is instrumentalized to account for the choice of definition, it is not always in this variable that the motivations reside.

Thus, the difference between the spaces designated by metropolitan area of Paris and the Greater Paris is due not so much to a perimeter difference as to the nature of these perimeters. In the first case, it is an abstract line, without thickness and determined once and for all; in the following, it is a large area within which, according to the speakers, according to their place of residence and their ideology, the definition varies. Thus the notion of limit can, as E. Verdeil has identified it, take two meanings: it separates, it is also the place of an indecisive belonging.

How can urban self-organization models be generalized in a city of more than two million inhabitants, many of which have been displaced over the past two decades? While for some activities, notably education, the private and / or community sector is providing some support, there are areas for which the intervention of public services is necessary, for the establishment and re-culture the new communities living in the peripheries. Faced with the disengagement of the state in these areas, faced with the lack of consciousness on the risk on segregation caused by installation of the new population with different cultures, imposing their visions and rules on the land owner.

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