

A CITY OF PROJECTS:

**GRAND PARIS, THE 2024 SUMMER
OLYMPICS, AND THE JURISDICTIONAL
NEGOTIATION OF CONTEMPORARY PARIS**

BY DAMIEN GEFFROY

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ROBERT OLIVER, COMMITTEE CHAIR
THOMAS SKUZINSKI
LUKE JURAN

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Abstract

Paris' successful bid for the 2024 Summer Olympics arises in the midst of a grand rethinking of the politics of regional and local development in the Île-de-France region. The emerging ambition to advance a metropolitan model is fundamentally hindered by a historically persistent and burdensome institutional puzzle. Contravening the consensual political dogma that such intricate structure demands to be simplified, initiatives of metropolization prompted the establishment of a new administrative layer, the Métropole du Grand Paris (MGP). By advocating dynamics of cooperation, the MGP is the institutional manifestation of a State-led ambition to reinvent a detrimental power mosaic in the region. But limited resources, expertise, and jurisdictional authority prevent it from asserting relevance within the metropolitan conversation. Yet, the Olympic project provides the MGP with a compelling opportunity to manifest crucial competence and to significantly mature its authoritative influence. In this thesis, we explore the blending of the Grand Paris regional development project and the Olympic ambition by investigating the role of the 2024 Summer Olympics in the establishment of an ambitious yet fragile metropolitan model. We use key informant interviews and secondary sources such as news articles, bid books, and official documents to interrogate the way France is tackling, in the 21st century, the challenges of metropolization. Our evidence suggests that Paris as a city of projects fundamentally corresponds to a ground for experimentation that puts institutions and infrastructure at the forefront of discussions. It appears clear that the Games correspond to a grand excuse to legitimize investments in ongoing projects (specifically the Grand Paris Express) and to consolidate State-led spatial reforms with little risk of dissension. The 2024 Summer Olympics are the State's cautious means to inquire the feasibility of a grand ambition without committing to an overhaul of the jurisdictional structure of metropolization.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

After multiple failed French mega event bids, Paris was elected as host city of the 2024 Summer Olympics. While ostensibly the 2024 Summer Olympics are linked to Paris, the spatial requirements of the event explicitly suggest Paris' incapability to accommodate specialty infrastructure within its own city limits. Ultimately, an important negotiation must take place in order to identify potential sites suitable for olympic facilities while also considering the production of a significant urban, economic, and social heritage. As such, the 2024 Summer Olympics emerge as an opportunity to investigate the way France is tackling, in the 21st century, the challenges of metropolization. This paper examines the blending of the Grand Paris regional development project and the Olympic ambition. Relying on interviews with key informants and secondary sources such as news articles, bid books, and city planning documents, it specifically addresses the implications of organizing the distribution of jurisdictions in a complex multi-layered structure of governance and a desire for political legitimacy.

RÉSUMÉ POUR AUDIENCE GÉNÉRALE

Après l'échec de plusieurs candidatures françaises, Paris a finalement été élue comme ville d'accueil des Jeux Olympiques d'été de 2024. Bien que cet événement soit étroitement lié à Paris, ses besoins spatiaux suggèrent l'incapacité de la ville à accueillir les infrastructures au sein de ses propres limites administratives. D'importantes négociations doivent par conséquent avoir lieu pour permettre d'identifier les sites pouvant accueillir des équipements olympiques, tout en considérant la production d'un héritage urbain, économique et social considérable. Ainsi, les Jeux Olympiques d'été de 2024 se dessinent comme l'opportunité parfaite pour examiner la façon dont la France aborde, au XXIème siècle, les enjeux de la métropolisation. Cette recherche observe les relations entre le projet de développement régional du Grand Paris et l'ambition olympique. Basée sur des entretiens auprès d'informateurs clés et de sources secondaires telles que des articles de presse, dossiers de candidatures, et documents officiels, elle met en avant le rôle de la réorganisation juridictionnelle au sein d'un système de gouvernance complexe et son rapport avec un désir croissant de légitimité politique.

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TABLE OF CONTENT

I - Introduction	1
1.1 Background information	1
1.1.1 The Grand Paris project: A result of long-lasting tensions?	1
1.1.2 The French Olympic tradition: Now depoliticized?	3
1.2 Problem statement	3
II - Literature Review	5
2.1 Entrepreneurial urbanism & mega-events	5
2.2 French governance strategy, shifting or rigid?	7
2.3 Sport mega-events as a leverage opportunity?	9
III - Methodology	11
3.1 Why focus on Paris?	11
3.2 Methods of data collection	12
3.3 Strengths, limitations, and delimitations	13
3.4 Participants	15
3.5 Sample Interview Questions	16
IV - Paris, projects, and politics: The great rethinking of a Grand Paris	18
4.1 Introduction	18
4.2 The overstuffed millefeuille of regional governance	21
4.2.1 Contemplating a supersized Paris	21
4.2.2 The emergence of the Métropole du Grand Paris	23
4.2.3 Scaling the metropolitan model	27
4.2.4 State-led dynamics of regional governance	31
4.3 A bid for the success of a metropolitan project	34
4.3.1 A city without space	34
4.3.2 Do the Olympics (bid or hosting) offer a dynamic for metropolitan cooperation?	38
4.3.3 The daisy principal	44
4.4 Do white elephants know how to swim?	45
4.4.1 Swimming in troubled waters	45
4.4.2 Filling in an empty shell	48
4.4.3 The white elephants' demise	50
4.5 Conclusion: A Grand Excuse?	53
References	55

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EPT	Établissement Public Territorial Territorial Public Institution
GPE	Grand Paris Express
IOC	International Olympic Committee
MGP	Métropole du Grand Paris Grand Paris Metropolitan Authority
RER	Réseau Express Régional Regional Express Network
SOLIDEO	Société de Livraison des Équipements Olympiques et Paralympiques Establishment of the Olympic Games Delivery Authority

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Agglomeration	Urban unit composed of the city center and its periphery.
Banlieue	An urbanized zone located around the city center, or a suburb.
Department	A level of government between the administrative regions and the communes. There are 96 departments in metropolitan France.
Intercommunality	Establishment of municipal cooperation on specific authorities.
Metropolization	The process of morphologic transformation and functional organization of a large city.
Millefeuille	In France, metaphor referring to the vertical fragmentation of institutional bureaucracy and of territorial governance. It originally translates as a ‘thousand-layer’ pastry.
Petite couronne	Inner ring of Paris. It is composed of three departments: Hauts-de-Seine, Seine-Saint-Denis, Val-de-Marne.
Territorial collectivity	In France, a subdivision with governing authority and with an elective form of local government.
White Elephants	Olympic venues falling into disrepair post-event period.

I - INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1.1 THE GRAND PARIS PROJECT: A RESULT OF LONG-LASTING TENSIONS?

The ordinary — almost banal — representation of Paris as a magnificent cultural nest of avenues graced with lavish boutiques and grandiose monuments feebly covers up an undeniable dichotomy: the wealthy urban core economically, politically, and culturally dominates while the banlieue¹ struggles and feels forsaken. Whereas the periphery encompasses economically heterogeneous neighborhoods, banlieues are essentially perceived as enclaved suburbs dominated by social disenfranchisement as well as high rates of delinquency, poverty, and unemployment (Angélil & Siress, 2012). They form a rather inconsistent belt that surrounds the urban core². Exclusion from numerous urban development projects, an almost continuous social abandonment, and economic forsaking embody the persistent tensions between the urban core and the banlieues (Angélil & Siress, 2012, Enright, 2016) and even constitute some of the most influential reasons behind the fierce 2005 French Riots³ that emerged from Clichy-sous-Bois (Body-Gendrot, 2016). The Greater Paris is — and has been for decades — the ground of a binary system where the urban core enjoys prosperity while its banlieues have become the anticipated recipient of most misfortunes (Avenel, 2009, Enright, 2016).

France's post-war industrial and economic growth spurt supports the birth of government-subsidized mass housing projects in the Parisian periphery (Angélil & Siress, 2012). The *grands ensembles* symbolize a movement of functionalist urbanization that essentially suggests quantity, convenience, and simplicity as prevailing over quality. They constitute the primary form of urban building in the banlieues and have become stigmatized in mainstream culture as places where poverty and unemployment is the norm. Although built with the fundamental intention of accommodating a burgeoning labor force during a period of housing crisis, several processes of

¹ Banlieue comes from the combination of two French words: *ban* (to forbid) and *lieue* (a unit of measurement referring to a league, or about 4 kilometers). It is a part of a city's suburbs often portrayed as poor and violent.

² Clichy-sous-Bois, Montfermeil, Aubervilliers, and Aulnay-sous-Bois are amongst the banlieues that are considered to be struggling the most. They are located in Seine-Saint-Denis, which occupies the North-Eastern part of the periphery.

³ The 2005 French Riots were triggered by the death of two teenagers believed to be victims of police harassment. Nonetheless, they conveyed long-lasting tensions felt by populations of many enclaved suburbs. The riots resulted in the death of two people.

exclusion — arguably driven by a pronounced *laissez-faire* economic liberalism (Wacquant, 2008) — led to the emergence of sensitive urban zones⁴. While employment rates plunged with the abrupt decline of industrialized activities, an obvious detachment from public policies heightened tensions (Angélil & Siress, 2012, Bellanger, 2014, Ronai, 2004). The creation of a colossal ring road around Paris' urban core further isolated the periphery (Avenel, 2009). It fundamentally demarcated the limits beyond which the public policy process, partly as a result of a lack of intercommunal cooperation, became rare and inefficacious. Although initiatives to combat social exclusion were still being implemented, the problems of the grands ensembles were often considered too significant to be resolved, at least without designing greater projects (Roberts, 2000). Consequently, these initiatives were rather unsuccessful. Initially envisioned as an opportunity for upward social mobility, the grands ensembles eventually became a problem (Avenel, 2009).

Despite legitimate conflicts of interest and a seeming breakdown of spatial politics, public authorities' acknowledgment of the core-suburb dilemma led to multiple pro-active urban renewal policies (Angélil & Siress, 2012). The commune of Saint-Denis embodies an attempt to combat inequalities between the banlieue and Paris while consolidating the influence of the city on a global scale by establishing a polycentric metropolitan model, the Greater Paris. Indeed, through the construction of the Stade de France⁵ and the improvement of public transportation, the 1998 FIFA World Cup transformed a peripheral commune heretofore challenged by an escalating process of deindustrialization. Indisputably, sporting mega-events and urban renewal policies are strongly intertwined (Hiller, 2000). The idea of mega-events as catalytic tools for development is not novel, and the credibility that they offer to wider urban renewal and regeneration programs cannot be ignored. As Paris was recently awarded the status of host city for the 2024 Summer Olympics, a potential for dynamism of urban revitalization is once again emerging. While the literature demonstrates comprehensive investigations of the interconnections between mega-events and urban space, both in a context-specific and in a broader framework, little research has focused on the 2024 Summer Olympics to understand how they interplay with current politics of urban mega-projects, notably the Grand Paris project, and the parallel reorganization of institutional processes.

⁴ Called Zones Urbaines Sensibles (ZUS), they are defined as areas of high-priority regarding city policy.

⁵ The Stade de France is the national stadium of France. It was inaugurated on January 28th, 1998 to host the 1998 FIFA World Cup and participated in the urban renewal project of the *Plaine Saint-Denis*.

1.1.2 THE FRENCH OLYMPIC TRADITION: NOW DEPOLITICIZED?

France's desire to host one of the biggest sporting mega-events has remained strong over the past few decades. Despite three failed French bids (i.e. Paris 2008, Paris 2012, and Annecy 2018), Paris's determination ultimately proved triumphant with the city being awarded host city status for the 2024 Summer Olympics. These failed bids convincingly appear as a bold desire to renew with a French Olympic tradition. It should be noted that Paris, having hosted the 1900 and 1924 Olympic Games, is already an Olympic City. France's strong Olympic tradition was further reinforced in 1968 and 1992 when Grenoble and Albertville respectively became host cities of the Winter Olympics⁶.

Both events took place in a highly politicized context in which the Olympics were undeniably used to leverage development and urban renewal projects (Kukawka, 1999). Whereas the Games in Grenoble were essentially State-led, those of Albertville occurred during a period of decentralization, suggesting a substantial disengagement of the State in the bidding process (Clastres, 2004). Albertville's candidacy was indeed supervised by its local governments (Kukawka, 1999). As illustrated by the failures of Paris, which lost to Beijing in 2008 and to London in 2012, and despite a recent decline of interest from world-class cities in hosting the Games (Baade & Matheson, 2016), France's Olympic tradition seems to prevail. While losing to London may have been difficult to digest, it allowed for France's approach to bidding to be thrown into serious question. Consequently, with the objective of better controlling political involvement, its candidacy process was transformed and mainly handed to French sporting organizations. But the 2024 Summer Olympics and their potential relationships with the Grand Paris project challenge such claim. The idea that a depoliticized candidacy team does not necessarily indicate the absence of political stakes then needs to be examined.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Since 2007 and the announcement by former president Nicolas Sarkozy of the *Grand Paris* regional development project, Paris' metropolitan area is undergoing urban renewal and revitalization, mainly guided by transit-oriented development. By confronting through an obvious

⁶ The Winter Olympics were introduced in 1924 in Chamonix by Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the International Olympic Committee and father of the modern Olympic Games.

process of unification the issues of core-suburb tensions and of an eroding Parisian identity (Enright, 2016), the intentions seem to be focused on the consolidation of the influence of the capital city on the global scale by competing with other European megalopolises — i.e. mainly London and Berlin (Enright, 2014). "Grand Paris [...] aims to secure the global-city status of Paris through a physical overhaul of space and through replacing the longstanding core-periphery layout of the city with a polycentric infrastructure where peripheral nodes of specialized late capitalist industry organize the region" (Enright, 2014, p. 385-86). The announcement of the Grand Paris project clearly indicates the rejuvenation of a political agenda that advocates programs of urban regeneration. As the city's candidacy for the Summer Olympics in 2024 further consolidates this idea, the thesis aims to examine the fundamental role of the 2024 Summer Olympics within a larger context of regional urban renewal dominated by the Grand Paris project.

II - LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationships between urban space, its geographic environment, and populations constitute the principal field of study of urban geography. Simply put, urban geography is *the extensive study of cities based on a geographical perspective*. It specifically seeks to convey a thoughtful comprehension of spatial economic, socio-cultural, and political processes that create patterns within the complex structures of urban spaces. These patterns consequently participate in the establishment of urban morphology, which considers the spatial arrangement of cities (i.e. edge city, exurb, suburb, inner core, etc.) in various historical contexts. Investigating the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris through urban geography's singular analytical approach then allows for a clever inquiry of the implications of such mega-event within a multifaceted framework of economic, political, and even symbolic regional urban development. Additionally, this thesis is an exploration of Paris' urban political geography. Political processes generating and influencing the spatial structure of the city, specifically in the form of mega-event and urban development, are being explored.

2.1 ENTREPRENEURIAL URBANISM & MEGA-EVENTS

A preliminary examination of the political structure under which mega-events are most often conceived is necessary in order to assimilate their implication within a context of urban and economic regeneration. This research argues that the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, like most contemporary mega-events, are inscribed within broader dynamics of urban revitalization dictated by initiatives of neoliberal and entrepreneurial governance.

The increasing influence of the private sector on decision-making activities conventionally exercised by the public sector suggests the emergence of entrepreneurial strategies, notably in localities embracing globalization (e.g. Golubchikov, 2010; Hall, 2006; Hall & Hubbard, 1996; Horne & Manzenreiter, 2006). Such strategies induce a rising necessity for urban governments to captivate private investors' interests by developing their attractiveness through mechanisms of promotion (Gold & Ward, 1994; Hall & Hubbard, 1996; Paddison, 1993). The city becomes a marketplace often foreseen as a support for capital accumulation more than a provider of services

(Harvey, 1989; Vanwynsberghe, 2013; Wolman & Goldsmith, 1992). As a result, Hall & Hubbard (1996) consider that whereas world class cities have promptly emerged, the economic resilience of others unavoidably deteriorated. Under a political structure dominated by entrepreneurial strategies of urbanism, mega-events have progressively endorsed cities' evident pursuit of prosperity and financial security through private investments. These strategies tend to advocate, often through the revitalization of industrial areas, the creation of urban forms dedicated to consumption rather than activities of production (Hall & Hubbard, 1996; Harvey, 1989; Hiller, 2006). New urban forms specifically established by mega-events are constantly expected to leverage urban renewal and economic development. They are markedly designed to stimulate external investments and consolidate local affluence. Fundamentally, mega-events can be treated as both an immediate result and a driver of urban entrepreneurial governance controlled by capitalist mechanisms (Müller, 2017); they have become an influential leveraging tool promoting it (e.g. Edizel, 2013; Hall, 2006; Vanwynsberghe, 2013). Inscribed within an entrepreneurial political framework that clearly follows a neoliberal agenda, the 2024 Summer Olympics can be envisioned as integrating a wider strategy seeking "to recast Paris as a world class metropolis capable of competing in the 21st-century marketplace" (Enright, 2013, p.155). Regardless of the governing model (i.e. public-private, public-public), mega-event development seemingly reveals some of the disturbing features of neoliberalism, which is casted as the only agenda.

Mega-events imply the emergence of urban development strategies based on entrepreneurial dynamics, which ultimately establish the city as a market-place driven by private investments. As such, mega-events are an opportunity to put urban agendas at the forefront of discussions; they gather significant private investments while strongly participating in urban renewal projects. In order to better comprehend the implication of the 2024 Summer Olympics in wider urban renewal project dominated by the Grand Paris project, it is fundamental to understand the strategies of entrepreneurialism. The Olympic Games do not only offer spectacular entertainment; they participate in the consolidation of a well-established capitalist system of urban policy. The private sector, through investments, undoubtedly joins this dynamic as it has a growing influence on urban planning.

2.2 FRENCH GOVERNANCE STRATEGY, SHIFTING OR RIGID?

The acknowledgment of the role of entrepreneurialism within political structures of most world class metropolises constitutes a base for more profound investigations of the relationship between singular characteristics of governance strategies and the conception of mega-events. Evidently, the examination of mechanisms of French governance is crucial in order to better comprehend the implications of the 2024 Summer Olympics within a context of urban and economic revitalization led by the Grand Paris project. French governance strategies appear to display potential contradictions by advocating established processes of decentralization while emphasizing the influence of Paris through sports mega-events and large scale urban projects.

The capital's urban and economic supremacy has historically commanded attention and investment, while provincial regions — often appearing forsaken and laggard — were overlooked. Paris' weight compared to the rest of France has persistently shaped — and been shaped by — the involvement of the State in the policy-making process (Enright, 2012). Up until 1974, Paris had no municipal autonomy as it was directly governed by the state. The centralization of urban development functions was expected to more efficiently establish coordination and provide services. Despite attempts at decentralization in the last few decades in order to fracture a traditional welfare state mentality and to spatially rebalance an apparent uneven economic, demographic, political, and social distribution (Loughlin & Seiler, 2001; Cole, 2006), France's capital city unquestionably remains polarizing and predominant. In the French context, decentralization is twofold. Territorial decentralization gave local and regional authorities more political responsibilities and resources, while functional decentralization transferred the delivery of some public services from the central government to new public institutions. The autonomy of these institutions remains limited nevertheless. Consequently, decentralization offered the state a tool of control while redistributing many of its administrative functions (Enright, 2012; Cole, 2006; Montricher, 1995; Nicholls, 2005).

To align with global trends, French governance strategies shifted away from *dirigisme*⁷, which was replaced by neoliberal behaviors and dynamism (Enright, 2012; Vlahos, 2013; Levy, 2008). Based on a political economy essentially oriented toward national interests, France's post-war dirigiste model was conceived as an attempt to redirect resources from consumption to investment in State

⁷ *Dirigisme* come from the French word *diriger* (to lead). It is also called managerialism.

modernization (Levy, 2008). The emergence of neoliberalism ultimately induces the rising influence of local administrations, private-public cooperations, and private investments on mechanisms of governance, more specifically on urban policies. It consequently creates "an elite environment that encourages very particular types of development" (Enright, 2012, p. 249) and that excludes most involvement of the citizenry (Thoenig, 2005; Saurugger, 2007). Local governments evidently participate in neoliberal dynamics (Thoenig, 2005) and become influential political actors on the international scale. But the French multilayered system of governance blurs the line between private and public involvement in decision-making. Enright (2012, p. 249) hence argues that "the scale of planning is often accompanied by depoliticization of neoliberal governance". Consequently, the endowment of a mega-event raises concerns about strategies of governance shifting away from decentralization to essentially focus on the growth of one city.

In correlation with the Grand Paris project, the 2024 Summer Olympics perfectly illustrate the complexity of French governance strategies. They emphasize a persevering dilemma that questions the dual identity of these strategies as either lenient or rigid⁸. On the one hand, attempts at decentralization would suggest a desire to challenge a substantial uneven distribution of welfare at the national scale while offloading some financial responsibilities. On the other hand, rigid dynamics of governance sustained by large investments in mega-events and regional urban regeneration projects tend to contradict this idea by manifestly emphasizing the global status of Paris. Moreover, the indisputable complexity induced by a system of multilevel governance suggests the necessity to identify and determine the actual role of each administrative layer (i.e. the state, the region, the department, the commune, etc) in developing and promoting the 2024 Olympic Games.

The 2024 Summer Olympics are inscribed within a complex system of governance in which each variable potentially influences — and *is* influenced — by the mega-event. One thus cannot hope to understand its implication without initially mastering the complexity of French governance strategies. These strategies raise many questions: Why opting for Paris as host city despite it being overwhelmingly polarizing and overpowering? Can such a decision illustrate a shift toward terminating dynamics of decentralization? Does it instead merely demonstrate the complexity of the French system and how contradictory it traditionally is? Can the Grand Paris project be considered

⁸ Rigid practices of governance are here perceived as conveying the idea of an enduring attempt to grow and maintain the influence of the capital city while lenient practices illustrate a desire to allow for decentralization.

as a way for the capital city to reaffirm its dominance by forcing its periphery to become territories which mission is to serve Paris again? Could the Summer Olympics embody concerns about the displacement rather than the integration of banlieues into a new greater Paris?

2.3 SPORT MEGA-EVENTS AS A LEVERAGE OPPORTUNITY?

On September 13th, 2017, Paris was awarded the status of host city for the 2024 Summer Olympics. The mega-event, following entrepreneurial mechanisms and inscribed within complex French governance strategies, is envisioned as a leverage opportunity for a wider urban regeneration enterprise prompted by the Grand Paris project.

Despite their short-term dimension, mega-events are constantly expected to offer the host city substantial long-term benefits (e.g. Baade & Matheson, 2016; Carlsen & Taylor, 2003; Smith, 2013). They are often examined through their tourism and economic significance, but it must not obviate the importance that resides in considering them as compound urban phenomena (Hiller, 2000, 2006; Müller, 2015). The idea of mega-events as catalytic tools for development is not novel, and the credibility that they offer to wider urban renewal and regeneration programs cannot be ignored (Burbank, Andranovich, & Heying, 2002; Essex & Chalkley, 1998). In addition to encouraging the production of new urban and transport plans, mega-events undeniably participate in accelerating their development (Kassens-Noor, 2013; Preuss, 2004). As such, the intertwined mega-events and urban agendas are significantly leveraged by political will and civic boosterism (Getz, 1991, 1997), which supposedly allows for planned economic growth, image improvement, and infrastructure provision — mostly related to sport, transportation, and affordable housing (Gold & Gold, 2016; Oliver & Lauermaun, 2017).

In addition, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), through recent reforms, demands bid cities to mesh urban development goals to their Olympic Games proposals (Oliver & Lauermaun, 2017). The mega-event must then be integrated within the bidding city's long-term planning agenda and constitute a tool accelerating — rather than triggering — urban development. Oliver (2017, p.33) argues that "the bid is used to develop institutional capacity regardless of whether it actually provided a catalyst effect in the built environment". It implies using the bid to leverage, transform, or even test institutional mechanisms and urban programs. Nonetheless, Müller (2017) argues that governing bodies of mega-events often use the idea of the event simply as a leverage mechanism to

justify their increasing social and financial costs. Questions related to leverage opportunities thus arise from the examination of the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris. In a context of urban renewal dynamics at the regional scale, the Olympics induce potential long-term benefits predominantly illustrated by economic growth. But the relationships between the mega-event and the Grand Paris project also suggest a desire to consolidate a prevailing urban agenda by giving credibility to its financial costs.

III - METHODOLOGY

3.1 WHY FOCUS ON PARIS?

After exactly one hundred years, the Olympic Games will be celebrated in 2024 in the French capital city, Paris. Chastened by numerous failed candidacies, most notably that for the 2012 Summer Olympics, France can finally relish its success. More than its perseverance, ambition, and Olympic tradition, it is its seeming obsession with hosting the Games that first drew our attention. Despite the evident contradiction with dynamics of decentralization promoted since the 1980s, Paris has been chosen to represent its country internationally. Now more than ever, Paris appears to display the characteristics of what can be described as a *mega-event city*. In addition to its commitment toward hosting mega-events, Paris is in the midst of a gigantic urban renewal program known as the Grand Paris project and best embodied by the Grand Paris Express, a new rapid transit network expected to be delivered by 2030. This project aims to transform the city and confirm its position among world-class megalopolises. Potential relationships between the Grand Paris project and the 2024 Summer Olympics then emerge. Both projects also serve as a lens into the way regional governance is organized in the Île-de-France region. Indeed, they are inscribed within the development of an emerging metropolitan model in which public stakeholders actively seek political legitimacy. While such dynamics are not uncommon, the complexity of the Île-de-France's institutional layout unarguably makes this case unique. This research constitutes a quintessential opportunity to identify, analyze, and explain these complex and manifold relationships. It further contributes to the many ongoing discussions around the future of Paris' metropolitan model and the resulting jurisdictional negotiations.

While there already is a thorough and exhaustive literature examining the influence of mega-events on host cities' urban space transformation and the implications of urban mega-projects in a potential context of urban and economic regeneration, most of the few studies investigating either the 2024 Olympic Games or the Grand Paris project seem to fail to notice — or at best to strikingly overlook — the connections between the two. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that most studies on mega-events are focused on past-events, which ultimately constitutes a potential justification for such observation. Therefore, this paper aims to fill the gap through the identification of these

intricate connections. The Olympics Games have unarguably become a significant political tool to leverage development opportunities. While this notion is well-known, the implications of the 2024 Summer Olympics in more global dynamics that aim to shape the future of an emerging metropolitan model in the Île-de-France region deserve to be thoroughly investigated through an institutional, political, and urban perspective, which is the ultimate aim of this paper.

Although adopting mega-event projects to promote economic growth and urban agendas is common practice in neoliberal cities, the case of Paris compellingly illustrates a somewhat deviant approach to such development strategy. Whereas the private sector is most often anticipated as being a significant actor that defines dynamics of space production for mega-events, the 2024 Summer Olympics emerge as the unconventional instance. Yet, they placidly conform to the French context. Through a substantial involvement of the public sector, they epitomize current dynamics of State rescaling aiming to affirm Paris as France's preeminent place of global commerce, investment, and influence. But while the Olympic Games are an explicit testimony to such scheme, they are merely one of the many tools used by the State to leverage a broader institutional transition. It is evident that examining both the Olympics Games and the Grand Paris Express is necessary in order to comprehend, in the French context, the State's traditional and contemporary means of acting upon its own ambitions. This research unveils that, through large-scale enterprises, institutional adjustments are being cemented into regional governance's arising and evolving structure.

3.2 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

As mentioned in the above sections, this research seeks to understand the implications of hosting the Olympic Games within the context of the French capital's expectations of consolidating its economic prosperity through municipal restructuring processes, and thus to examine the fundamental role of the mega-event within a larger framework of regional urban renewal dominated by the Grand Paris project. To address these questions, a qualitative approach mostly supported by semi-structured interviews constitutes the main method of data collection. Semi-structured interviews were conducted because it was anticipated that the interviewer would not get more than one opportunity to interview a key informant. Their content was slightly adjusted in line with the field of expertise of key informants. These interviews targeted elite individuals familiar with governance strategies of the Île-de-France region or with mega-event development, most specifically the 2024 Paris' Olympic bid. The list of participants, identified by name and affiliation

in a later section, includes individuals with authority in political and administrative institutions within the Île-de-France region, organizations, and senior officials involved by some means with the 2024 Paris Olympics or the Grand Paris project. Furthermore, chain sampling methods were used to help identify these key informants. The interviews were all conducted in French, transcribed and translated to English by the researcher. All but one interviews were conducted in person at participants' office. One key informant was interviewed upon the researcher's return to the United States and therefore required the use of a tool of telecommunication (FaceTime). Interviews ranged from 45 to 90 minutes.

Additional data were collected by analyzing secondary sources such as archives, news articles, proceedings of conferences, bid books, recordings, and city planning documents. In addition to helping contextualize and develop interview questions, they constitute an essential resource to complement and verify the data collected through interviews. Primary data and data collected from secondary sources were carefully compared. Among other resources, periodical news publications such as *L'Équipe*, *Les Échos*, or *Le Parisien* provided crucial information both pre and post interview. They helped construct a framework for interviews and were also used to verify the information obtained. Likewise, bid city candidature files were consulted to determine the basic blueprints of Paris' 2024 candidacy. They ultimately helped better comprehend the strategic planning processes anticipated and envisioned by the city of Paris and the Île-de-France region. A content analysis strategy was used to qualitatively analyze patterns within secondary sources.

Once transcribed and translated, the semi-structured interviews were carefully analyzed following a process of deductive coding, also known as *a priori* coding. Such process suggests that dominant narratives, based on content analysis, are determined before the interviews are being conducted. Regional governance, bidding logic, and legacy program were then predetermined themes. Multiple cycles of emergent coding were also performed in order to excerpt new themes and subthemes (e.g. identity logic and transit-oriented development). Searching for patterns in the qualitative data obtained helped build additional theories.

3.3 STRENGTHS, LIMITATIONS, AND DELIMITATIONS

Semi-structured interviews constitute the main method of data collection, mainly because they provide considerable flexibility. The interviewees are given freedom to express their view in

their own words and can consequently steer the direction of the interview. While semi-structured interviews are subject to some spontaneity, they are still prepared ahead of time. The interviews conducted for this research were all developed to ensure that key informants would feel comfortable sharing accurate information from their field of expertise.

However, there are some limitations to this research. Indeed, it must be acknowledged that many potential key informants declined or ignored a demand for interview. A sample which initially aims to represent most stakeholders of both the 2024 Olympic Games and the Grand Paris project can therefore lack diversity and comprehensiveness. Moreover, as there was no more than one opportunity to interview someone, little to no room for error was given. Two elements that also need to be recognized are the *interviewer effect* and *social desirability*. The interviewer effect suggests that the behavior or characteristics of the interviewer may alter the responses given by the informant, thus either positively or negatively influence the expression of particular information. In this specific research, the social status of the interviewer and the interviewees are likely to be noticeably different as the interviews essentially target elite individuals familiar with governance strategies or with mega-event development. Social desirability corresponds to a bias resulting from an interviewee's tendency to give the most socially-acceptable response to a question. Some potential key informants of this research are serving politicians, individuals of the private sector, and organizations. Their ability to provide accurate data can therefore be skewed. Although a few key informants decided to remain anonymous in regard to some questions, both the interviewer effect and social desirability are estimated to have had little to no effect on the data collected.

To obtain comprehensive results, delimitations were identified. As such, a strict structured interview schedule was avoided as it evidently does not allow for flexibility and for an in-depth comprehension of the dynamics and connections examined. Neither were surveys used. Although they could constitute a valuable source of information in some cases, their usefulness is quite limited in this specific research. They could for instance be used in further research on populations' perception of the heritage program developed for the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris.

3.4 PARTICIPANTS

Catherine BARBÉ is director of Strategic Partnerships at the Société du Grand Paris, the authority in charge of the construction of the Grand Paris Express.

Céline DAVIET is director of the Olympic and Paralympic Games Mission in Plaine Commune, in charge of ensuring a cross-sectional approach on the monitoring of the project's operational phase to secure a heritage and maximal benefits for local populations.

Julien DOLBOIS is coordinator of the City of Paris General Delegation for the Olympic and Paralympic Games and Mega-Events, in charge of the Games' heritage program.

Léo FAUCONNET is head of the governance mission within the Institut d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme, in charge of analyzing the way public policies are carried out in the Île-de-France region.

Mathieu HANOTIN is departmental councilor of the Seine-Saint-Denis at the Delegation of Sports and Mega-Events' Organization, and former deputy of Saint-Denis from 2012 to 2017.

Claire PEUVERGNE is director of the Institut Régional de Développement du Sport within the Institut d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme, in charge of evaluating mega-events-related projects' feasibility.

Quentin VAILLANT is assistant director of the Métropole du Grand Paris mission, a specific administrative entity attached to the city of Paris' central secretariat, in charge of managing the relationships the city of Paris fosters with the Métropole du Grand Paris and with territorial collectivities of the Parisian agglomeration.

3.5 SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

- What is your name?
- What is your affiliation and/or title?
- What is your role in [*institution*]?
- How long have you been working for [*institution*]?

GOVERNANCE IN THE ÎLE-DE-FRANCE REGION

- What do you think are the socioeconomic, political, and institutional objectives of the Grand Paris project?
- Please describe the power relationships between the state, the city of Paris, and the Métropole du Grand Paris, with regard to the Grand Paris project. How is the political balance amongst all the stakeholders preserved?
- What would be the ideal scale of governance in regard to the fruition of the Grand Paris project? Why?
- Some communes have disclosed their concerns in regard to the dominance of the Métropole du Grand Paris, arguing that they would prefer maintaining current inequalities than losing their political independence. Are these concerns misguided or legitimate? Why?
- Other debates have led to the argument that the Grand Paris project is a way for the capital city to reaffirm its dominance by forcing its periphery to become territories which primary mission is to serve Paris. Is this argument misguided or legitimate? Why?
- In which way is the Métropole du Grand Paris sharing a collective vision between territories rather than sponsoring local projects?

DEVELOPING THE OLYMPIC BID

- Who do you think are the key stakeholders in developing the Olympic bid, and now the Olympic Games strategy?
- What role has the French government played in the securing of this bid?
- Whose and what urban development objectives are best reflected by Paris' bid for the 2024 Olympic games? How were these objectives legitimated or negotiated?

HOSTING THE 2024 SUMMER OLYMPICS

- What are some advantages or disadvantages of hosting the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris?
- Which possible outcomes of the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris would you like to see the most?
Examples include transportation projects, economic development, jobs, etc.

- Which areas of the Greater Paris will potentially benefit the most from hosting the 2024 Summer Olympics?
- Please identify some of the major hurdles that need to be overcome before the hosting of the 2024 Summer Olympics.

LINKING THE TWO PROJECTS

- Please describe the linkages between the Grand Paris project and the 2024 Summer Olympics.
- In what ways has the representation of the Olympic Games and Grand Paris project been fair and accurate?
- What has been the role of the Grand Paris project and notably the Grand Paris Express in identifying potential sites for sporting events?
- How might the relationships between the Grand Paris project and the 2024 Summer Olympics be strengthened?

IV - PARIS, PROJECTS, AND POLITICS: THE GREAT RETHINKING OF A GRAND PARIS

Damien Geffroy, Robert Oliver, Thomas Skuzinski, and Luke Juran

To be submitted...

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Whether you are an avid or occasional viewer of international sporting events, it is likely you remember the iconic image of Queen Elizabeth II jumping out of a helicopter into the stadium hosting the Opening Ceremony for the 2012 Summer Olympics in London. On July 27th, 2012, 900 million people enjoyed a unique showcase of Britain's cultural identity, rich landscapes, and distinct humor. But whereas London basked in the moment, Paris was reminded of the unfortunate fate of its failed olympic bid. Overly confident that it would be chosen to defend the olympic values as host city for the 2012 Summer Olympics, Paris saw its dreams shattered during the 117th IOC Session in Singapore when London, secured the right to host the event. For the third time in a row, a French bid for the Summer Olympics had failed. It took France more than ten years to reflect on this failure and have the audacity to bid again. During the 131st IOC Session in Lima, Paris' perseverance was finally rewarded, as it was unanimously chosen as host city for the 2024 Summer Olympics in a unique double allocation that also saw Los Angeles being chosen to host the event in 2028.

The long-awaited success of Paris' bid is undoubtedly a significant step, even symbolic, toward developing and promoting its economic attractiveness. In order to remain competitive in today's globalized world, and as the private sector's influence on public decision-making grows, Paris and other cities increasingly rely on entrepreneurial strategies to develop their assets (e.g. Golubchikov, 2010; Hall, 2006; Hall & Hubbard, 1996; Horne & Manzenreiter, 2006). Consequently, mega-events are often seen as an ideal object to leverage dynamics of urban renewal and economic development. Indeed, the new urban forms they establish are designed to stimulate external investments and consolidate local affluence. And while Queen Elizabeth II's stunt in 007 mode did not directly contribute to London's urban transformation, the Opening Ceremony is still the perfect epitome of an attempt at promoting attractiveness. In addition to celebrating sporting accomplishments, the three-hour nation-themed spectacle revealed to the entire world Britain's most

significant cultural and social history. The Opening Ceremony is the kick-off to a global event of which, in 2024, Paris will be the heart. Ultimately, the Olympic Games, inscribed within entrepreneurial strategies, become a tool used by urban governments to captivate investors' interests (Gold & Ward, 1994; Hall & Hubbard, 1996; Paddison, 1993). The 2024 Summer Olympics can therefore be envisioned as integrating a wider strategy seeking "to recast Paris as a world class metropolis capable of competing in the 21st-century marketplace" (Enright, 2013, p.155).

Queen Elizabeth II's participation to the Opening Ceremony, while merely anecdotal, can be interpreted as a strong statement on the Olympic Games' powerful global outreach. Every four years, and for about two weeks, thousands of athletes compete to proudly represent their flag amongst the 206 participating countries recognized by the IOC. Despite their relatively short-term dimension, mega-events such as the Olympic Games are expected to bring substantial long-term economic but also urban benefits (e.g. Baade & Matheson, 2016; Carlsen & Taylor, 2003; Smith, 2013). In fact, they are considered as a catalytic tool of urban development (Burbank, Andranovich, & Heying, 2002; Essex & Chalkley, 1998). Not only do they contribute to the production of new urban and transport plans, they participate in accelerating existing project dynamics (Kassens-Noor, 2013; Preuss, 2004). The IOC itself, through recent reforms, encourages bidding cities to mesh urban development goals to their Olympic Games proposal (Oliver & Lauermaun, 2017). Ultimately, a bidding city must ensure that the mega-event is integrated within its long-term planning agenda and further constitutes a tool accelerating — rather than triggering — urban development.

In addition to providing a catalyst effect in the built environment, a bid suggests the potential establishment, development, and transformation of institutional mechanisms (Oliver and Laurmann, 2017). Paris' bid for the 2024 Summer Olympics is not different. An olympic law was implemented by the French government on March 26th, 2018 with the aim to "honor the commitments made to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) during the candidacy phase." But its significance lies in the fact that it actually serves as a exemption of urban laws that could jeopardize the success of the olympic project. The organization of the Olympic Games requires substantial institutional, financial, and technological resources in order to meet inflexible deadlines. The institutional framework under which the event is being constructed must therefore be considered. Ultimately, this olympic law corresponds to a unique but temporary solution that aims to limit the effects of France's administrative burden. Indeed, the 2024

Summer Olympics are inscribed within a complex multilayered system of governance; the infamous administrative millefeuille and dynamics emerging from this institutional puzzle directly influence — and are influenced by — the mega-event.

This research explores the blending of the Grand Paris regional development project and the Olympic ambition. We seek to examine the fundamental role of the 2024 Summer Olympics in the establishment of a metropolitan model that promotes dynamics of cooperation. We argue that Paris' bid emerges as an opportunity to investigate the way France is tackling, in the 21st century, the challenges of metropolization. Three questions are at the root of our investigation:

- (1) How are jurisdictional negotiations of regional governance carried out and organized?
- (2) How does the olympic project contribute to the construction of Paris' metropolitan model?
- (3) How have the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris been legitimated and leveraged?

To address these questions, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants familiar with governance strategies of the Île-de-France region and mega-event development. All of the interviewees actively participate in either the region's institutional and urban development or the olympic project's success. We identify and link comments of our interviewees by name in the following sections. Professional considerations led us to maintain anonymity of the data in a rare instance. The data derived from these interviews were validated through analysis and comparison with secondary sources, including archives, news articles, proceedings of conferences, bid books, recordings, and city planning documents. While themes were pre-defined before conducting interviews, each participant's field of expertise steered the discussion in slightly different ways. These interviews identified three large conversations that are guiding mega-event development in the Île-de-France region. The first conversation shines a light on the institutional puzzle of the governance structure in the Île-de-France region as notions of a Grand Paris are pursued. Here the focus is on how attempts to rescale Paris into a polycentric metropolis, through projects like the Grand Paris Express, is premised on a broader state-led initiative to invest in the banlieue and improve the competitive standing of the Île-de-France region. The second conversation introduces a second urban project, the 2024 Olympic bid, and illustrates how the bid for the world's premier sporting event reinforces the political project of expanding the geography of Paris through the channeling of resources (particularly state funding) to a particular site, Seine-Saint-Denis. The implications of the 2024 Summer Olympics in developing coherent dynamics of metropolization are

central to this discussion. The third conversation focuses on the strategy to construct a particular sporting venue, an aquatic centre, for the 2024 Olympic Games. The Olympic bid team's proposal to build a new permanent aquatic centre in Seine-Saint-Denis is used to highlight how the desire to create lasting urban legacies through transformative infrastructure intersects with important debates about how consensus might be facilitated at the metropolitan scale. Combined, these three conversations expose the complicated circumstances of developing and sponsoring entrepreneurially motivated, but socially sensitive, urban policies in Paris.

4.2 THE OVERSTUFFED MILLEFEUILLE OF REGIONAL GOVERNANCE

4.2.1 CONTEMPLATING A SUPERSIZED PARIS

The prospect of a cooperative and balanced urban governance scenario for greater Paris, while seductive, has proven to be elusive. As Orillard (2017) notes, the planning history of Paris is mired with misconception and even amnesia with key planning documents often overlooked by those seeking to convey that a greater Paris is a recent manifestation. For more than a century there has been a desire to instill institutional coherence amongst the various governmental tiers that operate both in Paris and the Île-de-France region. The urban primacy of Paris in the French urban system has proven to be a significant challenge and is frequently criticized for overshadowing the competitive advantages of other regions in France. With more than 11 million inhabitants in its urban area, Paris is more than eight times the size of secondary cities like Marseille and Lyon. This asymmetry, Enright (2018, p. 247) argues, generates a tense argument about whether or not the capital should be “prioritized in any national growth agenda” or if the “growth of Paris needs to be limited and territorial investment widespread to ensure more balanced national planning.” The credibility of both arguments has generated various reform efforts, but trying to instill appropriately sized governing institutions in France — responsive to global transformations yet sensitive to the regional interests of millions of residents — has proven to be an onerous task. Although the socialist government of the 1980s sought to extend powers to the territories through decentralization, efforts to rescale the balance of power and responsibilities (planning or otherwise) across the French urban system has nevertheless resulted in a form of territorial governance that, as Geppert (2017, p. 227) puts it, “remains wobbly.” As Geppert (2017) summarizes, France has a history of local government being extensively subdivided amongst approximately 36,000 municipalities that have been resistant to rescaling/merger. France's strong centralist tradition leaves communities accustomed to

prefectoral control, the representative efforts of locally elected officials, and the perceived egalitarian nature of local government. While it is easy to imagine the appeal of being part of a small municipality, the lack of city size often translates into a reduced capacity to generate resources and cope with economic disruption. In addition, lingering features of state centrality continue to curb the autonomy exercised by subnational levels of government.

As France's "only global city" (Halbert 2012, p.190), Paris has long benefited from "an intensive concentration of decision-making, productivity, amenities, services, and wealth" (Enright 2018, p. 243). Recently, however, there has been "a deconcentration of activities from the historic City of Paris to the rest of the urban area – first to the immediately surrounding Paris agglomeration, but second also to the rest of the Île-de-France and to its surrounding regions" (Halbert 2012, p.190). A "centrifugal shift in informational and intellectual activity outside the walls of Paris" is exposing the inadequacy of governing arrangements in the region (Enright 2018, p. 243). In addition, The French government's decision to introduce a series of new territorial collectivities or metropolises (i.e. Métropole du Grand Paris, Métropole d'Aix-Marseille-Provence, Toulouse Métropole, Métropole Grand Nancy) in 2010, has deepened the need to sort out how the Parisian metropolis will address a host of spatial tensions. Advancing a top-down 'metropolitan model' would appear to be a reversal on the decentralization strategy that had only recently been employed. At the very least, the changing patterns of governance structure leads to claims that the national state is acting in a "schizophrenic" manner, by continually shifting "between central power reinforcement and local strategic capacity development" (Carmouze et al. 2019, p. 9). It is also apparent that Paris and the Île-de-France metropole function in a manner that operates beyond the administrative-political landscape of the other regions (see section 4.2.3 below). In Paris, the entanglement of powers is being rationalized, as Halbert (2012) aptly identifies, across multiple spatial scales simultaneously.

Enright (2018) has usefully illustrated four tensions that complicate the governance of the Parisian metropolis. First, she points out that Paris represents both a blessing and a threat to two important competitors for influence: the national government and the region Île-de-France. Second, Paris' relationship with the provinces continues to be strained as national growth strategies target the capital as "the flagship territory of national development" (Enright 2018, p. 247). Third, establishing a shared agenda for Paris and the surrounding suburbs are compromised by a history of discordance. As noted, the banlieue has suffered from neglect and stigmatization and the prospects of finding common ground requires tackling issues of social distance. The fourth challenge Enright

(2018, p. 249) identifies emerges from the long-standing ideological cleavages that produce “divergent visions of the goals of metropolitan life and growth.” Enright does suggest there appears to be “momentum for compromise” but she is careful to note that the development of metropolitan institutions can quickly dissolve if politics at the national level sour (Enright 2018, p. 249).

It is important to recognize that the French state’s decision to advance metropolitan dynamics has the potential to profoundly impact the politics of local and regional development. While it is too early to determine just how much the territorial reconfiguring will shift the balance of power, the emergence of Grand Paris (announced in 2007), the Metropole du Grand Paris (in 2016), and a willingness to use big projects to advance urban planning goals (i.e. Grand Paris Express, and the Olympic Games in 2024) has put institutions and infrastructure at the forefront of discussions.

4.2.2 THE EMERGENCE OF THE MÉTROPOLE DU GRAND PARIS

The idea that France and Paris required new mechanisms to address metropolitan interests was adamantly promoted by Nicolas Sarkozy, former President of the French Republic. Seeking to ameliorate the growing image problem that had beset the capital city, he advanced the idea of a ‘Grand Paris’ to rejuvenate processes of governance in the region. Sarkozy invited a number of top architects and planning agencies to design scenarios that would expand Paris’ boundaries, while more fully integrating the suburbs with the city center and stimulating economic development. For Léo Fauconnet (2018, personal communication), the underlying concern of the Grand Paris project is: “the way we tackle, in Paris, the question of metropolization.” Fauconnet (2018, personal communication) acknowledges that, in France, the public sphere heavily influences development — whether it be economic or urban — and submits that the challenge of the Grand Paris is to answer the question of “how we govern an urban aggregate beyond what has been the traditional urban space of the city of Paris.” This involves the consideration of the various mechanisms established to better address, through territorial cohesion, Paris’ economic, social, and spatial transformation.. The Grand Paris project therefore transpires as a tool that aims to strengthen Paris’ resilience to economic transitions, but also to ameliorate its response to territorial inequalities and to new challenges facing dense urban aggregates; climate change, the loss of biodiversity, and energy production (Fauconnet, 2018, personal communication). As Enright (2014, p. 382) summarizes: “Grand Paris responds to a political mandate to address French and Parisian identities eroding under globalization and under conditions of postcolonial life, a social mandate to address inequalities

between the historic city core and the peripheral suburbs, and an economic mandate to increase regional productivity.” The conviction is that to be a remarkable city, Paris must become an eminent European and global economic playmaker; it must shine internationally. Sarkozy (2009) firmly proclaims that “Paris only has radiancy if it is great to all humans, not just to its inhabitants.” The Grand Paris’ ambition is a new territorial dynamic through momentous strategies of urban development, including significant improvements to the city’s transportation and housing stock. By fracturing social barriers and resolving the persistent core-periphery dichotomy, it must constitute a ground for unity, diversity, and equal opportunity. Sarkozy’s idealistic aspiration is then to (re)design and enlarge Paris so that the urban core and banlieue become indiscernible (Sarkozy, 2009). It is to advance a development perspective that reaches far beyond peripheral limits. The Grand Paris project epitomizes France’s contemporary vision of what its large cities should fundamentally strive to be. It further defines a new geography of power.

The Métropole du Grand Paris (MGP) was conceived in 2016 as the institutional manifestation of this State-led ambition. As explained by Catherine Barbé (2018, personal communication), the MGP is "a public institution of intercommunal cooperation [...] which, as it is the rule in France, is the emanation of territories it is composed of, with a metropolitan council that includes delegates from all communes member of the metropolis". As such, it is composed of 131 communes distributed in 12 territories (see Figure 1).

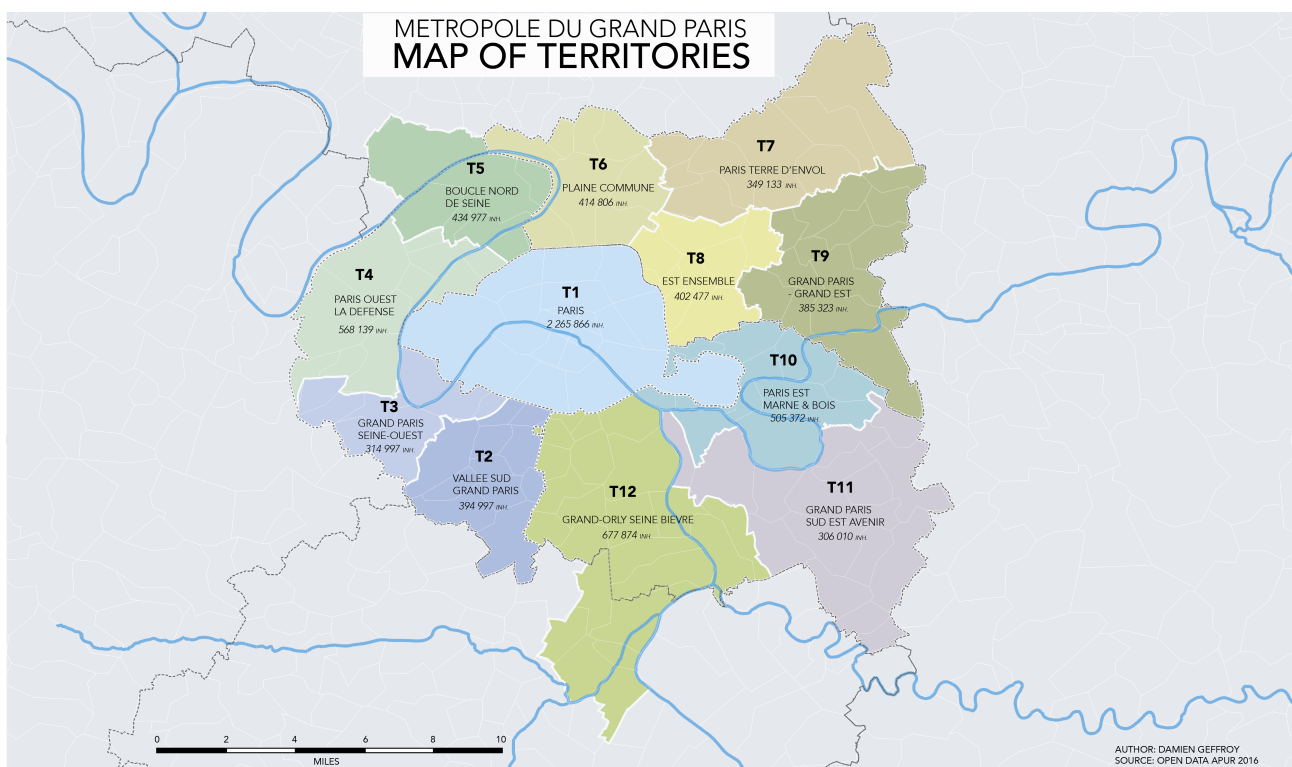


Figure 1: Territories of the Métropole du Grand Paris, with population

The 12 territories constitute the backbone of the ongoing institutional reorganization of the Île-de-France region. They were partly given jurisdiction over topics crucial to the construction of the metropolitan model, specifically urban planning, economic development, and housing policies. In an attempt to readjust a wobbly political balance, the 11 peripheral territories were designed to have a certain critical mass; the smallest one gathers a population of around three hundred thousand inhabitants distributed in sixteen communes. The resolution to divide the MGP into 12 different institutional entities ultimately strengthens the authoritative potential of peripheries within the metropolitan conversation and shapes emerging dynamics of cooperation between an already-powerful urban core and its neighboring territories. However, while the underlying objectives are conspicuous, the established institutional structure remains questionable. The MGP is not so much an emanation of territories but rather an emanation of communes. The latter are both directly — through the metropolitan council — and indirectly — through territorial councils — represented in its governance. Territories do not appoint anyone. They become operational relays of information to advance regional and metropolitan strategies rather than decisive entities with the authoritative power to identify and develop structuring schemes. Skepticism in regard to the actual long-term jurisdictional capability of the MGP is then reasonable. Nevertheless, it embodies a bold attempt at shaping a supersized Paris able to compete with global cities such as London, New-York City, and Tokyo.

Inscribed within these dynamics is the Grand Paris Express (GPE) transportation project (see Figure 2). For Barbé (2018, personal communication), it is an object of metropolitan interest used to encourage the development of a coherent territorial layout: "[it] is a project that creates a mesh by ensuring connections between all existing radials." But as Enright (2013) points out, the underlying ambition exceeds the mere progression of public mobility in a burgeoning urban environment where expansion outpaced the ability to accommodate new infrastructures. While facilitating mass movement in the urban aggregate is an undeniable objective of the project, it remains subordinate. In line with Sarkozy's vision to put forth territorial development in order to reinforce Paris' global economic appeal, the GPE's paramount intention is to create a plexus of connections to channel capital flows within the greater metropolitan region. As argued by Enright (2013), "rather than an uncontested 'good' for the city and inhabitants, infrastructures of transportation and the movements they enable must be understood as embedded within systems of economic exchange and exploitation" (Enright 2013, p. 798). The construction of the Grand Paris undeniably hinges on

transit-oriented development, as it mainly aims to establish a network of specialized nodes in the periphery. The GPE then becomes “a vehicle to spur on metropolitan investment in the banlieue” (Enright 2013, p. 798) and abides by the State’s aspiration to forge a polycentric regional model. It corresponds to a subtle yet overt entryway to state-led spatial reforms in the Île-de-France region, and “while the overarching project of Grand Paris remains nebulous and inchoate, the transportation plan — epitomized in the GPE network announced in January 2011 — is one of the few initiatives, out of the many grand schemes, to be written into actionable policy” (Enright 2013, p. 798).



Figure 2: Construction site for line 16 of the Grand Paris Express, Montfermeil in Seine-Saint-Denis (The future station will be located at the border of two suburban towns: Montfermeil and Clichy. The construction started in 2016 and is scheduled to be completed by 2024). (Source: GEFFROY; Date: June 2018)

The Grand Paris Express, while undeniably being of metropolitan scope, is actually not a project of the MGP. Instead it has its own governance model; a state-owned company called the Société du Grand Paris. For the MGP to become a pertinent and authoritative playmaker of territorial development, it undeniably demands to be accountable for topics specifically relevant to the

metropolitan construction. The issue is not a lack of metropolitan projects but rather the limited jurisdictional capability of the newly created public institution of intercommunal cooperation (Tessier, 2018). The inability to bring incremental value, through jurisdictional action, to the spatial vision of the metropolitan model corroborates the MGP's bungling passiveness (Van Eeckhout, 2019). A crucial decision must be made on whether to grant the MGP more jurisdictional authority or to simply remove it from the governance structure. The first option would imply potential overlaps, suggesting a changing dialectic in policy distribution as the role of departments, the region, and even communes would be reconsidered to avoid them. The second option would obligate other institutions to be responsible for emerging topics of metropolitan interest and for the establishment of cooperative dynamics. Regardless of what option is selected, the idiosyncratic administrative millefeuille of the Île-de-France region needs adjustments, and the status quo is clear: emerging metropolitan ambitions imply the need for a structure equipped to respond to metropolitan challenges. While the MGP could correspond to this structure, to date it has not yet achieved this political responsibility. As noted by Mathieu Hanotin (2018, personal communication), "one has to admit that for the Grand Paris Express to happen, there is no need of a Grand Paris administrative organization." In order to prevail, the MGP must not only have momentous resources, but it needs to intelligently use them to find relevance within the metropolitan conversation.

4.2.3 SCALING THE METROPOLITAN MODEL

While metropolization is politically debated, current dynamics clearly advocate the establishment of a metropolitan model in the Île-de-France region. The Grand Paris Express, though it carries its name, does not go through Paris. It is a powerful object whose goal is to create a robust metropolitan skeleton capable of leveraging substantial urban and economic development at a scale that exceeds Paris' administrative borders. But the prospect of a compelling metropolitan model is markedly weakened by the prevailing ambiguity around the delineation of its ideal scale of governance. Without a settled and chartered institutional structure, the skeleton remains vulnerable. The Île-de-France's notorious millefeuille is then problematic. Its obsolete vision of what an efficient jurisdictional distribution should be jeopardizes development strategies. Each existing institution exercises a general jurisdiction and can undertake any action of local interest, resulting in many potential overlaps. For Fauconnet (2018, personal communication), "[the] institutional system is not adapted to respond to macroeconomic challenges and challenges of public policies'

efficiency", mainly because of deeply fragmented public opinion. Despite consensus that a layer of the millefeuille needs to be removed, inaction remains a defining feature of the system.

Fundamentally, the government's inability to make a decision reveals the complexity of the situation, as each institution firmly defends its legitimacy within regional governance's current functional organization. The 1,276 communes of the Île-de-France region — of which between 400 to 500 are located within the Parisian agglomeration — more efficiently lead local actions. Due to their relatively small size, they are more aware of their populations' needs and can act accordingly. Through their status of decision-makers, they are critical to housing development, notably via the planning permission. They also decide of the territory's organization in terms of urban planning. Communes of the agglomerated zone are inscribed within the ongoing metropolitan conversation; they are in charge of most development projects emerging around the Grand Paris Express transportation project. Such involvement makes it difficult to imagine a governance model that entirely excludes the communal level. But while it corresponds — to a certain extent — to a current reality, Barbé (2018, personal communication) genuinely questions whether the communal perimeter, within dynamics of metropolization, is still relevant: "It is quite absurd to defend at all cost the municipal perimeter on all current jurisdictions given to the communes, in an interwoven territory such as the Grand Paris where municipal borders are so difficult to see because the urban fabric is so interconnected."

Such postulation suggests the need for another institution to take responsibility for some of the jurisdictional actions heretofore exercised by the communes. Some strongly believe that intercommunalities, and most notably Établissements Publics Territoriaux (EPTs), could become the ascendant form of governance defining the future of metropolization in the Île-de-France region. EPTs correspond to a public institutional structure that advocates cooperation between communes and promotes, through a shared vision, the establishment of common projects. Céline Daviet (2018, personal communication) considers that "intercommunalities had been able to develop a principle of federation of communes" to respond to the issue that "a single commune against the rest of the Grand Paris is quite complicated, to make its interest be heard". By gathering energies, expertise, and resources, EPTs allow communes to further increase their influence within the metropolitan conversation and weight against a historically ultra dominant Paris. But despite a common ambition, it is important not to rule out the possibility that the communes may still seek individual relevance by actively promoting their own agenda within intercommunal discussions. It is partly

with this ascertainment that the Métropole du Grand Paris was created. It corresponds to a federation of territories that specifically aims to tackle topics surpassing territorial interest. Because the MGP is divided into eleven distinctive EPTs, it can actually be apprehended as an intercommunality of intercommunalities which aims to impulse a global dynamic of development rather than a local approach rationally endorsed by the communal level. As noted by Daviet (2018, personal communication), it "must bring a holistic view and ensure territorial balances." The plethora of political parties that results from the administrative structure's high fragmentation implies the need for cohesion within the metropolitan construction. As it has the potential to ensure continuity of public action and mutualisation of policies, the MGP is an interesting tool, but arguably not under its current form. In fact, Fauconnet (2018, personal communication) is "quite convinced that the metropolitan dynamic emerges at a much larger scale" and that "the MGP has relatively limited perimeter to embrace this whole [metropolitan] problematic" (Fauconnet 2018, personal communication). Not only is operating an intercommunal governance at the metropolitan scale an onerous task, but avoiding the emergence of a vicious border effect is nearly impossible. The MGP is no exception, as its defined perimeter is legitimately debatable. Despite evident connections, it arbitrarily excludes communes from the metropolitan conversation.

Fauconnet (2018, personal communication) advocates for the region as the ideal authority in charge of most topics of metropolitan interest: "I think [the region] is a perimeter that nowadays is very interesting to reflect on the metropolitan operating model because it allows for the integration of different areas" (Fauconnet 2018, personal communication). While the MGP encompasses the dense city center, large peripheral agglomerations, and some suburban communes, it keeps rural areas of the Île-de-France region out of all metropolitan negotiations. And it is important to recognize that a large portion of people commuting to the densest areas, where public services are significant, come from rural areas. As such, Fauconnet (2018, personal communication) argues that "whether it be the question of mobility, of employment, of housing, or an environmental question, the perimeter [of the region] allows for important balances to be found". While he (2018, personal communication) realizes the interest in establishing a public institution capable of tackling topics specifically relevant to densely populated areas, "most of the large economic, planning, and demographic dynamics [...] are located at a scale much larger than the petite couronne" (Fauconnet 2018, personal communication). In a highly interconnected system such as the Île-de-France region, the exclusion of an important element jeopardizes its prosperity. The metropolitan model cannot be

judiciously constructed without considering all connections as being crucial to the cohesiveness of its structure. However, the region does not have a perimeter that is sufficient by itself to face all metropolitan challenges. As noted by Daviet (2018, personal communication), it lacks an essential dimension of proximity: "everything that happens at the regional scale has no proximity with local actors. There needs to be an intermediate scale" (Daviet 2018, personal communication).

Following this idea, Fauconnet (2018, personal communication) suggests that metropolitan challenges need to be managed at two scales: "the macro-metropolitan (that of the region) and the local-metropolitan (that of the intercommunalities)." Whereas communes are currently the dominant local authority in metropolitan dynamics, intercommunalities are more pertinent; they lead to more coherence and gather stronger political resources. But in order to be relevant, they must have a scale "that is governable and that eventually would make sense to inhabitants" (Fauconnet 2018, personal communication). Under its current state, the MGP is awkwardly positioned just in the middle. It is too small to be considered as a legitimate replacement of the region and too big to seriously question the role of territories. In order to mature into a structure capable of directing development and imposing projects, the MGP lacks vision at the local-metropolitan scale. Daviet (2018, personal communication) argues that it is unable to efficiently comprehend how a territory should evolve and act accordingly. To successfully establish the Parisian metropolitan model, it is then essential to develop dynamics of cooperation between territories while remaining knowledgeable of local specificities and needs. Even though the MGP represents an attempt at doing just that, its organization is an inconvenience. Despite initially emerging from political goodwill, it creates an ineffective transitional period where a new layer is permanently added to the administrative millefeuille when the latter desperately need to be simplified.

It becomes evident that maintaining the status quo is unreasonable. Uncertainty about the future of regional governance in the Île-de-France region does not promote forward momentum to needed territorial policies. For the MGP to prevail, its role must be clearly defined, or else it will likely fail. Its scale must be readjusted to, through projects, solve Grand Paris' challenges. Only then will the MGP become a relevant institutional tool within the metropolitan conversation. As noted by Fauconnet (2018, personal communication), "we are at the heart of the Grand Paris process", which implies that the MGP "arrives at the end of a period where the tools have already been structured, where the project is more defined". Through a number of initiatives, it tries to develop its

legitimacy. But large projects in the Île-de-France region do not require the establishment of a new structure. Hanotin (2018, personal communication) even argues that "large projects are what works best in France. We know how to do them, and by changing nothing, we can still deliver [them]".

Given the prevailing ambiguity surrounding the future role of the MGP within the evolution of the metropolitan model, its survival is clearly at stake. In order to be considered as an ideal scale of governance, it must prove its ability to promote cooperation while being decisive to development dynamics. It must bring a holistic vision while acknowledging local challenges of development. Ultimately, the MGP can find its relevance in areas with evident metropolitan roles. But it needs to be proactive in defining development schemes or in taking over planning processes. In addition to its coordinating role, the MGP then becomes a facilitator and a manager. As noted by Fauconnet (2018, personal communication), "politics hates emptiness, and so the MGP will want to go farther." It will try to embrace all metropolitan topics and "will ask for jurisdiction on transportation." While the Grand Paris Express had already been decided upon when the MGP was created in 2016, areas with newly-built train stations unquestionably have a metropolitan role. If it can become "a decisive actor in regard to the projects currently being implemented" (Fauconnet 2018, personal communication), especially through governance on transportation, the MGP will have proven its legitimacy within the metropolitan conversation. But prioritizing the MGP implies taking responsibility for a decreasing influence of the communal level. Fauconnet (2018, personal communication) believes that in order for the MGP to be able "to carry out its own projects [...] we must imagine a system that will be painful for the local level". It must however be recognized that such structural organization does not indicate the insignificance of communes in the construction of the metropolitan model. It suggests an imperative to rebalance institutional dynamics in order to have a more efficient multi-level operation of governance.

4.2.4 STATE-LED DYNAMICS OF REGIONAL GOVERNANCE

Skepticism around the ongoing construction of the metropolitan model undeniably highlights the complexity in defining a consensual structure of governance in a highly fragmented system such as the Île-de-France region. Through a number of initiatives of metropolitan scope, each public institutional level actively defends its legitimacy within emerging negotiations of development. But despite territorial challenges that suggest the need for an entity of intermediate scale, the State remains a predominant authority influencing regional governance. As noted by

Fauconnet (2018, personal communication), the Grand Paris is above all a State matter: "It is a project initiated by the State, wished by Nicolas Sarkozy who had assigned Christian Blanc to a newly established Secretary of State tasked with the Capital region's development" (Fauconnet 2018, personal communication).

A conflicting relationship with the region initially emerged from the obvious dominant position of the State in defining dynamics of regional governance, as the Grand Paris Express, epitome of a substantial metropolitan ambition, was also imagined by the State. In addition to not having been concerted, the Île-de-France region had authority on public transportation; it was technically responsible for the financing of the Grand Paris Express. Fauconnet (2018, personal communication) argues that "the first version of the 2010 law relating to the Grand Paris project served as a way to impose the project to other [institutional] actors, notably the region". Although it is directly concerned by the project, the region had limited power in its conception and emergence. Ultimately, "it is a project that nowadays can only be successful through dialogue between the State and the region" (Fauconnet 2018, personal communication). In virtue of an agreement signed in January of 2011, Île-de-France Mobilités, an authority of which the region is the parent organization, is tasked with ensuring coherence in the evolution of the public transport network. Despite an apparent effort from the State to include the region in the project's development process, unbalances remain ubiquitous. While the region is essentially in charge of ensuring coordination, it does not establish nor dictate how development is being operated. Because of the many technical challenges in terms of resources and expertise, the State decided to takeover most responsibilities, becoming the project's long-term financial guarantor. The objective of this explicit involvement is to ensure that the Grand Paris Express becomes irreversible. Come what may, its construction must be finalized. This decision ultimately illustrates the State's desire to get better involved into a project that by nature, scope, and ambition, is not only metropolitan but also of national interest.

Beyond its financial liability, the State further emphasizes its dominance through the project's governance model. As noted by Fauconnet (2018, personal communication), the Société du Grand Paris (see Figure 3) — in charge of the development and construction of the Grand Paris Express — is mostly represented by State officials: "It is a project that, project management-wise, is carried out by [...] a public industrial and commercial institution, the supervisory board of which is predominantly composed of State officials" (Fauconnet 2018, personal communication). Of the 21 members, 11 are State officials appointed by decree. The remaining members are

composed of elected officials from the various institutional layers of the Île-de-France region: "the most important territorial collectivities — primarily the city of Paris, the region, the departments, and some intercommunalities — are still represented within [the] governance" (Fauconnet 2018, personal communication). The metropolitan model, embodied by the Grand Paris' transportation project and "initiated by the State, [is] shared with territorial collectivities through the Société du Grand Paris' governance" (Fauconnet 2018, personal communication). It is especially shared with the region as it becomes "a guardianship of the Société du Grand Paris' organizational authority on transportation in the Île-de-France region" (Fauconnet 2018, personal communication). The choice to articulate governance strategies toward cooperation with the various administrative layers of the metropolitan model while maintaining a dominant position is also relevant to housing development: "it is primarily the State that remains competent, connected with the communes which are decision-makers via the planning permission and decisions on territories' organization in terms of urban planning" (Fauconnet 2018, personal communication). Interestingly, both extremes — the largest and smallest scale — of France's institutional structure are in charge of housing development, even though it corresponds to a major metropolitan subject.



Figure 3: Information wall by the Société du Grand Paris. (Montfermeil in Seine-Saint-Denis. Where only remains an open sky construction site, the tower Utrillo once stood. Its destruction leaves ground for a future architecturally remarkable station and adjacent buildings). (Source: GEFFROY; Date: June 2018)

As the construction of the Grand Paris Express progresses, many development projects emerge. Due to their metropolitan scope, and consequently their national interest, "the question of development [...] largely remains a shared matter between the local commune and the State on the most strategic projects" (Fauconnet 2018, personal communication). While it is clear that the State makes some efforts toward avoiding that a financial burden be imposed to the various administrative layers of the Île-de-France region, it is important to realize that it remains the dominant actor in current dynamics of regional governance. The Grand Paris Express emphasizes a strong reinvestment in transportation from the State but also contributes to maintaining a system of power relations where the State orders and dictates. Not only was the Grand Paris project an idea of the State, it is the State that will decide the future of the metropolitan model, and consequently that of the MGP. Ultimately, by creating metropolitan tools, the State shapes regional governance. But for the metropolitan model to be successful, dialogues with all administrative layers, notably the region and the communes, are crucial. Regardless of scale, public institutional actors matter.

4.3 A BID FOR THE SUCCESS OF A METROPOLITAN PROJECT

4.3.1 A CITY WITHOUT SPACE

Amidst all of its grandeur, it is hard to ignore that Paris is a spatially challenged city. Notwithstanding the beautiful gardens and parks, public squares and sidewalks, that continue to delight the urban flaneur, Paris has become a dense city with very little vacant space. After centuries of development, the rigidity of Paris's administrative borders and building height restrictions have combined to give the city an iconic silhouette, but simultaneously contributed to a cramped urban setting. For Fauconnet (2018, personal communication), the city's complex geographic burden has partly led to a situation where "suburban areas [were] the spillway of what Paris did not want — all noxious activities, waste, cemeteries." This form of French nimbyism helped inflame the tense relationship between France's capital city and its near periphery.

Siting new infrastructure in Paris is a delicate negotiation. The recent commencement of Europa City development in Triangle de Gonesse, a largely rural suburb north of Paris, lends credence to the idea that securing millions of square feet of mixed use development is more plausible closer to the airport than it is to the Eiffel Tower. Yet, officials in Paris also have to contend with the fact that previous efforts to build vertically, such as the construction of the Tour Montparnasse in 1977, triggered widespread backlash by Parisians who resented the challenge to the historic skyline.

Despite a constant struggle for space, Paris secured the right to host the 2024 Summer Olympics, a mega-event with a considerable urban footprint. Having submitted bids for the 1992, 2008, and 2012 Olympic Games we find that the various bid teams have shifted the location of key infrastructure and altered their bidding logics in search of a good ‘spatial fit’ for the Games (Strohmayr 2013; Oliver and Lauerman 2017). As Strohmayr (2013, p. 192) summarizes, all of the failed bids had to address “...the vexed question of whether principally to hold the games ‘intra muros’ or ‘extra muros’; within the old 1841-1844 walls of Paris long since replaced by the Boulevards des Maréchaux and the ring motorway known as the *péripherique* or beyond it, outside of Paris ‘proper’.” Each of the bids targeted different parts of Paris. The 1992 Games plan focused on the “‘Bercy’ and ‘Tolbiac’”, both industrial sites located along the Seine that were determined to require revitalization. Despite the realization that Paris would not host the 1992 Summer Olympics, Tolbiac remained Paris’ prime area of urban renewal. Its neglected industrial past meant the opportunity to start from scratch (Strohmayr 2013, p. 194). Instead of grandiose olympic facilities, Tolbiac most notably saw the construction of the National Library of France, key piece of the Grands Projets of François Mitterrand, an architectural endeavor to embellish the capital city with modern monuments. In contrast, the 2008 bid focused on the ‘Plaine de Saint Denis’, a neighborhood north of Paris, incorporating the newly built Stade de France while promoting the Games as an opportunity to “overcome the division between Paris and its densely populated suburbs” (Strohmayr 2013, p. 195). Although the Plaine Saint-Denis had undergone significant urbanization since the construction of the national stadium, it was still in desperate need of further investment to consolidate its resilience and to strengthen initiated dynamics of development. The 2012 bid returned attention to an ‘intra muros’ site, the Batignolles, in the North-Western part of Paris (17th arrondissement). While the Stade de France was incorporated in the 2012 bid plan, the transformative potential of the Games was linked to the development of the ‘gates of Paris’ (Porte de Saint-Cloud, Porte de la Chapelle) and crucially to the construction of the Olympic village on a fifty hectares site in the Batignolles. The bid team conveyed that the Batignolle site was “one of the last remaining areas of Paris requiring redevelopment...” (Replies to the Questionnaire 2012). Compactness, Fauconnet (2018, personal communication) explains, was one of the defining features of the 2012 bid effort: “It really was the idea of building an olympic village and an olympic park in close vicinity to have the biggest project compactness”, adding that “with this hypothesis, we were looking for 150 hectares. We knew very well that we did not have 150 hectares in Paris”. Although

the 2012 bid failed, the Batignolles development proceeded with a new urban park (Parc Martin Luther King) and the new Palais de la Justice now occupying the site (Oliver and Laurmann 2017). Each of the three failed bids lend evidence that “[t]he partial fulfillment of bid promises also means that new bids are forced to target new sites to locate Olympic infrastructure” (Oliver and Lauermann 2017, p. 118-119).

The point is, if land unavailability was already a significant issue in conceiving the candidacy for the 2012 Summer Olympics, then securing an ‘intra muros’ site for the 2024 bid team was even more problematic, unless it was given power on the scale of those given to Georges-Eugène Haussmann. So, while ostensibly the 2024 Summer Olympics are linked to Paris, the spatial requirements of the event explicitly expose Paris’ incapability to accommodate specialty infrastructure within its own city limits. As Daviet (2018, personal communication) puts it, between the 2012 and the 2024 candidacies, the logic has reversed from a compact bid to spatial dispersion (Paris, 2016). Siting an Olympic village in Paris is no longer a possibility (Julien Dolbois 2018, personal communication). The limited spatial options did, however, align nicely with the desire to use the 2024 bid as an opportunity to reduce inequalities between the urban core and the banlieue. The spatial plan of the facilities could be strategically organized to serve the dual purposes of encouraging peripheral development but perpetuate Paris’ prestigious image.

While the capital’s most emblematic monuments will be transformed into temporary venues, most urban development related to the event are designed to positively affect Saint-Denis and its surroundings (see Figure 4): "This time, the Olympic Games are rather centered here [Saint-Denis]. We have the village, we have the stadium, we have other olympic facilities. Of course the centrality in terms of prestige is in Paris because monuments are used. But in terms of planning, of urban transformation, the centrality is more in Seine-Saint-Denis than in Paris" (Daviet 2018, personal communication). This idea of centrality further joins a profound eagerness to promote a new identity of the banlieue. For instance materialized by billboards in Saint-Denis that proclaim “2024, our Games!” (See Figure 4), the olympic ambition represents a much desired sense of inclusion and belonging of peripheral territories.



Figure 4: Olympic facilities in Seine-Saint-Denis and 2024 Summer Olympics advertisement. (The Seine-Saint-Denis is at the heart of the 2024 Olympic Games' prospected heritage program. While the Stade de France will be renovated, a new aquatic centre and Olympic Village will be built in Saint-Denis. The Media Village will be in Le Bourget. The billboard is located on the facade of the town hall of Saint-Denis. It proudly claims "2024, our Games!"). (Source: GEFFROY; Date: June 2018)

Whereas olympic events planned in Paris will take place in temporary or already-existing facilities, the Seine-Saint-Denis department will benefit from the construction of permanent infrastructure, most notably an aquatic centre (discussed in more detail below). Ultimately, the Olympic Games become an object of metropolitan interest which, as emphasized by Dolbois (2018, personal communication), "joins the focus on territorial development of the North of Paris and Seine-Saint-Denis".

As soon as the decision was made to bid for the international multi-sport event, Paris agreed to promote a project dynamic oriented towards a better distribution of the economic and urban legacy. While this decision can be interpreted as an altruistic desire to advance the metropolitan conversation, it is important to realize that Paris "still defends its interests and works with neighboring territories but always with some friction" (Daviet 2018, personal communication). It further corresponds to the striking reality that "Paris is developing with difficulty because [it] suffocates from the inside" (Daviet 2018, personal communication). Paris, then, has no other choice but to look outward. This time, however, the periphery is not seen as a spillway. Unwittingly, it

becomes a pivotal partner. Both entities have a lot to gain from the decision to allocate a large part of the Olympic Games' heritage program to Seine-Saint-Denis. The latter, despite its proximity with Paris, remains a struggling territory, with lingering socio-economic and institutional hindrances continuing to undermine the success of the metropolitan model, and consequently Paris' ambition to strengthen its global attractiveness.

The 2024 bid was envisioned to be rather consensual: "What is interesting through this olympic project is how [...] we break barriers and we work on a common development thanks to the Games. Paris accepts from the beginning of the candidacy of course its central position but also almost all economic and urban benefits to be for Seine-Saint-Denis and not Paris" (Daviet 2018, personal communication). But while the conspicuous willingness to negotiate a collective heritage program can be interpreted as a significant shift in how Paris approaches its relationship with peripheral territories, it must also be understood as having emerged out of necessity. The spatial requirements of the Olympic Games and Paris' resulting inability to accommodate new related infrastructures forged a somewhat contrived partnership with Seine-Saint-Denis. When developing the bid, it quickly became unequivocal that Paris would be constrained to bequeath some of its expertise and resources to bring success to the Olympic project. As Paris is destined to endorse cooperation to satisfy its own plans, the event represents an unparalleled opportunity for Seine-Saint-Denis to pursue substantial development dynamics otherwise unattainable due to a lack of financial resources and stability. While the cooperative dimension of the Olympic project is arguably shaped by unique circumstances, it nonetheless remains a symbiotic endeavor and represents a remarkable opportunity to initiate future dynamics of regional governance. The establishment of a cooperative environment must then be ensured to defend the idea that Seine-Saint-Denis — along with the rest of the periphery — does not correspond to a territory of policy extension due to a lack of space in the capital city, but rather to a collaborator willing to negotiate on an equal footing for the success of the olympic project and of regional governance in the Île-de-France.

4.3.2 DO THE OLYMPICS (BID OR HOSTING) OFFER A DYNAMIC FOR METROPOLITAN COOPERATION?

In the midst of metropolization processes, sporting mega-events appear as the ideal tool to stimulate Paris' global attractiveness. In addition to their increasing urban, economic, and social dimension, the Olympic games undeniably correspond to a symbol promoting international

visibility. As Oliver and Lauermann (2017) argue, it is the malleability of the Olympic Games -- the capacity to be framed in a variety of manners and represent different bidding logics -- that makes them a powerful symbol to drive urban transformation. As Fauconnet (2018, personal communication) reports, the olympic bid was attractive because it could be leveraged and used to legitimate initiatives already being promoted by the Grand Paris project: "there was this wake-up call, at a specific time, that the metropolitan project had to be represented and that the Olympic Games were a good object for that." Alongside the Grand Paris Express, the Olympics seek to promote the capital city as an energetic and enterprising territory. But more than the mere production of a controlled image, the olympic project allows for collaboration to be introduced.

In a highly fragmented institutional structure such as the Île-de-France region, general consensus is difficult to attain, let alone maintain. Bidding and hosting the Olympic Games can be used as an influential approach to stimulate a sense of unity and cohesiveness. The event is often seized as an opportunity to trigger unique negotiations, maximize collective benefits, and shape dynamics of multi-scalar collaboration between institutional actors otherwise inconveniently uncoordinated (Oliver 2011; Oliver and Lauermann, 2017). Driven by the collective desire to benefit from a considerable heritage program as emerging projects are being substantially consolidated, those directly involved choose to cooperate by sharing knowledge and expertise (Lefèvre, 2019; Makowski, 2019). Undeniably, the olympic project represents an impetus to open key dialogues. As pointed out by Fauconnet (2018, personal communication), "it is an irreplaceable opportunity to simultaneously consolidate projects already in motion [...] but also to initiate this collective dynamic." Likewise, Barbé (2018, personal communication) argues that "this type of mega-event is a great catalyst of energies and is engaging. [...] It allows to create a project dynamic and to bring stakeholders together, especially political players." Daviet (2018, personal communication) concurs: "the Olympic Games in this ecosystem serve as a catalyst, or at least is a project at the scale of the Grand Paris". Of course, the actual influence they have on cooperation remains difficult to assess, but they have the merit of being of metropolitan scope.

Notwithstanding the ongoing frictions in shaping regional governance, the Olympic Games do appear to be promoting consensual politics. The occasion to leverage resources from the State and to draw attention to the investment potential of their communes has been recognized by stakeholders during previous rounds of sport development (i.e. the building of the Stade de France) (Lewis 2012; Strohmayer 2013; Oliver and Lauermann 2017). While those directly concerned with

olympic facilities must participate in the financing of the event, the most significant financial responsibility is upheld by the State. To Quentin Vaillant (2018, personal communication), "the olympic project allowed to make almost everyone agree, to give meaning, and to embody the interest of carrying a project such as the Grand Paris." It nonetheless corresponds to a strenuous exercise of humility and joins the Grand Paris project in crafting the institutional reorganization of metropolization in the Île-de-France region. Although it is Paris that defines the project's pace and that will be the centerpiece of the Olympic Games in terms of prestige, it has been well understood — from the candidacy phase onwards — that the event embodies a unique opportunity to promote dynamics of cooperation between all administrative layers. To Daviet (2018, personal communication), it is evident that an outward approach was endorsed by Paris. The latter acknowledges the necessity to orientate its resources, expertise, and power toward solving the Paris-banlieue dichotomy in order for the metropolitan model to be successful: "Paris and the Seine-Saint-Denis department clearly built a common project. [...] It clearly is a collective candidacy between two territories and an olympic institution" (Daviet 2018, personal communication). As revealed by Vaillant (2018, personal communication), Paris itself made the decision to partner up with Seine-Saint-Denis, arguing that the mega-event is an opportunity to develop or reinforce attractiveness. This decision is discernible in the proposed financing of the event. While it is anticipated that Paris will spend €100 million for infrastructure improvements within its own territory, the city will actually finance roughly €135 million overall. The €35 million remaining are then expected to be allocated to Seine-Saint-Denis in an effort to help finance peripheral infrastructure improvements. More than the actual amount, and even if motivated by larger considerations, the voluntary approach signals a newly-found desire to cooperate.

By reinforcing development in Seine-Saint-Denis, the olympic project corresponds to a remarkable opportunity to reduce territorial discrepancies between Paris and the near periphery. As specified by Hanotin (2018, personal communication), "on the €1.5 billion of public investment, €1.2 billion will be in Seine-Saint-Denis." Of course, it would be utterly absurd to say that Paris and its neighbor agree on all topics, but despite frequent dissensions, both entities have agreed to ensure and defend political unity throughout the entire olympic project. This climate of cooperation differentiates the 2024 candidacy from that of the 2012 Summer Olympics. As noted by Daviet (2018, personal communication), "there was this right alignment" which conveyed the idea that "we are able to develop a candidacy that is different." Most stakeholders involved in the development of the

olympic project actually agreed that a significant part of the heritage program be dedicated for Seine-Saint-Denis (Lefèvre, 2019), and such collective ambition is intimately inscribed within the metropolitan model's long-term goal. Hanotin (2018, personal communication) nicely summarizes the bid process as having "start[ed] the engine" of institutional reform and urban revitalization.

While Paris, due to its leadership position, is an unavoidable actor, the State also plays an important part in the ignition of the engine. It had a significant role from the candidacy phase; it helped secure the Olympic Games. Barbé (2018, personal communication) actually believes that before deciding whether to bid, Paris "wanted to make sure the State would get its hands more dirty" than it did for the 2012 candidacy, specifically through financial engagements. But the State's current involvement in the ongoing development of the project is just as — if not more — important. As noted by Dolbois (2018, personal communication), it is the dominant financial guarantor: "the State, in case of a deficit, guarantees that deficit." Its role is further emphasized in the organizing structure of the event, notably through the SOLIDEO, which is the Games' delivery company: "it is a public institution in which the State has the majority. The State has the voting majority simply because, for the most part, it is financing the Games in terms of infrastructures" (Dolbois 2018, personal communication). And amongst the €3 billion that comprise the SOLIDEO's budget for the construction of key olympic facilities, approximately €1 billion is guaranteed by the State. Daviet (2018, personal communication) further points out that in addition to a substantial financial commitment, the State is involved in the institutional organization of the SOLIDEO: "If you look at how the SOLIDEO was designed, the State has the ultra majority, [...] so if the State wants, the State decides." This dominant position ultimately implies the State's rightful ability to steer decisions as it wishes. It then becomes the manager in charge of the delivery strategy of facilities. Ultimately, the State is the "guarantor of the Games so they will happen no matter what, even if there is a political rotation in Paris" (Daviet 2018, personal communication). Anne Hidalgo, mayor of Paris since 2014, has been intimately involved with the entire candidacy process as she, after being quite reluctant, agreed that Paris candidates. But the 2020 municipal elections entail a potential political rotation, not only in Paris but also in peripheral communes. A change of tack from any involved entity in regards to the olympic project would evidently put at risk cohesiveness. Some candidates already voiced their opinion by criticizing the olympic project so strongly that one promised, if elected Mayor of Paris, to cancel the Games (Anonymous, 2019). But the State's entanglement in this endeavor must also be recognized as the outright demonstration of an

overarching ambition to reassert its authoritative prerogative into the politics of local development. The mega-event simply consolidates ongoing State rescaling efforts which, through the construction of the metropolitan model, clearly support a desire to bring the logic of political power



Figure 5: Grand Paris Express information wall in Villejuif (as the Olympic Games impose strict deadlines, the Grand Paris Express must progress. The sign informs passersby that the station is scheduled to be completed by 2024, year Paris will host the Summer Olympics). (Source: GEFROY; Date: June 2018).

decentralization to an end.

While the State has a significant role in the construction of Olympic facilities, its involvement in the actual planning of the event is illustrated by the organizing committee's structure. As detailed by Doblois (2018, personal communication), the organizing committee is composed of an administrative council with multiple members, of which 55% are from the sports community while "the remaining 45% are elected officials of territorial collectivities with the preponderance of the founding members — the State, the city of Paris, and the Île-de-France region, which have more votes than others simply because they are financially more engaged in this candidacy" (Dolbois 2018, personal communication). Of course, the State must work in collaboration with territorial

collectivities. The latter are directly concerned with the construction of event-related infrastructures. A subtle balance between all key actors must then be found in order for the olympic ambition to be successfully represented.

But transportation is what really makes the establishment of a collaborative environment crucial. The State, the Île-de-France region, and the city of Paris are all decisive actors of the Grand Paris Express. The Olympic Games then become the ideal object to consolidate these dynamics. As noted by Peuvergne (2018, personal communication), Paris' bid for the event was evidently built on the transportation project's cartography: "It is transportation that first conditions the candidacy project. [...] The Grand Paris project made sense, not only by creating new lines but also by reinforcing existing ones." Peripheral sites for olympic facilities were partly chosen in accordance with the GPE's planned construction progress. Although the creation of new lines is a significant aspect of the project, the improvement of existing infrastructures — specifically the RER — had a more consequential influence. Since the Olympic project depends on reliant transportation, a potential risk of deadline extension would jeopardize the success of the event or would lead to substantial cost overruns. One of the benefits of the Olympic project, Hanotin (2018, personal communication) explains, is the presence of strict deadlines imposed by the IOC. As such, the pressure to complete and connect Olympic facilities demands that progress is made on the Grand Paris Express (see Figure 5). What we find is that the GPE and Olympic projects are mutually reinforcing: "the candidacy was fed by the GPE, and the GPE will punctually be reinforced by the fact that things must be finished on time for the Olympic Games" (Barbé 2018, personal communication).

Although it is possible to imagine that both projects could still be achieved without the other, they clearly share a rationale. The path of the GPE was defined in 2011 through a State Council decree, well before the idea of bidding. It was a much stronger argument in Paris' previous candidacy, when the transportation project was still fictitious and being designed. The influence of the Olympic Games then mainly lies in their ability to incite cohesiveness. They further "led to some judicious acceleration and investment decisions" (Barbé 2018, personal communication) that would not have been made otherwise.

Undeniably, they are the Olympic Games of the Grand Paris. They endorse dynamics of metropolization through the promotion of a territorial development that aims to reinforce peripheral centralities. And while the candidacy mainly focuses on Seine-Saint-Denis, the idea of a territorial

competition is unanimously rejected. Instead, those involved in the project decided to collaborate toward defining a fair distribution of benefits. As noted by Daviet (2018, personal communication), Plaine Commune, which is a Seine-Saint-Denis' EPT where olympic facilities will principally be built, decided to establish a framework for cooperation in an attempt to leverage a legacy in neighboring territories: "We began to lead an approach on economic development and employment between the two other EPTs of Seine-Saint-Denis which do not have olympic infrastructures — Grand Paris Grand Est and Est Ensemble. With the Seine-Saint-Denis department we, four territories, plus the department, work so economic benefits from the Olympic Games can be distributed to the entire Seine-Saint Denis — not only to Plaine Commune's residents — and even beyond" (Daviet 2018, personal communication). Moreover, a territorial collectivity not directly concerned with the construction of event-related infrastructures has no financial responsibility whatsoever. In the financial scheme of the event, more resources are allocated to Seine-Saint-Denis than what it is willing to spend. A joint effort from the State, the region, and the city of Paris ultimately corresponds to a desire to orientate dynamics toward territorial development: "there was this idea of finding synergy" (Daviet 2018, personal communication). Hanotin (2018, personal communication) then argues that, while each territory undeniably has its own attributes, the Olympic project represents a commitment for cooperation as a way to enhance their individual strengths. Through the event's heritage program, shared expertise allows for mutual benefits. It then accelerates ongoing dynamics but also creates a fruitful environment that leverages and legitimizes new projects: "We are able to do things we are usually never able to do, because we work together with a shared objective and with a deadline" (Hanotin 2018, personal communication). Ultimately, it is important to recognize that for both the Olympic and the metropolitan projects to be successful, cooperation between all administrative layers is essential. The State evidently prevails as a dominant authority. In the French context, it is extremely difficult to envision large-scale development without its involvement. In the case of the Olympic Games, Daviet (2018, personal communication) argues that "if the State is not the guarantor as last resort, then it appears as a magma of collectivities fighting to know which one will control". The 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris then constitute the perfect object to initiate dynamics of cooperation. Despite a blurred governance structure, the metropolitan fact progresses.

4.3.3 THE DAISY PRINCIPAL

In the midst of conversations on Île-de-France's metropolitan construction, collectively defining development objectives is an imperative of success. As previously mentioned, the Grand Paris corresponds to the ambition to establish an institutional framework capable of ensuring more balanced development within a politically defined perimeter encompassing the most densely populated areas. The current metropolitan project is designed to encourage polycentricity (Warnet, 2018) built on what has been referred to as the daisy principal: "Paris is the heart and the centralities are the petals" (Daviet 2018, personal communication). The aim is to develop the periphery in a manner that does not simply serve as territorial extensions of Paris' policies, but instead leads to the formation of new economic hubs that strengthen the overall prosperity of the metropolitan construction. For the metropolitan project to succeed, Hanotin (2018, personal communication) argues, polycentric development must occur. The Grand Paris Express intimately corresponds to this ambition. By creating new lines and upgrading existing ones, the large-scale transportation project has the potential to reduce issues of disconnectivity experienced by peripheral territories. But as illustrated, the GPE is not the only project of metropolitan scope to participate in such dynamics. The 2024 Summer Olympics have the capacity to further consolidate the daisy principal, as the choice of Olympic sites illustrate "the Games developing in petals" (Daviet 2018, personal communication). By targeting Seine-Saint-Denis the 2024 Summer Olympics can leverage the symbolic importance and name-brand recognition of the capital city, legitimate the spatial strategy of the GPE, and improve a much maligned working class suburb. But as recently indicated by French President Emmanuel Macron, it is entirely possible that the stated goals for helping France's most deprived department may remain unmet

4.4 DO WHITE ELEPHANTS KNOW HOW TO SWIM?

4.4.1 SWIMMING IN TROUBLED WATERS

The disappointment of the failed candidacy for the 2012 Summer Olympics resulted in a critical reflection on French bidding traditions. Out of all the major global cities, losing to London was presumably the worst scenario possible. Paris' overly confident approach to the bidding process was snubbed when the right to host the event was unexpectedly attributed to London. But it must be recognized that failed bids still carry the weight of expectation. For instance, the 2012 bid promised the construction of a new aquatic centre in Seine-Saint-Denis. As Daviet (2018 personal communication) explains, it was a facility that was desperately needed: "We lack swimming pools,

we have aging swimming pools. So it is not just a whim to build it now. There is a true logic". Daviet (2018 personal communication) further notes, "It is a project to which the State committed that it be done no matter what." Jacques Chirac, the President of the French Republic at the time, made it clear that despite the failure, certain sporting facilities were necessary and would be built. While many projects were achieved, the construction of the aquatic centre never actually came to fruition: "For many years the aquatic centre was supposed to be built. We almost succeeded; the land was claimed. We had been able to round up fundings for the investment, but not for the maintenance and operation. [...] We had to write off the aquatic centre project and it always remained a fantasy of elected officials" (Daviet 2018, personal communication).

The 2024 Summer Olympics were envisioned as an opportunity to finally deliver the much needed facility. The bid not only provided an environment to legitimate the construction, the aquatic centre was touted as a defining feature of the candidacy. While the 2012 candidacy envisaged a large number of permanent installations, the 2024 effort reflects a deeper reliance on using existing or temporary facilities that require a more modest investment budget (Barbé 2018, personal statement). As noted, the IOC's adoption of Olympic Agenda 2020 encourages candidate cities to craft more sustainable and durable event legacies that correspond with urban planning objectives and long-term development plans. The promise of a purpose built facility that would remain following the Olympic Games was central to the 2024 bid's promotion of a concrete heritage of sports development legacy (Anonymous, 2019). The choice to locate the aquatic centre in Seine-Saint-Denis was not particularly contentious because of the clear need to promote sporting — specifically swimming — practices in the area. It was a decision that was considered meritorious by most stakeholders because it addressed a gap in social service provision, but nevertheless, it exposes important considerations of ownership and use post-Games. Put simply, while the facility has recognized value, the issue of 'who pays' still required negotiation, and illustrated the difficulty of establishing a heritage and spatial legacy simultaneously.

While the construction of the aquatic centre may appear consensual, the complexity emerging around the spatial organization of facilities led to frictions and could have jeopardized the project's success. The land previously claimed as part of the failed candidacy is now unavailable; it has become part of the Grand Paris Express project and is under construction. Adjacent land was also considered but was determined to be too small. Ultimately, locating the aquatic centre near the Stade de France, in Saint-Denis, was considered to be the best option (see figure 6). Although it is

inscribed within the Olympic project's desire to further emphasize development in Seine-Saint-Denis, the choice initially ran counter to the will of representatives from Paris. The site, as explained by one senior official, while "located in Saint-Denis, is actually a land owned by the city of Paris. It is an occupancy agreement between ENGIE [a French multinational utility company] and the city of Paris." There was concern that building on the site would increase Paris' financial exposure, a responsibility that Paris was reluctant to absorb: "When we were debating on where the aquatic centre would be located and when this offer arrived, Paris officials had for task to do everything they could for this specific land not to be chosen." Ultimately, the pressure to maintain collective support for the bid triumphed over what might be referred to as the 'politics of the piscine'. The decision-making vacuum was suspended when the MGP inherited the project (discussed below) and the private sector increased its commitment. It should be noted, however, that a new, more flexible facility emerged in the spring of 2018 that although maintaining the promise of providing swimming pools in the post-bid periods, now reflects a less burdensome financial responsibility.



Figure 6: Stade de France in Saint-Denis, in the Seine-Saint-Denis department (the aquatic centre will be located near the national stadium. The latter rises above the peripheral ring road which, as the sign indicates, directly leads to Paris' historic center. The Olympics Games' heritage program focuses on Seine-Saint-Denis, but Paris remains spatially and imaginarily omnipresent). (Source: GEFFROY; Date: June 2018)

4.4.2 FILLING IN AN EMPTY SHELL

Intriguingly, the land chosen to host the olympic facility is owned by Paris and located on Seine-Saint-Denis' territory but neither of the two are actually in charge of the project. The provision of the aquatic centre for the 2024 Summer Olympics is being orchestrated by the MGP. As explained by Dolbois (2018 personnel communication), "collectivities of Seine-Saint-Denis did not feel capable of carrying out this big facility [while] the city of Paris did not feel legitimate." For Dolbois (2018, personnel communication), it was obvious that the MGP "was used as a backup solution" to resolve a governance quandary. Handing over the construction of the aquatic centre to the MGP might be considered questionable, given that most ongoing metropolitan dynamics are pursued without the direct involvement of the MGP (Fauconnet 2018, personnel communication). It is clear that the MGP struggles to significantly impact the metropolitan conversation, mainly because of its unstable governance, weak budget, and ambiguous role. Designed to reflect a specific metropolitan vision, the MGP nevertheless was not empowered to assert its influence. As such, it struggles to be more than an empty institutional shell. Dolbois (2018, personnel communication) submits that "it is because today the MGP resembles an empty shell that it is a bit excluded from the olympic project." Undeniably, the aquatic centre was a means for the MGP to establish relevance both to the olympic project and to regional governance (Barbé 2018, personal communication). Prior to absorbing the aquatic centre project, the MGP's sole contribution to the metropolitan conversation was sponsoring the Inventons la Métropole du Grand Paris initiative. Ostensibly, the MGP was encouraging the reimagining of the new face of the Grand Paris, but was operating without political clout. Taking over the construction of the aquatic centre had strategic importance because it afforded the MGP increased legitimacy, as it could communicate purpose and relevance. As noted by Dolbois (2018, personal communication), "it is more difficult to destroy an institution when it is useful, when it operates facilities, rather than an institution that is quite empty."

While the MGP emerges as an important actor of the project, it does so when dynamics are already well established. Given that most olympic facilities are managed by the SOLIDEO, the involvement of the MGP has the potential to upset cohesion and reinforces vulnerability. The decision to hand over the construction of the facility was accompanied by a climate of doubt. As one interviewee put it, the MGP's inability to successfully carry out the construction of the aquatic centre on its own was evident: "During the first workshops, we clearly noticed that instances of the MGP were not really knowledgeable of what an aquatic centre is, of the operating issues afterward, and of what it

would really imply." It was clear that the MGP was a late-arriving actor to the olympic project, and was not simply resource-strapped but additionally lacked experience to successfully carry out a project under strict deadlines. The decision to allow "an embryonic institution" to lead the aquatic centre was viewed to be inherently risky. Yet, given that the MGP goals are nurtured by the State, not surprisingly support has emerged during crucial moments of the process.

Current dynamics oriented toward establishing a metropolitan model unequivocally advocate for the involvement of the MGP in objects of metropolitan interest. The aquatic centre is one of them. It allows the MGP to be the 'last born actor' to progressively find its role within the governance of the Olympic Games. The institutional framework under which the Olympic project is carried out then encourages cohesiveness between all key actors of the metropolitan conversation. What remains undetermined is what will become of the MGP once the Olympic Games are over. Put another way, the relevance of the MGP remains tied to the event and like the aquatic centre, questions of permanency remain. The newly-created institution must be given jurisdictional tools that persuade its ability to prevail as a constituent of future metropolitan initiatives. Its role will otherwise be solely limited to undertaking projects loaded of responsibilities other entities repudiate. Although the Olympic Games provide the MGP with the opportunity to manifest crucial competence, they are arguably being used to facilitate policy experimentation (Lauermann 2016; Oliver and Lauermann 2017). Should this experiment proves successful, it opens up the opportunity for a jurisdictional rescaling in the post games period. The MGP's relevance in dynamics of metropolization would then be asserted and carried on. If the experiment proves unsuccessful, the failure can be attributed to the exceptional circumstances of the event rather than to the State's ineptitude in fabricating a sustainable institutional framework of regional governance. The fact is, the Olympic venture represents a way to start the engine and create momentum while being cautiously sheltered from the consequences of contingency. It is well recognized that the MGP's shell is still markedly fragile. Hanotin (2018, personal communication) even argues that "as long as there will not be authority at the MGP to be able to carry out projects, to impose projects to others, to command, then it will remain an empty shell" whose main role will only be to oversee and maintain cohesiveness. From this perspective, the Olympic Games can be read as a conscious gamble to test out the feasibility of a grand ambition without committing to an overhaul of the jurisdictional structure of metropolization.

4.4.3 THE WHITE ELEPHANTS' DEMISE

In a global context where trends are oriented toward the development of metropolization, mega-events become increasingly intertwined with urban agendas. More than the eminent development of sports or tourism, they are now envisioned to generate a substantial urban legacy. But an overly ambitious project and a poorly controlled legacy ultimately implies the risk for the emergence of white elephants, these post-event decaying and abandoned venues. It is partly to counteract an upsurge of Olympic venues falling into disrepair that Agenda 2020 was created by the IOC. One of the ultimate objectives of the event's strategic roadmap is to reinvent the Olympic brand and to encourage cities to consider re-engaging with the Olympic Movement.

Paris' approach to the 2024 bid process embodies Agenda 2020, as it was evidently built to comply with newly established recommendations. While most Olympic venues for the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris are either already-existing or temporary, perennial facilities are conspicuously part of a controlled heritage program of which the aquatic centre is the exact epitome. In order to limit risks of cost overruns, the project of the aquatic centre has considerably been readjusted since the candidacy (Anonymous, 2018; Lefèvre, 2018). As noted by Dolbois (2018, personal communication), a report commissioned by the State in March of 2018 warned about significant risks: "We realized we had a risk of cost overruns of €600 million on the entire project. At the heart of these cost overruns, the topic of the aquatic centre was the most significant." While its construction was initially estimated at around €100 million, the report projected a total cost of €270 million. Inscribed within a desire to develop an efficiently controlled and structured heritage, the choice was made to reconsider the dimension of the olympic facility. While it initially was envisioned as a 17,000-seat venue, the aquatic centre will instead be comprised of three temporary pools and one perennial, of which the size has been considerably reduced.

As highlighted by Dolbois, such strategic procedure ultimately implies a reorganization of financial responsibilities. Whereas perennial facilities, through the SOLIDEO, are financed by public allowances, temporary ones are part of the organizing committee's budget. This budget of €3.8 billion is exclusively privately funded. By transforming the project of the aquatic centre into temporary facilities, the State then casts aside most financial responsibilities: "It allowed us to avoid cost overruns and to have a €90 million project while we had announced €104 in the candidacy" (Dolbois 2018, personal communication). In addition to an obvious financial rationale,

this approach also corresponds to a more substantial heritage. Instead of having an under-used sporting facility capable of hosting 17,000 spectators, each temporary pool will be dismantled and rebuilt in communes of Seine-Saint-Denis where needs are significantly high. To Dolbois (2018, personal communication), the project of the aquatic centre was ultimately readjusted "by being smarter and cleverer both by preserving heritage and by having more flexibility in the creation of the facility." It epitomizes Agenda 2020's intentions to develop an event that responds to the host city's long-term planning needs.

More than the readjustment of the aquatic centre, the entire olympic model is conceptualized in such manner. Urban projects are not fabricated specifically for the event. Instead, it is the latter that integrates pre-established dynamics of mutation (Bernardi, 2017). As emphasized by Daviet (2018, personal communication), the Olympic Games legitimize and accelerate projects that were previously suspended because of limited financial resources, specifically in Seine-Saint-Denis: "There is an urban project that exists and that was fragmented. It was multiple projects that we had to gather and for which we had to create coherence." The event offers a perfect opportunity to create a common and virtuous dynamic to achieve these projects almost simultaneously. To Fauconnet (2018, personal communication), "the candidacy must be a boost for things that were previously wanted but that did not exist."

By emphasizing development in Seine-Saint-Denis, the 2024 Summer Olympics' heritage program unarguably illustrates such aspiration. In alignment with the transportation project of metropolitan interest, it further participates to the Grand Paris' ambition to encourage the mutation of territories. But such an endeavor includes significant risk. To Barbé (2018, personal communication), "it could be a disadvantage if we brutally transformed the territory into a business and luxurious district." Institutional mechanisms are then established to prevent uncontrolled development. The olympic project does not simply integrate ongoing dynamics of urban transformation. An anticipatory approach to the construction of its heritage program is adopted to maximize long-term legacy. After the event, the Olympic Village will be reconfigured into 2,200 family-housing units, 900 student-housing units, and commercial activities. The ultimate objective is to foster diversity and avoid the emergence of a mono-functional neighborhood.

While the organization of a mega-event can be seen — by the uninformed — as a privately-handled venture, French elected officials have a crucial role in developing an efficient heritage program for

the 2024 Summer Olympics. They are most knowledgeable of a territory's socioeconomic profile and can work on a project that is actually useful in terms of local development. The event's influence on institutional processes then becomes irrefutable. It further corresponds to the idea of the Olympics being a powerful symbol, capable of being "both a mechanism of solidarity, and mechanism of exploitation" simultaneously and leads to the formation of agreements previously unattainable (Lippmann 1922, p.154). As noted by Dolbois (2018, personal communication), an olympic law was implemented to facilitate decision making. This law of exception dwindles France's administrative burden by gathering procedures and by considerably shortening approval deadlines (Lherminier & Laffitte, 2018). In compliance with Agenda 2020's recommendations, the Olympic Games serve as a way to trigger the acceleration of public policies in territories where development dynamics are often slow.

For the event to be considered successful, it is then important to develop a project that can produce a reasonable and achievable legacy. Ultimately, the readjustment of the aquatic centre illustrates the host city's ability to manage and control the event's heritage program to target specific needs and maximize long-term benefits. Although it is impossible to predict the post-event legacy, establishing judicious institutional mechanisms creates a virtuous environment for prospected dynamics. With such ambitions, Daviet (2018, personal communication) emphasizes that the legacy around the construction of the Olympic Village was conceived to follow specific requirements: "The Olympic Village must eventually be a neighborhood like others, which follows the PLH; our PLH requires 40% of social housing on our territory." The thorough development of an efficient and controlled heritage program then requires institutional decisions to be made.

Undeniably, a number of risks remain, but they are not specific to the 2024 Summer Olympics. Instead, they are more generally associated with the construction of the metropolitan model. As spatial divides are being ameliorated, and as urban connectivity is being developed, the potential to create momentum for gentrification, forcing residents out due to rising prices increases. Because it clearly integrates the metropolitan construction, the olympic project would then be a factor contributing to the process of disenfranchisement. It would influence the emergence of an uncontrolled and undesired legacy and would illustrate the failure of the heritage program. The point is, the 2024 Summer Olympics represent a pivotal moment not just for the Grand Paris vision, but also for the Olympic Movement. If the heritage program is successful, it potentially offers a counter-narrative to the legacy of white elephant stadiums and needless post-Games facilities. At a

time when the IOC is struggling to attract bid cities, the implementation of a successful heritage program in a city that lacks space would be a powerful signal that Agenda 2020 is having the desired result. It could, as Fauconnet (2018, personal communication) aptly summarizes, resuscitate what is otherwise viewed to be a “worn-out entertainment machine.”

4.5 CONCLUSION: A GRAND EXCUSE?

Paris as a city of projects perfectly embodies the State’s regained ambition to, through dynamics of metropolization, profoundly reinvent the politics of local and regional development, of which mega-events and transportation projects strategically constitute the backbone. The establishment of the Métropole du Grand Paris corresponds to a subtle yet overt entryway to State-led spatial reforms. Created by the State, it is the centerpiece of institutional reorganization processes in the Île-de-France region. But while emerging ambitions imply the need for a structure equipped to respond to the most pressing challenges of metropolization, the MGP’s reliability is questioned and criticized for lacking crucial resource, jurisdiction, and expertise. The commonly-accepted requisite is to simplify a burdensome administrative millefeuille, but the establishment of this new institution fundamentally acts against such rationale. Because of its ambiguous role, the MGP struggles to find relevance within the ongoing conversation of regional governance. It merely acts as a support of municipal initiatives. Projects of metropolitan scope then represent a compelling opportunity for the MGP to significantly mature its authoritative influence.

While transit-oriented development is promoted, through the Grand Paris Express, as a broader state-led initiative to solve a detrimental Paris-banlieue dichotomy, the Olympic Games are used to obligate cooperation. Although the event carries Paris’ name, it is that of the Grand Paris metropolitan fabrication. Its urban requirements inexorably challenges the city’s lack of vacant space, favoring a peripheral approach to development. Dolbois (2018 personnel communication) reminds us that “the Olympic Games and the Grand Paris Express are indeed projects that incarnate what the Grand Paris is all about, of what it is in terms of territorial existence and reality. But it is not the demonstration of what the institutional scale should be.”

Considering their strict spatial and temporal dimension, the Olympic Games are a perfect object for experimental action. They correspond to the MGP’s subtle entry into the metropolitan conversation, as it was tasked with the construction and operation of a major Olympic facility, the aquatic centre.

This strategic decision deliberately adheres to the fact that no else wanted to claim responsibility for the venue. Undeniably, the MGP needs the event to exist and mature. The aquatic centre transpires as a tool to venture into the implementation of metropolitan dynamics while Paris becomes a ground for experimentation that puts institutions and infrastructure at the forefront of discussions. The underlying intention of a Paris as a city of projects is to use these projects to inquire the feasibility of a grand ambition without committing to an overhaul of the jurisdictional structure of metropolization. If the Olympic experiment shows unsuccessful, the blame can be put on the exceptional requirements of the event rather than on its disorganized institutional handling. The points is, the Olympic Games are a grand excuse to legitimize investments in ongoing projects (specifically the Grand Paris Express) to reinforce an institutional transition for State rescaling, and to further consolidate State-led spatial reforms with little risk of dissension. Unquestionably, and as noted by Fauconnet (2018, personal communication) there is a renewal of confidence in the ability to see big: “There was a sort of renewal of confidence around this capacity to carry out very big projects: the transportation project, which objectively is currently the largest transportation project in the world, this olympic candidacy, which will put France in the spotlight. There is a dynamic that objectively, we cannot say did not exist ten year ago because we were already at the beginning of this dynamic, but in which we did not believe.” But the State, while it strongly engages in the institutional reorganization of regional governance, also builds itself a safety net for disengagement in case of failure.

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