

MICHAEL CARMONA*

A VÁROSFEJLŐDÉS SZEREPE A RÉGIÓFEJLŐDÉSBN ROLE OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mire jó egy város? Növeli vagy csökkenti a jólétet a régióban? Tudást, munkahelyeket, rendet és fegyelmet hoz létre, vagy kizsákmányolja a környezetet, a város szemetesládájaként használva azt, ahol kényelmesen „le lehet rakni” a háztartási és ipari hulladékot, a szennyvizet, a reptereket és a külvárosi lakótelepeket?

Ha a városoknak a régió dinamikájához való hozzájárulását vizsgáljuk, feltétlenül mérleget kell vonnunk az adott város és a környezete közti kölcsönhatásokról. Számos kísérletet tettek már – amerikai és európai kutatók egyaránt – a rejtvény megoldására, egy olyan gyakorlatban is használható modell megalkotására, mely elősegítené a város méretének, a régió településszerkezetének, a tér hasznosításának optimális meghatározását. Eddig még nem sikerült eredményre vezető modellt alkotni, azonban különböző „impresszionista” javaslatok már születtek.

Vajon egy város pozitív vagy negatív imidzssel rendelkezik a régió egészére nézve? Jó vagy rossz ötlet Párizst és környékét „Párizs Régiónak” (*Région Parisienne / RP / Paris Region*) nevezni? A nevet nem véletlenül változtatták meg *Ile-de-France* régióra, de ez harminc év múltán is jó ötletnek tűnik? A Diadalív játékony hatással van az *Ile-de-France*-ra? A belváros és külvárosok között ingázók serege pozitívan vagy negatívan befolyásolja a régió egészét? A K+F előnyös a regionális tér számára? Egyáltalán, a regionális térnek békés tájakat és nemzeti örökséget kell a zajos városok zaklatott lakói számára biztosítania? Létezhet régió egy lyukkal a közepén? Az urbanizáltságnak olyan fokát értük el, hogy egy város már akárhol és sehol sem létezhet?

Ezek meglehetősen fondorlatos kérdések, és az egrí szimpozion kiváló lehetőséget jelent a „történet” újbóli áttekintésére a városi és regionális dinamika legújabb globális fejleményeinek tükrében.

Does a prosperous city bring prosperity to the surrounding region? Does the wealth of its inhabitants bring wealth to the surrounding villages, towns and boroughs? There is a general trend to answer “yes”, thus considering that the city automatically transmits its own dynamism to the neighbourhood; and yet, this issue is much questionable.

* Michael Carmona, PhD Professor, Paris IV. Sorbone, egyetemi tanár, intézetigazgató.

In order to develop a cost/benefit analysis of the problem, I shall use the post-war experience of France in town and regional development.

On the first days of January 1949, a french geographer, Jean-François Gravier, published a book bearing the following, very provocative title: "Paris and the French desert". At this time, during the immediate post-war years, Paris was swiftly recovering from the injuries inflicted to buildings and factories (notwithstanding the human losses) by the war and the battles for the liberation of the national territory; the governments have been since the end of the war facing the following question: when reconstructing the damaged car manufacturing plant of the Renault company (which had just been nationalized), should the decision be made to reconstruct the plant on the same site, close to the municipal border of Paris, or should it be wiser, easier and less expensive to relocate the plant elsewhere in France, why not at a distance of 300 to 500 kilometers off Paris, where the land costs nothing, and where considerable supplies of cheap manpower are available? The decision was made to reconstruct the plants on the same, historical site, in order not to lose time, and considering precisely the existence, inside Paris and the suburbs of Paris, of a skilled manpower.

The same decisions were taken when the governmental authorities had to finance the reconstruction of truck manufacturing, heavy chemical machinery, paper industry, aeronautic plants, for, mills, slaughterhouses. Paris was before World War II the first industrial region of the country, despite the fact that Paris and its region completely lack any kind of mineral resource, such as coal, iron, gas, hydraulic energy. After reconstruction was enhanced, Paris still remained the first industrial country of France. Moreover, Paris benefitted immediate positive effects of reconstruction which were up-to-date equipments and fittings; much of the corresponding cost was met by the Marshall plan which enabled the country, and specially Paris, to implement a large-scale modernization of the industrial tool.

This is what happened from 1945 to 1949–1950, and explains why Jean-François Gravier wrote his book. Gravier understood what the consequences of this rebuilding of industrial Paris could mean.

The first consequence was to attract to Paris and to the neighbouring communities of the capital city all young skilled, learned and ambitious people. There has been indeed a huge brain drain, mainly drawing to Paris youngsters from all other regions of France. Inside the Paris region itself, which accounts for a mere 2% of the territory of France, the same phenomenon happened. Half of the area of this region of Paris is covered by farms, and dedicated to agriculture, one fourth is covered by forests, and one fifth is covered by the city of Paris and its suburbs. After World War II, the agricultural communities, the villages, the small towns all around Paris suffered the same workforce drain; the territories located in the outskirts of Paris quickly became empty, except here and there, when fresh areas were needed for urban purposes. Paris and the neighbouring suburbs, between 1950 and 1954, gained every year a net surplus of 140.000 inhabitants – that is 560.000 inhabitants in 4 years. This was at the expense of all regions of France, but mainly the territories located in a range of about 200 kilometers around Paris, from which a majority of these people originally came.

This workforce drain had in some sense a positive effect for the deserted regions, since the agricultural activities, lacking workforce, had to turn to intensive mechanization, thus accelerating the modernization of the French agriculture, and in turn convincing more young people living in the countryside that they would make a better living by migrating to Paris.

A second major consequence of this demographic tide was that the increase in the Parisian population brought extra customers to the Parisian consuming market, thus favouring the creation of new industries, new services, new shops, and distributing more salaries, more purchasing power, more wealth in Paris and in the communities around Paris. Paris was an overcrowded city, with more than 3 million inhabitants packed on a surface of 100 square kilometers, and the overspill of the population in the suburbs was accelerating, the suburbs of Paris accommodated 2 extra millions before the war burst; the figure became 3, then 4, 5, 6 million; today, the population of the city of Paris has dwindled to 2 million, and the suburbs have climbed to 9 millions, leaving a poor 500.000 inhabitants to the rural part of the region. This piling of inhabitants in the suburbs of Paris produced a downgrading of the quality of life, since housing mixed with heavy industry plants; the absolute priority granted to industrial production allowed environmental conditions to become worse and worse; but the people, as well as the governmental authorities, cared very little for that, since high wages, lively conditions of life and entertainment, were present.

Most of the newcomers were young people, and they married earlier than today, made many babies, fuelling in this way the increase of the consuming market; they needed new housing, with bigger apartments and houses to host their numerous children. Many districts inside Paris had to be renovated, that is, the former old buildings erected during the nineteenth century were pulled down, and new high rise, built after the most modern rules of the realistic socialism style, triumphant all over Europe, were completed. At a time, Paris had little place left for these new built areas, and governmental authorities were looking for spatial extension, that is coveting green areas outside Paris, where corn, vegetables and beets were grown, and which could be bought at a low price in order to be transformed in new urban districts.

As for the elderly people living in Paris or in the dense suburbs surrounding Paris, since the environment was bad, when they retired, they had no need to remain in the bad conditions of life prevailing in the capital city; so they naturally tended to leave Paris in order to settle in the countryside, and, for that purpose, they bought deserted houses in deserted villages all around Paris.

So new inhabitants came in the agricultural territories surrounding Paris: one category was provided by young people establishing in the new buildings which were just dormitories to them; a second category were elderly persons, retired from Paris, and still bearing the habits of a long duration of life in a big, lively city; they quickly were bored to death by the quiet life of the villages.

Urban people and agricultural people really belonged to two worlds which were completely ignoring each other. I have a personal memory which strikingly illustrates this situation. At the beginning of the sixties, the French State had decided to

buy a big plot of land in a small community located exactly 14 kilometers east of the cathedral of Paris, the so-called Notre-Dame cathedral, which marks the center of all the French road networks. A distance of 14 kilometers from the cathedral means that this small community is located at a distance of 9 kilometers from the eastern limit of Paris; there is a train going from inner Paris to this small community. The name of the village is Sucy en Brie; the name "Brie" refers to an agricultural and historical region which lies close to Paris, extending eastwards till it merges with the neighbouring region of Champagne. Historically, in Sucy en Brie, there were fields where cattle were grazing – hence a special cheese, very reputable in the wide range of French cheeses, called "the Brie" cheese; in Sucy en Brie, there also were vineyards formerly belonging to the chapter of Notre Dame; and there were three or four properties belonging to rich families which used to go there during the summer, because Sucy lies on the ridge of the plateau of Brie-Champagne and is so close to Paris. So the government had decided to buy two of these big properties in order to build there thousands of realistic socialist blocks for young people with children living and dreadful conditions in Paris. When you say children, you mean of course schools. In 1964, I was starting to work in the office of the Head of the Planning Department in the Ministry of Education, and, to please the parliamentary deputy of Sucy, the Minister had taken the decision to build in this former village a brand new college. And so I was sent to Sucy to look after possible locations for the erection of the new college. With the deputy, we met the owner of the location which appeared to be the best; it was not very difficult to find out the owner: he was the mayor of Sucy, the owner of a significant proportion of the agricultural areas of Sucy-en-Brie; when started looking for him, were told in which of his fields we could find him, and finally met him in one of his properties; he was sitting on top of his tractor; he greeted us very cordially in the midst of the thick, heavy, drenched mud, and accepted instantly to sell to the State the piece of land needed for the construction of the college. Then we started chatting about his life and experience. He was already an aging man, and was very talkative. The most striking thing was when he told me: Look, young man; I am very proud for one thing; I was born in this small community, and I have been elected Mayor many years ago. During my life, I have been only three times in Paris; once, in the day I was summoned to join the army when started the second World War; the second occasion was when in 1952 the Queen of England, Elizabeth II, visited Paris; and the third time was in 1960 when the government decided to launch the creation of the two new housing districts in Sucy en Brie, and the Minister of Housing insisted on receiving me personally because he wanted to tell me how lucky I was since the government would consequently finance a new town hall, the modernization of the railway, commercial structures, and new plants in the low fields lying between Sucy and Paris. Three times in a whole life.

Which lessons can we draw from the example of Sucy? Paris used this community first, before the middle of the XXth century, for wine and cheese providing, and for the summer holidays of wealthy Parisians. Then, in the sixties, Paris remembered that this community could also provide cheap land to locate in a pleasant environment thousands of new dwellings. And since this region started begin occupied by houses, it made sense to attract, in the area lying between Sucy en Brie and the

boundaries of Paris, industrial parks, where plants for the new goods asked for by our modern society could be manufactured, such as electrical bulbs, refrigerators, washing machines, but also a huge garbage disposal area and a big waste water treatment plant.

To tell the truth, Sucy en Brie is nowadays a very nice community, with more than 25.000 inhabitants, with 40% of the surface still remaining in green space and forests, with well-kept streets and public space, a great deal of equipments which contribute in the global welfare. The former parliamentary deputy is now member of the French Senate, he has been elected Mayor of Sucy en Brie ever since the former Mayor has died. No pollution, excellent links with Paris thanks to the railway which has been integrated in the express transit railway system of the region of Paris.

A history of many other local communities around Paris would be very similar to that of Sucy en Brie. Wealthy people from the nobility or the high bourgeoisie buying properties around the city, and in general taking care of the agricultural production in such a way that the agriculture in the region of Paris is one of the richest and most productive in France. After the industrial revolution starts, plants overflowing past the boundaries of the city of Paris, rapidly surrounding Paris with a continuous ring of factories, a forest of high chimneys spitting smoke and ashes in the sky. Then part of them closing down to reopen farther away, while new houses replace them. In the social geography of Paris, wealthy communities are more numerous in the west, low classes being more densely clustering in the eastern suburbs. In the wealthy local communities, a new phenomenon has developed; these urban suburban locations has started attracting some high level equipments, such as universities, high schools, engineering schools, laboratories. Top managers, because they rather live in the west and the south-west part of the Parisian suburbs, have, after the years seventies, contributed in pushing to this part of the area the new offices in which banks, insurance companies, headquarters of industrial or commercial companies, have relocated when it became obvious that staying in Paris, insided prestigious but inadequate buildings, was no longer a solution for better productivity and efficiency. Logically, a high proportion of the modern office space in the Paris region located in the western suburbs, in spite of all the efforts which the governments have deployed during the last 50 years to impede such locations and encourage relocations also in the eastern part of the suburbs and region of Paris.

An analysis of where the wealth is located shows that it is concentrated in the western half of Paris and of its suburbs; on the contrary, poor people, shabby industries and damaged landscape are concentrated in the east.

This shows that the city does exert a strong influence on its local environment, should it be positive or negative. If you look at figures of population, the north and the east of inner Paris, of its suburbs and of three neighbouring region, accommodate more or less one half of the overall population; but in what conditions of life! Jobs are located in the west, and this means transportation and commuting. These housing districts are often decrepit, and they are the places where hundreds of cars burn every night. Dynamism does extend from inner city to the local environment, but also the negative consequences of dynamism. Can the local authorities do much to impede such effects, to turn them in a positive way? History of the last 50 years

shows that it sometimes happens, but in general these phenomena are much more often undergone rather than asked for and managed by the mayors of these communities.

The same situation can be observed in the other metropolitan regions of France. The weight of Paris and its economy and wealth is overwhelming in France; yet, due to the distances from Paris to the borders of France, a fair number of major cities scattered along these borders have managed to develop, through the natural trends of history, and thanks to tremendous efforts started after the beginning of the sixties to enhance regional development in other regions than the region of Paris. France has three conurbations reaching or exceeding a million inhabitants, Lyon, Lille and Marseille; others have some 600.000 to 700.000 inhabitants, like, for instance, Bordeaux and Toulouse. These metropolitan areas are significantly named by the name of the main city, and as a matter of fact, the main city is the core of all movement, impulse and attraction in the metropolitan area; there are located the universities and engineering schools, the headquarters of the regional authorities, the regional headquarters of the banks; there are the local stock exchanges, the regional headquarters of the railway company, the most sophisticated commercial structures, the theaters, the finest cinemas, the opera houses and concert halls, and so on.

For instance, Toulouse, some 600 kilometers from Paris, in the direction of the South, has been lucky enough to escape the major injuries of the two World Wars. It has become a capital city for aeronautics and space industries; Toulouse hosts the most important plant of the Airbus plane, and has Universities and research centers enjoying a high international reputation. Moreover, the city is lively, colourful, and its inhabitants are very devoted to the community. So, Toulouse is a dynamic city. Consequently, Toulouse is attractive, and attracting people and companies. Toulouse has such a grip on the regional local communities that economists are now currently describing the relationship between Toulouse and these communities as "Toulouse and the Toulouse desert"; the medium size cities scattered all around Toulouse within a range of 80 to 100 kilometers experience a thorough aspiration of their local activities for the benefit of Toulouse, while Toulouse sends to them retiring people, or low income families in the need of low cost housing with a piece of garden for their two, three or four kids; in many cases, these families are constituted by immigrants, with people facing heavy problems of integration in the French society. The rural districts around Toulouse have all united in a formal league designed to oppose ambitious Toulouse. They constantly strive to direct towards the rural space a fair proportion of the national and European subsidies flowing to the dynamic industries which account for a major part of the dynamics of the city of Toulouse. The local communities complain that local companies leave to re-settle in Toulouse, while Toulouse sends poor people to them, or people who ask for gated communities.

When a local company leaves its settlement to relocate to Toulouse, it is indeed a drama. When, instead, gated communities appear, designed around a golf course, and there are many in the region of Toulouse, what happens? They bring to these rural districts money flowing from the pockets of well-to-do customers. At the same time, these customers seek to have the highest bio quality for the products they eat such as meat, vegetables and fruit; bio products are sold in France at prices at least 15 to

20% higher than the ordinary ones, and this brings again revenues to the local farmers. The same refined customers do not drink, like the workers drank in the old times 7 or 8 liters a day of low quality wine; they drink perhaps only one or two glasses of wine, but they want this to be good, natural, and thus push higher and higher the quality of the local vintages. They want to use their leisure by rowing on the local lakes and rivers, cycling, riding on horseback, and this, again, provides work to the local companies, permanent jobs and consistent resources to the inhabitants of these local rural communities; even younger people from the city go to work to these new communities because they can get fine jobs in a pleasant environment, and this matches with the general request for a better quality of life, closer to the natural ambient.

Without Toulouse, where would such local economy of the rural part of the region stand today?

So, it is true to say, because reality is there, that the dynamics of the main city can bring many discomforts to the region all around. The region is considered by the city as a waste area where one can dispose garbage, implement water treatment plants, install domestic waste incinerators, develop airports, logistics deposits, freight railway stations, oil refineries, power plants, psychiatric units, lunatic asylums, detention centers, wholesale markets, all equipments necessary for our life but which everybody prefers to veil and, if possible, completely ignore. It has often been said that the suburban area of Paris is the doormat of France. Insulting as this remark can be, it betrays very conspicuously the way urban planners and policy makers consider the surroundings of the city.

But on the other hand, there are benefits for the neighbouring region. With the development of the demand for better landscapes and natural environment, the rural districts inside an urban region can drag money and jobs to enhance the aspects of natural space through national and regional parks creation, through ecotourism activities, through biological agriculture, through leisure, hiking, thermalism. Hosting an airport means cashing incurring resources, even if it brings restrictions to the possible development for housing; but noise and strict regulations regarding the height of the buildings do not impede the implementation of exhibitions facilities, showrooms, marts, hotels, offices, cash and carry stores, and so on. If a rural area, because of the availability of space, is requested to host a research center or a new faculty, this first means money; but it also means, in the medium and the long term, people one day making the decision to establish their living in the neighbourhood of the laboratory or school where they work day after day; and once you have a certain number of scientists and researchers living on the spot, this means that you need people to provide them services for hospital or health cures, take care of their children in the kindergartens, run shops to meet with their daily needs. And all this means incomes, revenues, and more wealth to be distributed throughout the area.

The question now is: how to establish a fair balance between advantages and disadvantages? No mathematical formula can provide the right answer; this is why all countries in Europe try to encourage the constitution of local forums, or conurbations councils, where people living on the territory of a so-called metropolitan area, around a main city, can discuss about common interest and agree on some commons

paradigms about how to share the burdens and the benefits of the growth and dynamics. The solution to this problem, which was not unknown in older times, has long been to simply push further away the administrative limits of the growing city; Europeans experienced like this, greater London, greater Berlin, greater Wien, greater Paris, and the creation of Budapest as one city through the merger of three cities, Buda, Pest and Obuda, without forgetting the latest contemporary extension of the boundaries of metropolitan Budapest with its 23 districts. Notwithstanding the fact that Budapest, today, means even more than the metropolitan city alone, but includes communities located in the county of Pest and even further, thus justifying the recent creation of the BAFTA Council.

Such councils have been experienced in many similar situations. Sometimes, they appear then disappear, like what happened to the first GLC, Greater London Council, like things happened with the liquidation of the Urban Community of Barcelona decided by the regional authority of Catalonia. Paris has no such joint committee with its neighbours; there are separate cooperations for domestic refuse burning (but not collection), cooperation for the waste water treatment (but not for the fresh drinkable water production and distribution); public transportation is managed by the State and by the regional authority. Many other examples can be produced, such as those of Istanbul, of the Metropolitan cities of Italy, of Mexico, Djakarta, Cairo, Buenos Aires, etc. They all show that there is a deep concern about the need for joint decision and action throughout a regional space if one wants the benefits of the dynamism of the main city to be better used.

After World War II, a French economist, François Perroux, issued a new theory of development, stressing the key role of so-called "Development poles"; it became a very popular theory of development, for the redevelopment of distressed areas in already developed countries as well as in developing countries. It explained that erecting a major modern pole for instance for shipbuilding, car manufacturing, oil refining and treatment, steel, aluminium, or whatever else, brings modern equipments, habits and mentality to an area, and that development then irradiates all around the neighbouring country. The theory has proved wrong, which does not prevent governments and international institutions to still refer to it because it is easier than starting to scatter smaller actions and initiatives on a wider territory. Experience has proved that development does by no means irradiate by itself, but needs to be organized and channelled, through an accurate governance, taking into account the local traditions, ambitions and institutions if one wants to give way to initiatives aiming at mutual benefit for city and region.