THE FRENCH NEW TOWNS

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THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS
Baltimore and London

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INTRODUCTION

New towns are being built as a matter of public policy around the world. In "advanced" industrial countries, in socialist Eastern Europe, and in the Third World, new towns have been selected as a relevant tool for coping with problems of urban growth. In the United States, urban policy makers have flirted with the new towns concept on several occasions, most notably with the Greenbelt towns of the 1930s and the Title VII new towns of the early 1970s. However, new towns have generally been dismissed as inappropriate and impractical for the American situation.[1]

A revitalized new towns program in the United States will only arise if fresh evidence is available to demonstrate the benefits of them. The crippled Title VII new towns can be usefully studied, but more valuable lessons may be drawn from countries where new towns programs are receiving strong government support. A considerable amount of information has been generated about the British new towns program.[2] The consensus among U.S. planners and policy makers is that the British new towns are rather successful but have limited applicablility to the American situation.

American observers who have dismissed the British experience as irrelevant to U.S. planning problems would do well to consider the French new towns program. The French have only recently turned to new towns: the first government document in support of them appeared in 1965, while large-scale construction dates from around 1970. The French program, however, more than makes up for its tardiness by the scale of the effort. The French new towns program is

[1] See, for example, William Alonso, "What Are New Towns For?," *Urban Studies* 7 (1970), and Lloyd Rodwin, *The British New Towns Policy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956).

[2] Among the many sources of information on British new towns are J. B. Cullingworth, *Town and Country Planning in England and Wales* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970); Hazel Evans, ed., *New Towns: The British Experience* (London: Charles Knight and Company, 1972); Frederic Osborn and Arnold Whittick, *The New Towns: The Answer to Megalopolis* (London: L. Hall, 1963); Frank Schaffer, *The New Towns Story* (London: MacGibbon and Fee, 1970); and *Town and Country Planning* magazine.

now one of the largest in the world in terms of housing starts and new employment. By the late 1970s, the French new towns were creating around 20,000 housing starts and 15,000 new jobs per year.[3]

Nine so-called "villes nouvelles" are being built in France at the moment (fig. I–1).[4] Five of the new towns are located in the Paris region: Cergy-Pontoise, located 25 kilometers northwest of central Paris; Evry, 25 kilometers south; Marne-la-Vallée, 10 kilometers to the east; Melun-Sénart, 35 kilometers southeast; and Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, 30 kilometers southwest. Four new towns are under construction elsewhere in France. L'Etang de Berre, 15 kilometers northwest of Marseille; Lille-Est, 5 kilometers east of Lille; L'Isle d'Abeau, 35 kilometers east of Lyon; and Le Vaudreuil, 25 kilometers southeast of Rouen. The French new towns are planned on a large scale. When completed near the end of the century, the nine new towns are expected to contain nearly three million residents. The planned sizes range from 140,000 for Le Vaudreuil to 500,000 for Evry and Berre. The others are expected to be around 250,000–300,000 each.[5]

Despite the size and expense of the French new towns, no evaluations have yet been undertaken. Data is relatively scarce, while the literature has been confined to descriptions of the physical plans or the administrative structure. Virtually nothing of significance has appeared in English. The purpose of this book is to inform planners and policy makers around the world about the French new towns. This book will analyze what the French new towns are trying to accomplish; the administrative, financial, and political reforms needed to secure implementation of the program; and the achievements of the new towns. At all times, the evaluation of the French new towns will be undertaken with an eye to international applicability.

Why build new towns? In view of the low priority given to the development of a new towns construction program in the United States, the first chapter of this study will examine the reasons for the adoption of a new towns policy in France. New towns are used to

[3] By comparison, the British new towns added 47,793 new jobs and 21,788 dwellings in 1974. Annual statistics are published in *Town and Country Planning*, usually the February issue.

[4] Several other projects in France could qualify as new towns in the broad sense of the term, including Mourenx, Toulouse-le-Mirail, and Herouville-Saint-Cair. However, these projects are not included in the structure of administration and financing that has been established by the government for the nine new towns referred to here. These are the nine "villes nouvelles." For a description of the other projects, see Pierre Merlin, *Les Villes nouvelles* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969).

[5] The French have not established precise figures concerning the desired populations at the completion of the projects. These figures represent the approximate targets for the year 2000.

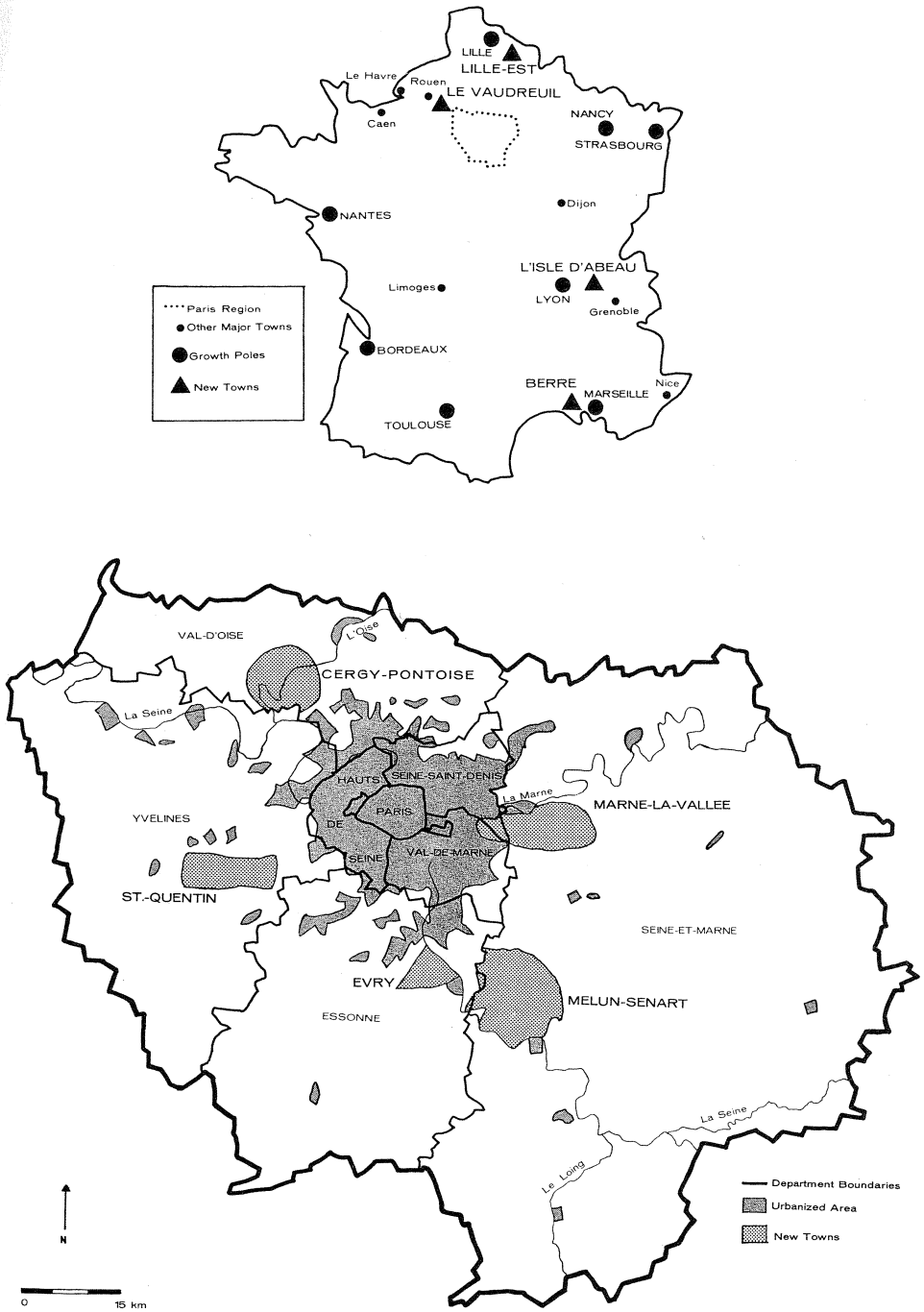


Figure I–1. The French new towns

implement national policies for managing urban and regional growth. They play two roles: they are tools of intraregional planning, by organizing the growth of metropolitan areas, and they are tools of interregional planning, by stimulating the development of relatively poor regions.

The contemporary international planning movement for the construction of new towns originated with an Englishman, Ebenezer Howard, who wrote *Garden Cities of To-Morrow*.[6] Howard called for the construction of new towns, or garden cities, on the periphery of existing urban areas. The garden city was an isolated, self-contained community planned to be a predetermined size. It represented a "marriage" between town and country, where residents enjoy both the employment and shopping opportunities of the city and the healthy environment of the countryside. Surrounding the town would be a green belt of permanent open space to prevent sprawl and to preserve the physical independence of the garden city. The population would be recruited from overcrowded existing cities, to enable their redevelopment at lower densities. Once the planned size of 32,000 was reached, the garden city would no longer grow; further regional growth would be concentrated in additional new towns. Eventually, a system of new towns would be developed, each physically separated by a green belt but linked by a transportation system.

Howard's book, written in 1898, literally as well as symbolically marked the culmination of nineteenth-century concern for the implications of rapid urbanization. Nineteenth-century cities were characterized by poor physical and social conditions. Residents in the rapidly growing cities suffered from diseases and a high mortality rate. Health problems were aggravated by poverty. Wages were low and unemployment high. Housing was overcrowded and without running water or adequate ventilation. Crime and other social disorders increased. The factories produced smoke and other pollutants.

Mumford has said, "Perhaps the greatest contribution made by the industrial town was the reaction it produced against its own greatest misdemeanors."[7] Three types of reactions to the poor physical conditions in the nineteeth-century cities can be detected: (1) to "tinker" with existing cities by installing water and sewer systems,

[6]Cambridge, Mass., and London: The M.I.T. Press, 1965. Originally published in 1898 as *To-Morrow: A peaceful Path to Real Reform*.

[7]Lewis Mumford, *The City in History* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1961).

slum clearance, highway construction, etc.; (2) to build suburbs that permit workers to escape from urban conditions every evening; and (3) to construct entirely new towns without the poor conditions of existing cities. The first two movements attracted the attention of most urban reformers, but it is the third one that concerns this book.

In recent years, new towns have played an additional role in the development of national urban growth policies. Planners concerned with the disparities between the richer and poorer parts of the country have sought ways to reduce the gap. The poorer regions suffer from relatively depressed economies characterized by high unemployment and declining industries. To improve the economic conditions in the depressed regions, new jobs must be located there. However, different jobs have different impacts on the region's economic development. Jobs in certain industries will stimulate more economic growth than others. Some economists call these industries "basic" industries, because they sell most of their products outside the region and consequently bring in money. These industries contrast with "nonbasic" or "service" industries, which serve only the local population and merely recirculate money within the locality. Other economists call the key firms "propulsive" industries. The addition of a propulsive industry to a region will stimulate demand for other firms that sell products to the propulsive industry. Growth-inducing industries increase the demand for a variety of supporting services and facilities, such as housing, schools, shops, and recreation for the new workers.

New towns have been constructed in connection with these growth-inducing industries. Such towns provide the most up-to-date services and facilities for the convenience of the new industries. New towns can also be used directly to stimulate regional development. If propulsive industries can not easily be attracted, employment opportunities can be provided in the region by the construction of a new town. New towns can be the focus of investment in a depressed region where the existing urban areas are considered unattractive. Given this theoretical understanding of the intra- and interregional roles of new towns in the development of national urban growth policies, Chapter 1 will examine the reasons why new towns are now being built in France.

Chapter 2 is concerned with the administrative structure by which new towns are built in France. American critics invariably cite the need for administrative reform as a fundamental reason for the infeasibility of the new towns idea in the United States. Local authority boundaries are inappropriate for solving urban problems but are unlikely to be changed in the near future. New towns require a higher degree of coordination among different governments than is

currently exercised in the United States. Pessimism expressed by American writers concerning the practical ability to create new towns within the American administrative system is used as an excuse for evoking generally negative attitudes toward new towns. The critics may be correct about the likelihood of fundamental change in the American legal structure but they are wrong in their assessment of the extent of administrative reform actually needed. The belief that a unique form of administrative structure must be created in order to build new towns is based on knowledge of only the British new towns administration.

The British have a simple administrative structure for developing new towns. Each town is directed by a development corporation, appointed by the national government, that carries out virtually all aspects of urban development. It prepares the master plan, buys the land, installs roads and utilities, builds structures, rents the buildings and acts as landlord or sells them, provides maintenance, builds parks and playgrounds, provides the shopping centers and pubs, runs the buses, etc. Existing local authorities are consulted as a matter of courtesy but have little impact on policy decisions.

Critics who consider new towns impractical in the United States because the British administrative structure for creating them could never be adopted should examine the French experience. Like the United States, France has a large number of small local authorities with legal responsibility in the urban development process. In fact, France has fifty percent more local authorities per capita than the United States. The territory of the nine new towns encompasses 114 local governments. French planners have demonstrated that, given the will at the national level, an effective new towns policy can be developed with minimal changes in the traditional governmental structure.

The third chapter concentrates on major economic questions associated with new towns. The British method of financing new towns has been much admired but not replicated in other democratic societies. The British development corporation receives fifty-year Treasury loans to pay for construction costs. It must demonstrate that the project is likely to be financially sound. If the Treasury is satisfied with the financial prospects, it makes the loan at a rate of interest comparable to the rates available to other prime borrowers. The loans are repaid with the assets received by the development corporation primarily through sale or leasing of land or structures. This system gives the corporation a good deal of independence because it is freed from the need to secure capital grants on an annual basis.

Neither the French nor the American new towns have been able to secure the degree of financial independence enjoyed by the British.

The United States attempted to solve the problem by providing loan guarantees to private developers. A developer who wished to build a new town applied to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for a guarantee of up to $50 million to facilitate borrowing money from private financial sources at a lower rate of interest than would otherwise be available. In return the developer had to work for certain social and physical planning goals. The $50 million limit on guarantees to each new town proved inadequate when the U.S. economy slowed in the early 1970s. House sales lagged, reducing the rate of income generation. New towns developers, who were inexperienced with working at such a large scale, were unable to meet their financial targets. As a result HUD has had to provide more grants and guarantees than anticipated. In the long run, the new towns may still be profitable. At this time, however, they have required a larger government contribution than expected.

The French have steered a middle course between the monolithic national government framework in Great Britain and the dike-stopping approach of the American government. It is a complex system, heavily influenced by French administration irrationalities, and many problems remain. Although numerous difficulties have arisen, the system has been sufficiently workable to recommend it for analysis by the international planning community.

Chapter 4 discusses the role of the private sector in the French new towns development process. In Great Britain, the public sector performs virtually all the tasks associated with the building of the new towns, while the American new towns are almost entirely private ventures. Private developers are strongly involved in the French new towns effort, but the division of responsibilities between the public and private sectors is more rational in France than that achieved in the United States under the Title VII program. The French government in effect acts as the prime developer for the new towns, assuming most of the financial risks. The large new town sites are divided into smaller units, which are manageable by private developers. This arrangement avoids one of the major problems in the American new towns program. In the United States, new towns have been too large for private developers to manage successfully with their existing methods. The French have recognized the fact that private involvement is most efficient if the private developers are permitted to work at their more usual scale of operations. Consequently, the government has devised a number of tools to channel private developers into the new towns and away from undesirable locations.

Chapter 5 examines the major accomplishment of the French new towns: the achievement of socially balanced communities. In contrast

to most one-class dormitory suburbs, the new towns contain a relatively heterogeneous population, with a mixture of working-class and middle-class families. Furthermore, the new towns are planned to achieve a balance between residences and nonresidential functions, particularly employment opportunities. Many European cities, including Paris, are socially segregated in a spatial pattern different from U.S. cities—the poor live in the periphery rather than the center. Despite these differences the social problem is basically the same: geographic segregation prevents the poor from achieving access to the high quality of housing and supporting services enjoyed by the middle class. Because of their peripheral location the French new towns run the risk of being all low-income projects. Planners have therefore placed a high priority on the attraction of middle-income families to ensure a balanced mix of social classes. This policy has achieved considerable success. Middle-class families have been attracted through the provision of single-family, owner-occupied housing, good shops and recreation facilities, and especially through the provision of job opportunities, including offices.

In the United States new towns have been proposed as a mechanism for integrating low-income families into suburbs that are otherwise closed to them. The French experience domonstrates that socially heterogeneous new communities can be developed, even within the framework of a market system, if a sufficiently high priority is placed on the effort.

For the American observer, two broad patterns emerged in evaluating the achievements of the French new towns. First, the French managed to overcome considerable political and financial obstacles to implement the new towns program. In particular, the French planners had to face problems relating to the inclusion of local authorities and the private sector in the development process. Their solution is extremely relevant to American problems of urban development. Second, the benefits from building new towns are more in the field of social planning than physical planning. The French new towns, like similar programs elsewhere in the world, have not been able to capture the percentage of growth planned for the regions where they are located. However, this study concludes that new towns appear to provide a measurably superior way of life for its residents than is available in alternative forms of urban growth.

1

THE NEW TOWNS IDEA

The current new towns effort in France can be traced back to the 1965 master plan for the Paris region, called the Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme de la Région de Paris (SDAURP).[1] The SDAURP was the first official document in France to propose the construction of new towns. It called for the accommodation of most of the Paris region's growth in eight peripheral new towns, which would range in size from 400,000 to 1,000,000 residents by the year 2000. These eight new towns would be located along two development corridors, or preferential axes. The axes were designed to run parallel courses from southeast to northwest, tangent to the north and south sides of the existing built-up area (see fig. 1–1). Three new towns were proposed for the northern axis and five for the southern. Along the north side, the existing suburban areas of Saint-Denis, Sarcelles, and Bobigny were to be extended to the west to new towns at Beauchamp and Pontoise. To the east the axis would include the new airport at Roissy, the redevelopment of the soon to be abandoned Le Bourget Airport as a new employment and shopping center, and the new town of Noisy-le-Grand. Along the south side, five new towns were planned. Three were included west of Versailles—two at Trappes and one at Mantes. Evry was planned near Orly Airport and the Rungis industrial area (the site of the transplanted Les Halles market). Further east, a large new town called Tigery-Lieusaint was programmed for the area south of the forest of Sénart and north of Melun.

Of the eight new towns proposed in the SDAURP, five are now under construction: Cergy-Pontoise and Marne-la-Vallée (formerly Noisy-le-Grand) along the northern axis and Saint-Quentin-en-Yve-

[1] Délégué Genéral au District de la Région de Paris, *Schéma Directeur de l'aménagement et d'urbanisme de la région parisienne*, 3 vols. (Paris: Délégation Général de la Région de Paris, 1966). The SDAURP was revised in 1975.

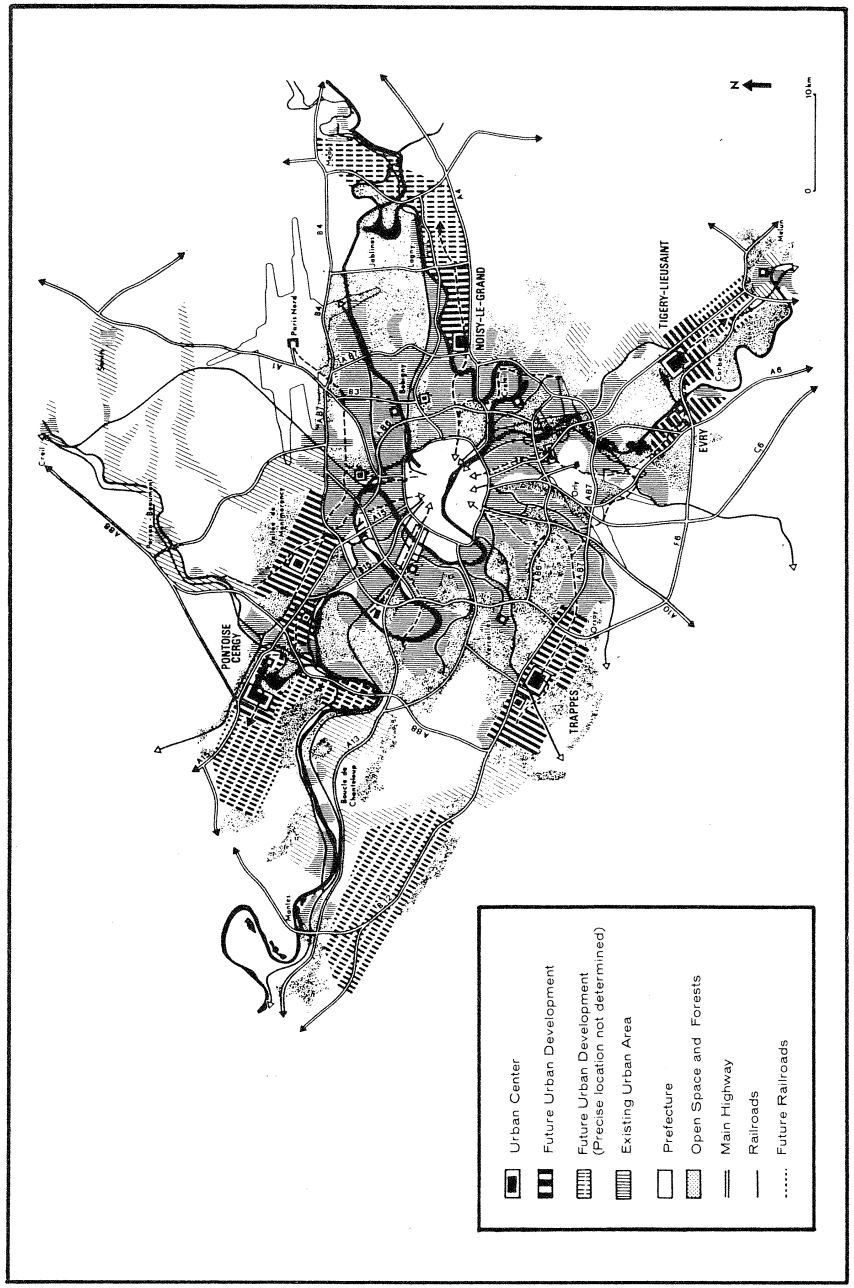


Figure 1–1. The Paris region master plan of 1965. Eight new towns were proposed along two axes tangential to the existing built-up area. Compare this plan with the modifications adopted in 1969 (figure 1–2). (Préfecture de la Région Parisienne, *La Région parisienne: quatre années d'aménagement et d'équipement* (Paris: Institut d'Aménagement at d'Urbanisme de la Région Parisienne, 1973], p. 8)

lines (formerly Trappes), Evry, and Melun-Sénart (formerly Tigery-Lieusaint) along the southern axis. Two of the proposed towns were eliminated because of strong opposition from local officials, while Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines combined two sites into one (fig. 1–2). These five new towns are designed to accommodate around 1.7 million people by 2000 rather than the original 4.5 million.

While the Paris regional planners were advocating the construction of new towns, the national planners in the DATAR were also attracted to the idea. Studies carried out in the three *métropoles d'équilibres* of Lille, Lyon, and Marseille indicated that regional growth would have to take place outside the existing urbanized area. For various reasons new towns were recommended at these *métropoles*. In the Lille region, a new town was needed to provide services and facilities for a large university complex being built to the east of the city. At Lyon, two new towns were proposed to counteract the tendency of the Lyon suburbs to sprawl in all directions. These were located on the east side of Lyon in order to preserve vineyards and other natural amenities elsewhere in the region and to strengthen the development of axes between Lyon and Grenoble, Chambéry, and Annecy. One of the two new towns, L'Isle d'Abeau, has been started adjacent to a new airport that will be one of the largest in France.

The new town at Marseille was necessitated by the decision to increase the port capacity. Because large-scale expansion was blocked at the existing port area, an entirely new port is being built on the Gulf of Fos, to the west of Marseille. The adjacent new town of Berre will provide the needed supporting services for the port facilities. A fourth new town is Le Vaudreuil, near Rouen. It will help to organize the large-scale growth anticipated in the Basse-Seine corridor, which extends from Paris to the English Channel at Le Havre. The new town is designed to prevent this growth from occurring in a sprawling extension from Paris by channeling development into the new town well beyond the current limits of the Paris region.

THE FAILURE OF NEW TOWNS IN THE UNITED STATES AND THEIR SUCCESS IN GREAT BRITAIN

In the United States business and social reformers have long toyed with the new towns idea. Yet U.S. efforts until 1970 have remained isolated and uncoordinated, with one exception outside the concern of the government—the Greenbelt towns constructed during the 1930s. Three new towns were developed by the Resettlement Administration under the leadership of Rex Tugwell: Greenbelt,

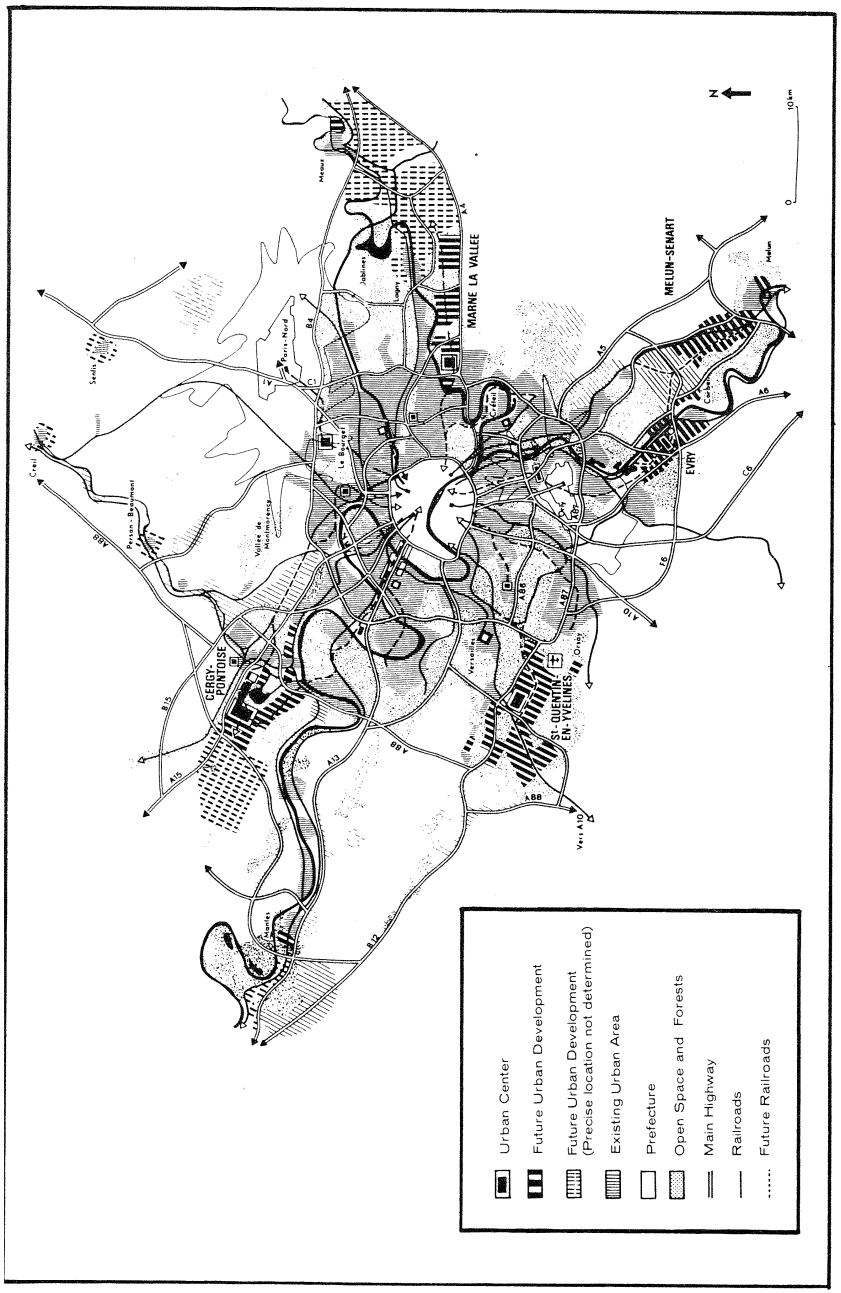


Figure 1–2. The revised Paris region master plan of 1969. The 1969 revision of the 1965 master plan eliminated three of the eight proposed new towns. Two at Trappes were combined into one, now known as Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines. Mantes and Beauchamp were eliminated after intense local opposition to the plan. (Préfecture de la Région Parisienne, *La Région parisienne: quatre années d'aménagement et d'équipement* (Paris: Institut d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme de la Région Parisienne, 1973], p. 8)

Maryland; Greenhills, Ohio; and Greendale, Wisconsin. The projects, built by WPA workers, housed low-income government employees but contained few job opportunities. They suffered from bureaucratic indifference after the first few years of operation. An attempt to build a fourth new town in New Jersey was stopped by a court suit, which eventually resulted in a ruling that the Resettlement Administration was unconstitutional. Administration of the Greenbelt towns passed from one unsympathetic agency to another, ending with the Public Housing Administration. In 1949 the projects were sold. Despite the problems of the Greenbelt towns they made an important contribution to the development of American policy; they demonstrated that with the leadership of the federal government, environmentally attractive, low-income housing projects could be built in the suburbs.[2]

Other than the Greenbelt towns, American new towns have been initiated by private developers, most recently in the 1950s and early 1960s. There are hundreds of communities calling themselves new towns in America today, although most are merely large-scale dormitory suburbs. Induced by the apparent success of many privately sponsored new towns at the time, Congress adopted a national urban growth policy in 1970, in which new towns would play a role. Title VII of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1970 called for the implementation of a national urban growth policy in the United States, based on a number of urban and regional planning principles. Congress declared that the national urban growth policy should help reduce economic and social disparities among regions and within urban areas through comprehensive treatment of the relationships of poverty, employment, and the growth or decline of urban and rural areas. The president was required to submit a national urban growth policy statement every two years.[3] The bulk of the HUD Act provided government support for the construction of new towns. New towns were cited as an efficient mechanism for the implementation of the social, physical, and economic goals of the national urban growth policy.

Four types of financial assistance were made available under the act:

1. Loan guarantees. Private developers could receive up to $50 million in government guarantees for loans to acquire and develop the new town site. The guarantee could cover up to 80 percent of the land acquisition costs and 90 percent of the land development costs

[2]See Joseph L. Arnold, *The New Deal in the Suburbs: A History of the Greenbelt Town Program, 1935–54* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1971).

[3]Public Law 91–609, 84 Stat. 1791, 42 U.S.C. 4501.

incurred by the private developer. A state agency could receive 100 percent of these costs. Thirteen projects received $348 million in commitments, with $299 million actually issued. Two other projects developed by the New York State Urban Development Corporation were given certificates of eligibility for all types of financial assistance other than guarantees. (See table 1–1.)

2. Loans. Loans of up to $20 million for fifteen years per project were authorized to assist the developer in making interest payments on the loans. In 1971, $36 million was released by the administration but rescinded shortly thereafter. No further funds have been made available. However, after several projects defaulted, HUD had to

Table 1–1. The Title VII New Towns

New Town	*Location*	*Loan Guarantees*		*Population*	*Jobs*
		Committed	*Issued*	*(1976)*	*(1976)*
New towns where development is continuing under the original developer					
Harbison	8 mi. northwest of Columbia, S.C.	$24m	$24m	2,800	1,500
Maumelle	12 mi. northwest of Little Rock, Ark.	25m	14m	140	45
St. Charles	25 mi. southeast of Washington, D.C.	38m	38m	9,000	250
Shenandoah	35 mi. southwest of Atlanta, Ga.	40m	25m	7	30
Soul City	45 mi. north of Raleigh, N.C.	14m	10m	55	116
The Woodlands	30 mi. north of Houston, Texas	50m	50m	2,500	1,200
New towns where HUD is acquiring the assets and seeking new developers					
Cedar-Riverside	downtown Minneapolis	$24m	$24m	2,800	1,500
Flower Mound	22 mi. northwest of Dallas, Texas	18m	18m	325	25
Jonathan	25 mi. southwest of Minneapolis, Minn.	21m	21m	2,500	1,500
Park Forest South	30 mi. southwest of Chicago, Ill.	30m	30m	5,800	1,800
Riverton	10 mi. south of Rochester, N.Y.	21m	16m	875	12
New towns being phased out					
Gananda	12 mi. east of Rochester, N.Y.	$22m	$22m	0	40
Newfields	7 mi. northwest of Dayton, Ohio	32m	18m	122	50

make interest payments in connection with the loan guarantees it had issued.

3. Supplementary grants. The new towns were eligible for grants under a variety of federal programs. A new town project that received a federal grant could then get a supplemental grant from HUD to assist the local government's contribution when required. Only $25 million was ever appropriated under this section. The federal categorical grant system was replaced in 1974 by the Community Development Block Grant, under which new towns are eligible.

4. Special planning assistance. An extra $5 million (raised to $10 million) was authorized by Congress for the provision of assistance to the developers for planning innovative social, environmental, or technical projects in the new towns. The administration impounded these funds.

Finally, the New Community Development Corporation was to be established to oversee the program. Originally designed to be independent of other federal agencies, it was eventually placed under HUD and renamed the New Communities Administration. The New Community Development Corporation was able to undertake direct construction of demonstration new towns, although no funds have been appropriated to undertake such an effort.

Why has the Title VII program failed? A HUD white paper, prepared in 1976 with the assistance of the Booz-Allen consultant firm, cited two major defects in the program:

a. Policy failures. The new towns program was never implemented within the context of a national urban growth policy. Instead, it was seen as a method of supporting large-scale private developers. The location of the new towns was not based on planning considerations; sites were selected on the basis of response to applications submitted by developers. Although HUD tried to require the private developers to achieve certain social planning objectives, there was no mechanism of control once funds had been granted. Furthermore, other government social programs, even within HUD, were not coordinated with the new towns. Developers who wished to build low-income housing, which requires government financial assistnace, could not secure the funds from HUD.

b. Implementation failures. The method of financial assistance was infeasible. Private developers were forced to borrow large sums of money to pay for land acquisition and site preparation costs. The loan guarantees did not provide sufficient benefit to offset the high risks of the efforts. Even with the guarantees, the developers still had to repay their loans. The interest payments alone turned out to be more than the revenue that could be generated from land sales in the early

years of the projects. The federal support could not salvage projects that were basically poor financial risks. The recession of 1973–74 sealed the doom of many Title VII developers who could not generate a market for their land.[4]

In January 1975, HUD placed a moratorium on any further Title VII project applications. The following year, it reevaluated the thirteen original projects. Six projects were permitted to continue with refinancing for the original developer, while the assets of the other seven were acquired by HUD. A new developer is being sought for five of the new towns, while the other two—Gananda, near Rochester, N.Y., and Newfields, near Dayton, Ohio—were terminated.

In contrast to the situation in the United States new towns have been built in Great Britain and France within the context of national urban growth policies. Although the precise planning policies and the role of new towns differ in the two countries, there are strong similarities.

The British new towns policy was initiated after World War II, a part of a comprehensive planning system developed by the newly elected Labor government, almost precisely fifty years after the publication of Ebenezer Howard's book. Howard was not content simply to expound his idea in a book; he wanted to generate interest in the actual construction of garden cities. He secured enough support to start construction of the First Garden City at Letchworth in 1903, with a second begun at Welwyn in 1920. His followers organized the Garden Cities Association, now the Town and Country Planning Association, to encourage government and popular support for national planning and new towns.

Two government reports during the interwar years supported the principle of constructing new towns in Britain, but the turning point was the Report of the Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population (known as the Barlow Report) in 1940. The Barlow Commission was appointed "to inquire into the causes which have influenced the present geographic distribution of the industrial population of Great Britain and the probable direction of any change in that direction in the future; to consider what social, economic or strategic disadvantages arise from the concentration of industries or of the industrial population in large towns or in particualr areas of the

[4]U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, New Communities Administration, *New Communities: Problems and Potentials,* 5 vols. (Washington, D.C.: New Communities Administration, 1976).

country; and to report what remedial measures if any should be taken in the national interest."[5]

The industrial distribution was caused by changing technological conditions, such as the substitution of electricity for coal and the end of the transportation monopoly held by railroads. Expanding industries no longer sought locations near sources of raw materials but were concentrating in the largest markets, such as London and Birmingham. Barlow noted the social, economic, and strategic disadvantages of industrial concentration. Although the commission did not specifically recommend the construction of new towns, its argument against continued unchecked growth of the big cities coincided with that of the new towns supporters.

The Barlow Report's recommendations against further concentration in London and other big cities became the basis for postwar planning policies. Sir Patrick Abercrombie was appointed to prepare plans for the London region, as well as the central area.[6] The Greater London Plan of 1944 divided the London region into four rings. The inner ring, which had been severely damaged during the war, was to be comprehensively redeveloped at lower densities. The second ring—the older suburbs—would maintain a stable population level, although some moderation was needed. The third ring was a green belt, where further building would be prohibited and permanent open space safeguarded. Beyond the green belt, growth would be concentrated in new towns, designed to receive the "overspill" of people and activities displaced from the inner ring.

Britain elected a majority Labor government for the first time in 1945, committed to large-scale social and economic planning. The most important urban planning policies included:

1. Nationalization of land rights. All proposed changes in the use of land had to receive the permission of local authorities. Owners prohibited from developing their land could receive financial compensation. Funds for compensation came from a 100 percent "betterment" tax on the increased land values accruing to owners of land with development permission.

2. Statutory plans. Local authorities were required to prepare plans showing where development could take place and areas to be

[5]Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population, *Report,* Cmd. 6153 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1940).

[6]Patrick Abercrombie, *Greater London Plan, 1944* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1945): and J. H. Forshaw and Patrick Abercrombie, *County of London Plan* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1943).

protected. Permission to develop land could be given only if it were consistent with the development plan.

3. New towns. A commission was established under the direction of Lord Reith (who had organized the BBC) to prepare strategy for the implementation of a new program.[7] Reith proposed sites for new towns, many of which coincided with Abercrombie's suggestion, as well as the methods of financing and administering the new towns.

Fourteen new towns were designated between 1947–51, including eight outside of London and two in Scotland. These so-called Mark I new towns were primarily planned for intraregional purposes. They were designed to accommodate the overspill from the central areas of London, Birmingham, Liverpool, and Glasgow, that is, the families needing homes as a result of the planned reduction in the number of dwellings in the redeveloped central areas. When the Conservative party regained power in 1951 they permitted work to continue on the new towns but designated only one additional new town between 1951–63. In the early 1960s, however, the Conservatives initiated a second wave of new towns, primarily to meet interregional needs. Thus the usefulness of new towns has now been accepted by both political parties. Thirty-three new towns have been designated in Britain, containing two million people and one million jobs.

Is there a role for new towns in the United States? Despite the problems of the Title VII new towns, HUD thinks so. Although the nation's population is increasing less rapidly now than in the past, large-scale redistribution of that population continues. People and jobs are still moving from central cities to suburbs, and from the north and east to the south and west. In the absence of effective planning, the suburbs and newer cities of the south and west are organized in a wasteful, costly, and environmentally damaging pattern of sprawl while the central cities of the northeast try to meet the needs of an increasingly poor and nonwhite population with the dwindling tax base. Like other countries, the United States has both intraregional and interregional problems that call for a coordinated planning response. According to a 1976 HUD white paper, "The nation's experience with new town development, both private and public, indicate that new towns, properly located, designed, financed, managed and supported, represent a cost-efficient, environmentally-sound, socially-desirable, and consumer-attractive tool for intelligent growth management."[8]

[7]New Towns Committee, *Interim Report*, Cmd. 6759; *Second Interim Report*, Cmd. 6794; *Final Report*, Cmd. 6876 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1946).

[8]U.S. Dept. of HUD, New Communities Administration, *New Communities* p.99.

How can the United states revive its new towns program? Many of the difficulties associated with the development of a new towns program in the United States are due to an attempt to emulate the administrative and financial procedures adopted in Britain. As the HUD white paper relates, "While French and Scandinavian new town programs helped to inspire interest in the development of an American counterpart, the British program most influenced Title VII's design."[9] The central argument of this book is that many of the problems faced by the French planners in the implementation of their new towns are comparable to those now experienced by the United States. The French experience deserves the careful attention of American policy makers, because if the French could overcome the obstacles to the development of new towns there, so could the Americans.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW TOWNS IDEA IN FRANCE

In certain ways the French new towns represent a departure from the traditional concept of new towns, as developed primarily in Great Britain. The French new towns are large projects, ranging in size from 140,000 to 500,000 residents. They are not separated from the rest of the built-up area by green belts. Because of different tastes in urban design the French new towns contain more high-rise apartments than almost anywhere in the world. The French new towns could in fact be called "new downtowns" in view of the importance being placed on development of large town centers.

However, despite the differences in architectural execution the French new towns share the same functional rationale with other new towns projects around the world. The French new towns, like their counterparts elsewhere, are designed to organize large-scale urban growth in an orderly manner, with an efficient provision of required services and facilities, while at the same time achieving a socially balanced community.

The sixth national plan provided the official government statement of the purposes of the French new towns policy. According to the sixth plan, the new towns are designed to accomplish four primary goals:

1. to restructure the suburbs by organizing new concentrations of employment, housing, and services;

2. to reduce the amount of commuting and ease the transport problems in particular urban regions;

[9]Ibid. p. 10.

3. to create truly self-contained cities, as measured by a balance between jobs and housing, a variety of different jobs and housing, the provision of housing and supporting services at the same time and place, the rapid creation of urban centers, and concern for recreational facilities and environmental protection;

4. to serve as laboratories for experiments in urban planning and design.[10]

Although the sixth plan differs somewhat in terms of organizing the rationale for new towns in France, the basic twofold pattern, which runs throughout the new town literature, is clearly observed. The French new towns have distinctive visual characteristics, but the underlying functions of the policy—to concentrate regional growth in an efficient manner and to create socially balanced communities—have been maintained.

In order to understand why French planners support the construction of new towns it is necessary to examine the relationship between the new towns and other planning policies in France. Like other European countries, France initiated national planning policies after World War II. In contrast to the British, who started the construction of new towns soon after the war, French planners had other planning priorities. New towns have been developed in France only in a second generation of postwar planning in the 1960s.

French planning since World War II has been characterized by two major principles, the stimulation of national economic growth and the reduction of regional disparities. The rationale for these two planning goals may be examined in more detail.

Economic planning

Although France, like the rest of Europe, required large-scale reconstruction of its industrial base because of wartime destruction, it had a more fundamental economic problem. For nearly a century, between 1850–1950, while the rest of the western world rapidly expanded, France had been relatively stagnant economically and had not increased in population.

Until 1850, the growth of the French economy and population had not differed dramatically from that of other countries. France had the largest population in Europe except for Russia. It had been the second country (after Britain) to begin the process of industrial modernization in the eighteenth century. Although the new industrial

[10]France, Office of the Prime Minister, *Programme finalisé des villes nouvelles* (Paris: Ministère de l'Equipment et du Logement, 1971).

system spread much more slowly across France than elsewere, nonetheless France appeared to have established a strong, balanced foundation for long-term economic prosperity. However, France stopped growing after 1850. The population, which had grown from 27 million in 1800 to 38 million in 1865, stagnated for the next eighty years. In 1946 the population was 40.5 million, an increase of only 2.5 million in eighty years, an average annual rate of increase of less than 0.1 percent. The lack of growth was due to the abnormally low birth rates in France, rather than to unusually high mortality rates.[11] By the end of World War II England, Germany, and Italy, as well as the Soviet Union, were all more populous than France.

During this 100-year period the French economy expanded far more slowly than the rival European states. Diffusion of technological innovations to rural areas was much slower. National monetary policies did not support speculative economic ventures. Few risks were taken by French businessmen. Most of the industrial inventions were imported to France by foreigners. Isolated experiments and innovations sprang up in France, but they were not developed or accepted throughout the economy.[12]

In response to the long-term economic problems, as well as the wartime destruction, France established an economic planning program after World War II. Supported in part by Marshall Plan funds, France established its first national plan in 1947, under the direction of Jean Monnet. The plan set priorities in national investment for the purpose of stimulating recovery and long-term growth. Public funds were channeled into six industries considered most critical to the national economy: coal, electricity, steel, cement, agricultural machinery, and transportation. Some key sectors were nationalized in whole or in part.[13]

The process of creating national plans has been institutionalized in France. These plans now routinely set national investment priorities for five-year periods. In 1976 the French completed the sixth five-year plan and began the seventh. The plans have reflected the nation's predominant economic concerns, such as industrial expansion, unemployment, inflation, social services, relations to the Common

[11]The cause of the unusually low birth rate has been inconclusively debated. Explanations include the lack of economic growth, the inheritance laws, and the sophistication of French civilization. See Joseph Spengler, *France Faces Depopulation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1938).

[12]See Claude Fohlen, "The Industrial Revolution in France," in *Essays in French Economic History*, ed. Rondo Cameron (Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1970).

[13]See Stephen Cohen, *Modern Capitalist Planning: The French Model* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969).

Market, etc. The plan has become a forum for political debates over the relative merits of alternative economic policies. As was indicated earlier, the sixth plan included the new towns among the national investment priorities.

The national plan is prepared by a government organization called the Commissiariat Générale du Plan (CGP), or National Planning Commission.The CGP was designed to complement rather than compete with the established ministries, such as the ministry of national economy and finance or the ministry of equipment. It has a relatively small staff (about sixty) but is attached directly to the prime minister's office. The CGP relies on the various ministries to conduct research and implement the plan. Its role is to coordinate goals and priorities established by the various factions in the government.

Regional planning

The overall economic and demographic stagnation in France during the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century masks the sharp patterns of redistribution going on. As in other countries, French cities were growing faster than the rural areas, but the trends were more dramatic.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, economic and demographic growth was rather evenly distributed around France. Cities expanded but so did the countryside. Economic expansion was achieved without a massive migration to the cities. Industries such as textiles operated efficiently with rural home-based labor, rather than in costly factories in big cities. Although Paris had long ago been established as the most important city in France, the regional centers such as Lille, Lyon, and Marseille shared in the national growth.

After 1850 the pattern of balanced national growth was destroyed. People and jobs were increasingly concentrated in the Paris region, which started to grow at the expense of the rest of the country. From 1801–51 Paris grew by around 500,000 people and France as a whole by 9 million. After the 1866 census the rural areas began to lose population rapidly while urban growth was increasingly concentrated in Paris. From a city of one million in 1851, Paris grew to 1.8 million in 1866, 2.5 million in 1891, and 6.6 million in 1946. Between 1866 and 1946, the Paris region increased by 4.8 million people, while France as a whole increased by only 2.5 million. France outside Paris therefore actually declined by 2.3 million people during this eighty-year period. Paris increased its share of the national population from

two percent in 1800 and five percent in 1866 to fifteen percent by 1946.

In contrast to the situation in England, where governments since the time of Elizabeth I had tried to stop the growth of London, the French encouraged the growth of their capital city. Paris competed with Berlin, Rome, and Vienna to become the largest and most important city on the continent. Public works projects were concentrated in the Paris region. Virtually all roads and railroads converged there. Baron Haussmann, prefect of the Department of the Seine from 1853–71 under Napoleon III, directed a massive building effort in Paris. Wide boulevards and large squares were carved out of densely packed neighborhoods. Large parks were developed on the fringe of the built-up area, including the Bois de Boulogne, the Bois de Vincennes, Buttes Chaumont, Montsouris, and Parc Monçeau. The water and sewer system of Paris were modernized (and are the tourist attractions today). The facilities built by Haussmann proved sufficient to accommodate the demands for public services until well into the twentieth century. Since Haussmann's day, Paris has also developed an extensive subway system.

The concentration of physical development in Paris was complemented by administrative centralization in such areas as government and banking. Applications for loans by individuals or industries in the provinces took much longer to process than identical loans applied for in Paris, because provincial bank branches had to send the request to the central office in Paris for approval. Government decision making was increasingly centralized. The most famous anecdote was that the minister of education in Paris could tell a visitor exactly what line of Vergil was being recited at that moment in every classroom in France.[14] Paris became increasingly dominant as the cultural and intellectual center of France. Investment in theaters, museums, and universities was concentrated there. Per capita income in Paris was twice as high as the poorest parts of France.

After World War II, the French public became increasingly aware of the growing imbalance between Paris and the rest of the country. The most important contribution to this awareness was the publication of a book called *Paris and the French Desert*, written by a geographer, J. -F. Gravier. Gravier brought to public attention the role of government policies in concentrating national growth in Paris. He warned that if existing policy continued, France outside of Paris would be a cultural and economic wasteland.[15]

[14]Michel Crozier, *The Bureaucratic Phenomenon* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 239.

[15]J. -F. Gravier, *Paris es le désert français* (Paris: Flammarion, 1947).

Since World War II the French government has attempted to reverse the trend of concentrating resources in Paris. At the same time that the national plans were being developed by the CGP, the ministry of construction—the agency then responsible for much of the government investment in public works projects—took the lead in the development of regional redistribution policies. Programs were formulated to divert growth from the Paris region to the rest of France through a system of permits and financial incentives.

The agency responsible for implementing regional development policies within the ministry of construction was the Département d'Aménagement du Territoire (DAT). During the 1950s DAT was criticized for its failure to discriminate among different industries. By urging all industries to locate in less developed areas, the DAT failed to take into account the different impacts that different industries have on particular regions. The DAT approach to regional development was called "saupoudrage," or powdering. Critics claimed that sustained growth in the less-developed regions could only be fostered if certain key industries were directed there. The DAT was also handicapped by the fact that the disbursement of financial incentives was controlled by the minister of finance, who had other priorities besides regional development.[16]

By the early 1960s the division of responsibilities in the government between economic planning and regional development had become absurd. The DAT planners within the ministry of construction were engaged in the preparation of a national physical plan for the location of new equipment at the same time the CGP was engaged in the preparation of the fourth national plan for economic priorities. It was clear that the regional development policies of the ministry of construction were increasingly intertwined with the national economic planning process. Coherent integration of the two efforts was needed.

Beginning with the fourth national plan (1962–65), the CGP was required to examine the regional impact of all investment proposals. Previously, the national plans divided the study of the economy into different sectors. Today the national plans break down the goals and targets by regions as well as by sectors of the economy. The national plan therefore is a matrix of targets for particular sectors and particular regions. For example, the plan sets a goal for overall housing starts in France but also distributes that total among the regions.

New organizations were created at the regional level to assist the central administration with the establishment of regional economic

[16]George Ross and Stephen Cohen, *The Politics of French Regional Planning* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Center for Metropolitan Planning and

policies. France was divided into twenty-one regions, each headed by a regional or "superprefect" (fig. 1–3). The regional prefect consults an advisory commission (the Commission de Développement Economique Régional, or CODER), which contains between twenty and fifty labor and business leaders, local politicians, and other prominent individuals. Each region is given a share of the national plan, called the "tranche régionale," or regional slice. Each of the twenty-one regional prefects, with the advice of CODER, establishes priorities within the region. The regional prefect has considerable discretion in allocating resources to specific projects within the region, such as housing, secondary roads, and schools. However the region cannot, for example, use housing funds for roads. Projects of national importance, such as universities, airports, and expressways, are excluded from the regional prefect's concern.

While the CGP retained responsibility for the development of the national plans, a new national agency was created to ensure that actual investment patterns within the various ministries followed the overall regional development priorities established in the plan. This organization is the Délégation à l'Aménagement du Territoire et à l'Action Régionale (DATAR), the delegation for regional planning. It works with the established ministries so that the investment program of each ministry is consistent with national goals for regional development. Like the CGP, the DATAR works with the existing bureaucracy but answers directly to the prime minister. The DATAR can not command the traditional ministries to adhere to established regional policies, but its close relationship with the prime minister enhances its influence.[17] Its principal power is the right to review the annual budgets prepared by the various ministries. All proposed projects are examined by the DATAR to determine if they are consistent with regional policies. If the DATAR opposes the plans of a traditional ministry, the conflict is settled by the prime minister.

[17]According to Ross and Cohen,

The DATAR, modeled after the Planning Commission, was deliberately designed not to pose a direct threat to existing ministries. The fact that it was too small in staff and resources and too weak in legal powers to act on its own constituted a fundamental guarantee to the ministries: like the Plan, it cannot replace them; it cannot command them. DATAR cannot become a super-ministry. It must work within the existing structure of bureaucratic competence and power, trying to initiate and coordinate action by other ministries. But unlike the Plan, which developed during a period of weak, unstable governments and strong, independent bureaucracies, and consequently stressed political non-commitment and independence, DATAR was created in a period of strong Gaullist governments. It has been much closer to purely political undertakings than was the Plan in its early days. Though headed by a 'Minister,'

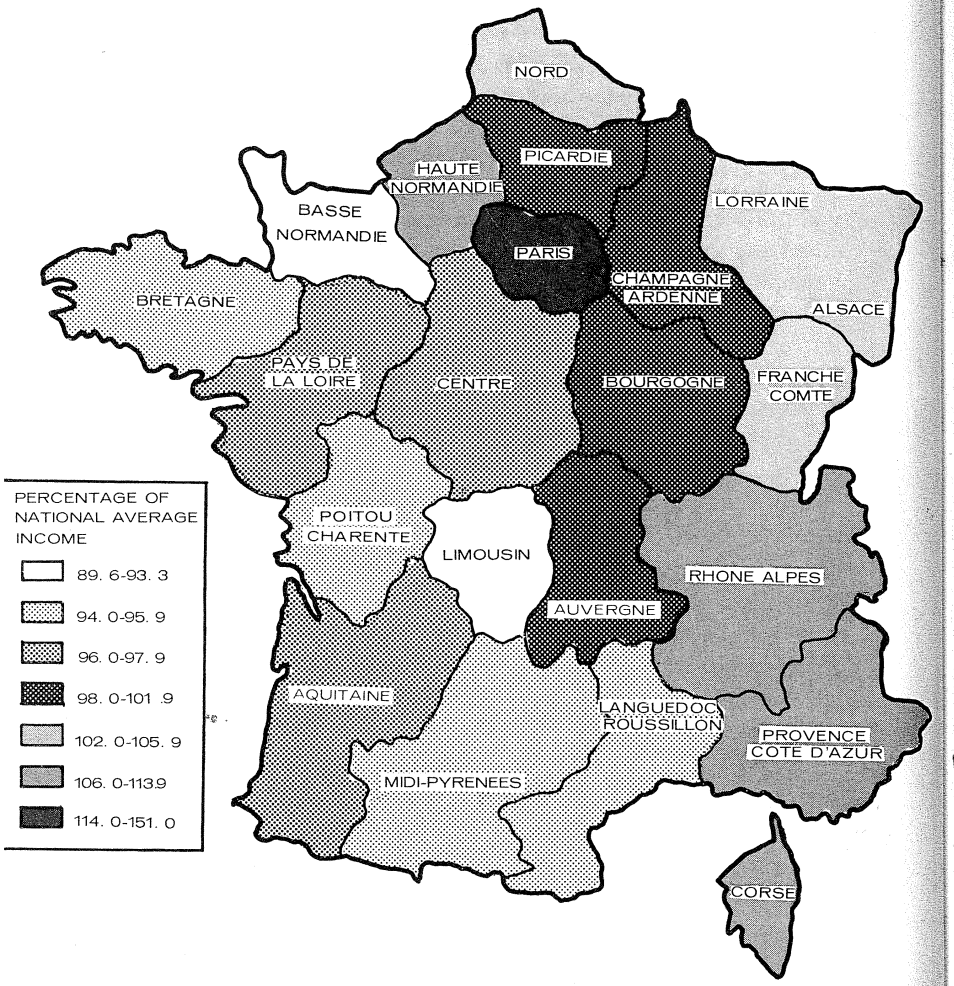


Figure 1–3. The French planning regions. The map indicated the variation in per capita income by regions in 1970. Despite the narrowing of the gap since World War II, the Paris region has nearly a fifty percent higher per capita income than any other region in France and nearly twice the per capita income of the poorest regions.

Minister's Office. But DATAR's attachment has been more intimate in political terms. Among its other consequences, this close political attachment has been an important source of its influence in dealing with other administrations. (Ibid., pp. 19-20.)

The DATAR can also directly finance projects through a small fund that it manages. This fund is called the Fonds d'Intervention pour l'Aménagement du Territoire (FIAT), the fund for regional planning assistance. One of the largest projects supported by the DATAR is the development of Languedoc-Roussillon as a tourist region. Originally a primitive swamp-infested region on the Mediterranean between Marseille and the Spanish border, Languedoc is now being prepared for tourism. Included in the effort is the development of several new communities, with hotels and other tourist needs. New infrastructure is needed throughout the region to support a large population. Many of the administrative and financing techniques first attempted in Languedoc were later applied to the new towns program, although the French government does not consider the Languedoc projects themselves to be new towns.

The DATAR has been responsible for the development of a rather sophisticated regional development policy in France, still based on opposition to further demographic and economic growth of Paris. In contrast to the earlier situation, relatively strong tools are now available to implement this policy. Growth is discouraged in Paris and encouraged elsewhere by a number of measures.

All new housing units or firms above a certain size must obtain a permit to locate anywhere in France. The DATAR has limited the number of new dwellings and offices that can be established in the Paris region. At the moment, growth there is held to around 100,000 dwelling units and 700,000 square meters of office space per year. A firm seeking a permit to be in Paris must demonstrate that no other location in France is feasible. Even in that case the DATAR will strongly encourage the firm to select a suburban location, such as a new town, rather than central Paris. Permits for construction elsewhere in France are granted much more readily.

Regional development policies are also implemented through financial incentives. Firms that do receive permits to locate in the Paris region must pay a special charge, depending on the exact location within the region. On the other hand, a variety of subsidies are given firms that locate elsewhere in France. The country is divided into five zones; industries that locate in the poorest areas, such as Brittany, receive the heaviest subsidies, while those in Paris receive none.

The DATAR has concluded that the most effective way to counteract the influence of Paris is to concentrate investment in relatively few locations rather than to spread it uniformly around the provinces. The most pragmatic way to achieve the long-term objective of reducing the domination of Paris is the encouragement of *métropoles d'équilibre,* or growth poles. The rationale of the growth pole theory,

as developed by Perroux, Boudeville, and other French regional economists, is that a few industries have much more of an impact on regional growth than the others. The presence in the region of these key, or propulsive, industries will foster the development of other supporting industries nearby. The location of the propulsive industries should be the main concern of regional development strategies. Because there are only a few, they should be located where they will do the most good.[18]

The DATAR selected eight urban regions to serve as focal points for the establishment of propulsive industries: Marseille, Lyon, Lille, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Nantes-St. Nazaire, Strasbourg, and Nancy-Metz, all large urban areas. They were chosen with the reasoning that the strong pull of Paris could be counteracted only by other large cities. Unlike the rural areas or small towns, the *métropoles d'équilibre* were already large enough to offer supporting services and facilities to meet the initial needs of propulsive industries.

PLANNING FOR THE PARIS REGION

While national attention was focused on correcting the historical imbalances between Paris and the provinces, the Paris region continued to grow, from 6.6 million people in 1946 to 8.4 million by 1962. The nineteenth-century roads, parks, and sewers that had served Paris for many years were no longer adequate. Much of the housing in Paris was overcrowded and lacking modern sanitary conveniences. The housing shortage was severe, because of the years of low construction rates, wartime damage, and the large population increase. Effective planning was stymied by the absence of strong local authorities, inappropriate programs, and hostility on the part of the national planners toward the continued growth of the Paris region. In the absence of strong planning controls the Paris region rapidly expanded during the 1940s and 1950s in a sprawling, undisciplined fashion, aggravating social problems.

The Paris region has become more and more spatially divided into socially segregated units. The basic problem is that more people wish to located their homes and activities in the city center than the space allows, given current building techniques and the need for historical preservation. This pressure to locate in Paris drives out space-intensive activities in favor of those requiring little space, and attracts

[18] See Jacques Boudeville, *Problems of Regional Economic Planning* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966), and Niles Hansen, *French Regional Planning* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968).

those who are most willing to pay for the location. Thus, offices are expanding in the center while factories move out, and the well-to-do stay in the center while the poor are priced out. Concentration of attention on the center of the city has brought a neglect of the surrounding suburban areas, where the activities and people unable to remain in the center are relocated.

The Paris region has also been spatially segregated between the east and west. The population is divided about evenly between east and west, but two-thirds of the jobs are in the west. During the 1960s one-third of the new population, three-fourths of the employment, and four-fifths of the offices were located in the west.

Paris has always played a dominant role in the nation's economic affairs. The same pressures that worked for concentration of businesses in Paris also produced competition for space in the center itself. In the older parts of Paris classes were traditionally sorted out vertically as well as horizontally. Wealthier families tended to live on the second or third floors, just above the street level and storefronts. The poorest people would live in the basements or lofts, with the worst ventilation. Consequently, everyone enjoyed relatively good accessibility to the opportunities and attractions of central Paris.

Since World War II, the traditional method of accommodating everyone who wanted to be in central Paris has been inadequate. The older buildings require substantial rehabilitation or replacement, after which rents must invariably be raised. Rent controls were applied but have served mainly to postpone inevitably needed work. The rapid rise in housing costs in central Paris today is thus partially the result of many years of frozen prices. With modern building techniques, the lofts of the poor have been turned into fashionable apartments for the wealthy. Working-class neighborhoods are being "rehabilitated" into more expensive, "trendy" boutique districts. Other areas are demolished to make way for luxury high rises.

The intense competition for space in central Paris has priced the poor out of the market. They must live in peripheral projects that have all of the negative features of suburban living and none of the positive. Shopping and recreational facilities are inadequate in the suburbs. Jobs are far away, requiring long-distance commuting on frequently inadequate public transportation systems. Most of the social problems are found in these suburban areas.[19]

Strong pressures for a central location are also expressed by firms seeking office space. This phenomenon is not limited to Paris, of course. Competition for space is unusually intense in central Paris,

[19] See Jean Lojkine, *La Politique urbain dans la région parisienne, 1945–1972* (Paris: Mouton, 1976).

though, for two reasons. Attempts by the national planners to reduce the dominance of Paris have limited the number of new office buildings constructed. In addition, the historical importance and beauty of central Paris severely constrains the amount of possible new construction. Although a few high-rise offices have been permitted in central Paris, their clearly perceived glaring incompatibility with the historic city makes it increasingly difficult for further high rises to be built. Therefore, offices must be squeezed into older, low-rise structures. As in other cities, factories and warehouses, the source of many "working-class" jobs, are moving out of central Paris to the suburbs because they need room to expand. Employment growth in central Paris is due entirely to the expansion of offices.

Central Paris, with about one-fourth of the region's population in 1968, had one-third of the secondary (manufacturing) jobs and over one-half of the tertiary (office) jobs. The inner suburbs contained around 40 percent of the population and the same percentage of the region's secondary jobs, but only one-fourth of the tertiary. The four outer departments of the Paris region, with 30 percent of the population, contained only one-fifth of the secondary and tertiary jobs. The distribution of secondary jobs matches the distribution of population to a large degree, but the office sector—the sector absorbing virtually all of the increase in jobs—is concentrated in central Paris (table 1–2).

Table 1–2. Distribution of Residents and Jobs in the Paris Region

Location	*Population*	*Jobs*	*Offices*
Central Paris	25.8%	47.1%	68.2%
Inner suburbs	41.5	30.0	26.7
Outer suburbs	32.9	22.9	5.1

NOTE: The inner suburbs are defined as the departments of Seine–Saint-Denis, Val-de-Marne, and Hauts de Seine. The outer suburbs are defined as the departments of Essonne, Seine-et-Marne, Val-d'Oise, and Yvelines, Cergy-Pontoise new town is in the department of Val-d'Oise. Evry is in Essonne. Marne-la-Vallée is within three departments: Seine–Saint-Denis, Val-de-Marne, and Seine-et-Marne. Melun-Sénart is in Seine-et-Marne. Saint-Quentin is in Yvelines.

Planning policies in the Paris region prior to the formulation of the new towns idea have aggravated these existing imbalances. Housing programs were designed to alleviate the severe shortage following World War II. Large-scale housing estates, called "*grands ensembles*," were planned in the suburbs during the 1950s and 1960s. Today around one million people live in these *grand ensembles*

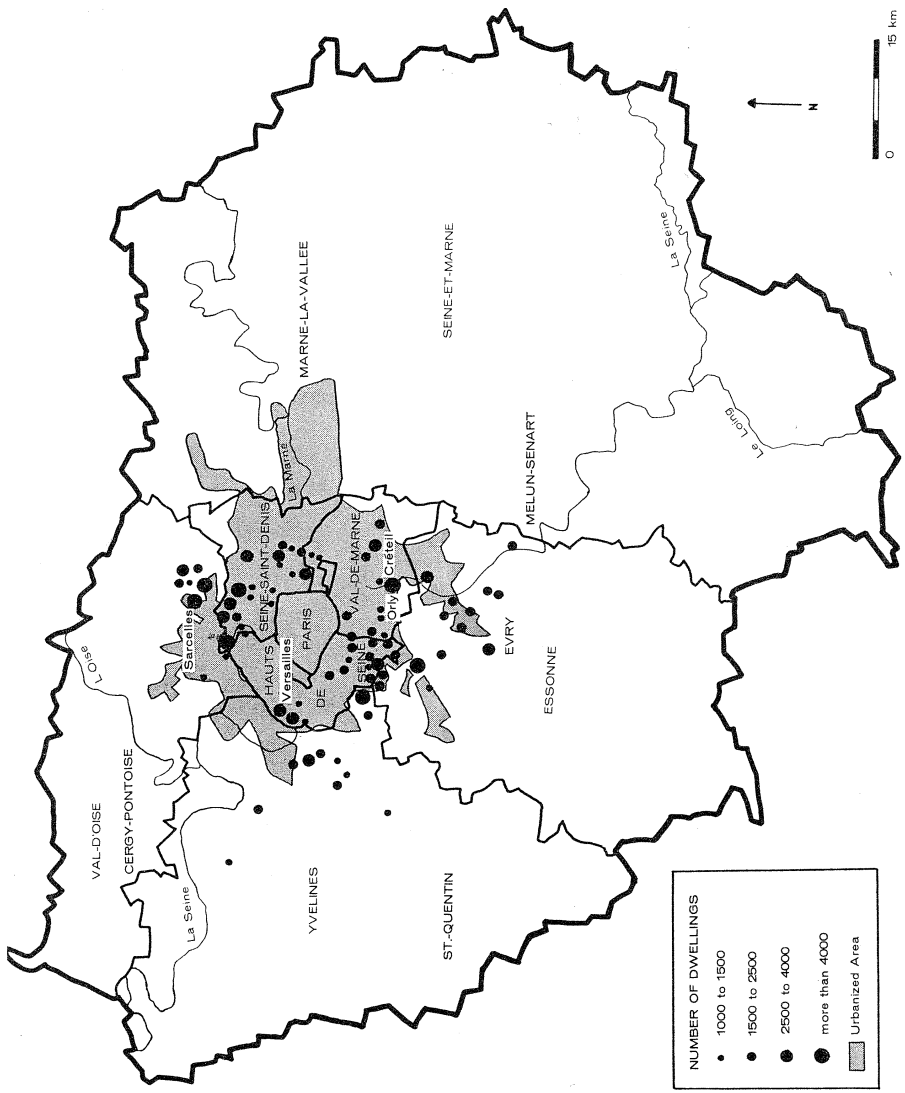
outside of Paris, about one-third of the population of the outer suburbs. Nearly one-half of the population increase of the Paris region since 1954 has been concentrated in *grand ensembles* (fig. 1–4).[20]

The *grands ensembles* are considered by most French planners today to be unsatisfactory living environments. A relatively high degree of crime and other social pathologies has been observed in them. The planners blame the high incidence of social problems on the lack of social and physical diversity in the projects. Because the purpose of the *grands ensembles* was to provide a large quantitiy of housing, the projects generally consist of several high-density apartment towers. Shopping and recreation facilities near the projects are usually inadequate, and employment opportunities are rare. Residents are required to commute long distances to work in central Paris or in other suburbs. One study has shown that 20 percent of the workers in one large project spend more than one hour to reach work. Commuting was aggravated by the relatively poor public transportation in the suburbs.

The social composition of the residents of these *grand ensembles* also reflects a lack of diversity. The age distribution of the residents shows a preponderance of children under ten and adults between twenty-five and forty, with almost a complete absence of individuals in their early twenties or over fifty. The apartment units have mainly three and four rooms, suitable for families with one or two children but not for individuals or large families. The income distribution is similarly narrow, with most workers performing routine office functions.

The most important planning program affecting the distribution of jobs in the Paris region has been the construction of La Défense. Like the *grands ensembles*, La Défense has exacerbated the social problems of the Paris region. It is a large-scale office complex located in the western suburbs. In response to the pressures for additional office space in the Paris region, the government approved a plan in 1958 to redevelop a large district west of the central area. The most important axis in Paris, which extends west from the Louvre through the Tuileries, Concorde, Champs-Elysées, Arc de Triomphe, and Neuilly, now terminates at the modern high rises of La Défense. The first stage of the operation, on 130 hectares, will be completed shortly; the project contains around 1.5 million square meters of offices, 300,000 square meters of commercial space, and 100,000

[20]See Paul Clerc, *Les Grands Ensembles banlieues nouvelles* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1967); Jean Duquesne, *Vivre à Sarcelles? Le Grand Ensemble et ses problèmes* (Paris: Editions Cujas, 1966); and Merlin, *Villes nouvelles.*



SOURCE: Paul Clerc, *Les Grands Ensembles Banlieues Nouvelles*, p. 28

Figure 1–4. *Grands ensembles* in the Paris region. The map shows the *grands ensembles* of more than 1,000 dwellings. Although located closer to central Paris than the new towns, the *grands ensembles* suffer from poorer transportation links and fewer services within the project areas. Most consist entirely of high-rise apartment towers.

jobs. Future extensions are now being planned. Around thirty percent of the new offices being built in the entire Paris region are now concentrated in La Défense. The result of this concentration in La Défense is a strengthening of the patterns of spatial segregation in the Paris region, for the project represents an extension of the regional office center along a western axis, rather than a fundamental reorientation of the direction of growth, to spread offices more evenly throughout the region.[21]

A master plan was created for the Paris region but was already outdated when published in 1960. This plan, called the PADOG, called for a limit to the growth of the Paris region. A tight line was drawn around the region, surrounded by a green belt in which no new projects were to be located. All growth would be concentrated within the continuously built-up area. By 1960, both the physical boundaries and population projections of the PADOG had been exceeded in the Paris region.[22]

Responding to the need for coherent planning policies in the Paris region, President de Gaulle asked his old friend Paul Delouvrier to see what he could do about the situation. The president appointed Delouvrier as the first head of a new Paris regional government. A strong, dominant personality, Delouvrier is considered the father of French new towns. He is universally cited as the first French planning official to advocate the development of new towns and actively to work for their realization. He was able to use his strength and influence, especially with the president and the minister of finance, to transform the vision of new towns into concrete reality.

In the early 1960s Delouvrier sent his planners around the world to examine planning policies in other cities. French officials at that time seemed to suffer a temporary loss of self-confidence. The traditional French attitude of hostility to foreign ideas was replaced by an aggressive desire to plan Paris with the best tools available from the rest of the world. The new towns policies in Britain, Scandinavia, and Eastern Europe were judged successful by the French.[23]

[21]The head of La Défense development corporation, Jean Millier, was formerly working with the new town studies. He has claimed that La Défense is not really in competition with the new towns. Given the proximity to central Paris and the price advantages, office firms are flocking to La Défense, while the new towns must scramble to get such firms. (Interview, July 1974).

[22]France, Ministère de la Construction, *Plan d'Aménagement et d'Organisation générale de la région parisienne* (Paris: Ministère de la Construction, 1961). For a description of the PADOG plan, see Peter Hall, *The World Cities* (New York: World University Library, 1966).

[23]See for example, Institut d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme de la Région Parisienne, *Cahiers de l'Institut d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme de la Région Parisienne* (Paris:

Delouvrier's rationale for advocating the construction of new towns outside of Paris was based on the demographic "realities" as he saw them. First of all, it was clear that the geographic area of urbanization must expand, for even if the population were to remain static in the region, each inhabitant would demand more space for housing, services, and equipment, such as cars. However, the population was not going to remain static; even if migration from the provinces were halted, the population would still rise because of the larger number of births than deaths. From 8.4 million people in 1962, Paris would "realistically" grow to 14 million by 2000.

Given the need to expand the surface of the Paris region, the choice is between continuous development and isolated points of growth. The latter was considered infeasible, according to Delouvrier, because "it requires a sharper discipline or control than the French people would accept." The alternative of continuous development normally implies sprawl, or, as the French call it, "tache d'huile" (oil slick), a pattern considered equally unacceptable. The desirable pattern would be to promote continuous growth, not in all directions but along selected axes or corridors, with the other axes retained as open space. New towns are desirable as focal points within the axes of development in order to provide the services and entertainment otherwise found only in the center of Paris.[24]

Although the rationale for constructing the provincial new towns is not entirely contradictory to that for the Paris new towns, it is clear that the two are not fully compatible. The Paris new towns are designed to organize the "inevitable" growth of that region in an efficient manner. The provincial new towns are designed to organize the nationally beneficial growth outside of Paris in an efficient manner.

Despite the fact that four of the nine French new towns are being built in the provinces, the program is still perceived in France as essentially Paris-oriented, because the strongest supporters of new towns have been in the Paris regional government. To the DATAR, the Paris new towns represented a counterinfluence to their policy of discouraging growth in the Paris region. Why then did the DATAR support new towns? To some extent, the DATAR's support for new towns was a result of Delouvrier's pressure. Delouvrier, aware that national support could not be expected for Paris new towns alone, urged the national planners to consider new towns in the provinces.

[24] Interview with Paul Delouvrier, July 1974, my translation.

Whether the DATAR would have proposed the provincial new towns without Delouvrier's strong urgings is unknown; but it is certainly true that support for the Paris new towns represents an exception to the national planners' opposition to new large-scale investments in the Paris region. The reduction in the scope of the Paris new towns program was certainly due in part to the need to balance the sizes of the Paris and provincial new towns efforts.

The two sets of new towns have proceeded simultaneously within a unified national structure of administration and financing. In practice, relatively little competition has developed among the various new towns despite the sharply different origins of the provincial and Paris programs. The most important reason for the lack of conflict over priorities among the various new towns is the overall demographic situation in France. Since the end of World War II long-term demographic trends have been reversed.

Since 1945 the Paris region has continued to grow, from 6.6 million to around 10 million in 1975. However, the Paris region is no longer growing at the expense of the rest of the country. In the three decades since World War II, the French population has grown at a rate of 1 percent per year, after a century of averaging under 0.1 percent per year. This reversal is even more dramatic when compared to other western countries, which have moved closer to zero growth. From the slowest growing country in Europe, France has become one of the fastest. About 20 percent of the increase during this period has been due to migration from former colonies in Africa and Asia, but the rest is attributable to higher birth rates and lower mortality rates.

In 1946 the population of France was some 40.5 million, less than in 1901, and only 2.5 million more than in 1866. Between 1901 and 1946, the Paris region had grown by about two million and the rest of France had lost two million. Since 1946, the Paris region has grown by over three million people, but the nation as a whole has increased by thirteen million. From 40.5 million people in 1946, the population of France increased to 42.5 million in 1954, 46.5 million in 1962, 48.5 million in 1965, and around 53 million by the end of 1975.

As a result of the dynamic demographic situation since World War II, no region of France is growing at the expense of others. The nine new towns do not have to fight very hard among themselves for a piece of the pie because it is a very large pie. Paris is growing but so are the provinces. The new towns, consequently, have little impact on the interregional distribution of growth in France. They are attracting part of the continued growth of the Paris region, and part of the growth of the Lille, Lyon, Marseille, and Rouen regions as well.

CONCLUSION

I have traced the history of the French new towns policy, the administrative and financial arrangements for implementing the policy, and the quantitative and social achievements. Although the policy is relatively recent in origin useful lessons can be drawn from the experience. For American observers, two lessons are particularly significant. The first lesson concerns the administrative and financial system. As in the United States, France has local authorities and private developers who cannot be ignored in the urban development process. The British-style development corporation is as inappropriate to French as it is to American administrative realities. The French new towns supporters were faced with the task of creating a workable system that preserved the roles of the local authorities and the private sector in the development of nationally financed new towns. Although the precise details of the French solution could not be replicated in the United States, the general principles are clearly relevant.

The French have created new institutions that disturb existing relationships as little as possible. The Etablissement Public d'Aménagement is a public agency with much less power than the British development corporation. It is concerned only with the aspects of new towns development for which local authorities and private developers are clearly unequipped. The French have also solved the local government crisis by coopting the existing local authorities into participating in the new towns development process. The local authorities come together in a union, the Syndicat Communautaire d'Aménagement, which controls the rural areas to be urbanized and leaves alone most of the existing population in the local authorities. The most important function that the SCA performs is the establishment of a uniform tax base within the urbanizing area.

The French have solved one of the major practical problems associated with new towns development in the United States—that new towns are not profitable activities for private developers. The United States has failed to achieve a satisfactory method of supporting the private construction of new towns. Title VII of the 1970 Housing

and Urban Development Act authorizes HUD to make loans and guarantees to private developers of new towns. This financial assistance would permit these developers to borrow money below market rates, thereby reducing their carrying charges and consequently the overall project costs. This method proved unsatisfactory when developers began to incur higher expenses than anticipated. Although critics have blamed both the developers and the government for the failures, the real problem is that a new town is much too big for a single private developer to organize.

The French have a more rational method for preserving the profitable participation of private developers in the new towns development process. The EPA acts as the prime developer for the new town. It chops up the new town into a collection of smaller projects that can reasonably be managed by private developers. In this way private developers can achieve profits in their normal manner, while the risks are taken by the only institution large enough to do so—the national government. New towns may or may not be more economical than other projects if all costs of development are compared. The critical point is that their successful realization in a liberal economy depends upon a rational distribution of responsibilities between the public and private sectors based on the strengths and weaknesses of each.

The second lesson for the United States concerns the benefits achieved by the French new towns. They have not succeeded in drastically reorienting the direction of growth in the Paris region. Between 1971 and 1975 the five Paris new towns attracted around 100,000 housing starts, 90,000 residents, and 50,000 jobs. While these are impressive figures, they constitute only some 15–20 percent of the continued growth of the Paris region. The legal and political support is lacking to concentrate a significantly higher percentage of growth in the new towns. In 1965 the Paris new towns were planned to accommodate over three-fourths of the growth of the Paris region until 2000. That figure has steadily declined since the original master plan. In 1971 the sixth plan called for about one-fourth of the growth of the Paris region to be concentrated in the new towns. The seventh plan in 1976 programmed the more realistic figure of 15 percent for the new towns between 1976 and 1980. In effect, the percentage of growth planned for the new towns has declined until it has reached a point comparable to the experience of the London region.

In view of the failure of the new towns in Paris (as in London) to attract more than 15–20 percent of the region's growth, the main benefit of the new towns must be found elsewhere. In fact, the new

towns offer a living environment superior to alternative projects. To some extent this is a qualitative judgment but considerable data can be generated to justify it. The major achievement of the French new towns is the creation of socially balanced communities. There is a much greater mixture of different housing types and a balance between residential and nonresidential functions. The new towns, in contrast to other suburban areas, are becoming strong commercial and employment centers. They have much more job opportunities, stores, and recreational facilities than elsewhere in the suburbs. As heterogeneous, self-contained communities the new towns have already made a distinctive contribution to France.

American planners must therefore realize that new towns are not mechanisms for ending all suburban sprawl. They will never succeed in terms of quantitative impact. Rather, new towns are balanced, self-contained communities. A rational new towns policy in the United States can only be based on an understanding that the projects are primarily oriented to achieving social, not quantitative goals.

This evaluation of the French new towns should serve as a beginning rather than a summing up of the understanding of the contributions of new towns to the development of national urban growth policies. The conclusion that the most significant contribution of the French new towns is the creation of socially balanced communities must be further explored. Although we know that the new towns contain a greater mixture of different types of people and functions we don't know the significance of that fact. Information from Britain indicates that their new towns contain a lower incidence of crime, mortality, and health problems than in unplanned cities of similar size. The French new towns are still much too new to permit the compilation of meaningful data. However, the lower level of social disorders could be due to the peculiar characteristics of families attracted (young and mobile) rather than to the socially balanced environment of the new towns. In the United States, new towns could be used to bring together residents of different races as well as different incomes.

This study has raised many questions in addition to answering some. The construction of entirely new towns will always remain one of the most stimulating dreams for urban planners. The French have made the dream a concrete and practical reality.

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