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ID 1478 | THE ECONOMIC CRISIS MODELLING THE TERRITORIAL COHESION. THE FRENCH CASE

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1 INTRODUCTION

The economic and financial crisis since 2007 was a brake on economic growth, accompanied by a reduction in public and private investment. In addition, the European Union lost weight in a globalized economy. The development and application of the principle of competitiveness seeks to counteract the negative effects of the crisis. To this end, it moves not only to the economic and business sphere, but also to the territorial context. Competitive and synergistic territories are now the focus of numerous development and investment policies. However, other territories with characteristics that do not favour investment run the risk of falling behind in a process marked, above all, by innovation.

The Eighth Progress Report on economic, social, and territorial cohesion. The regional and urban dimension of the crisis was published in 2013, although it offers information only up to 2011. Its analysis covers aspects such as poverty, social exclusion, the labour market, migration, and regional convergence. From the main conclusions drawn from the study, we will highlight the following. First, the increase in regional divergence after a long period of convergence. They re-emphasize the central pentagon in front of the peripheries, and the urban versus the rural areas. Secondly, the cities present heterogeneous situations, better resisting the large capital cities, even though poverty and social exclusion rates increase within them. About EU Member States, between 2007 and 2011 the countries most affected by the crisis in terms of GDP and the labour market were Latvia, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Estonia, and Spain. Portugal, Denmark, Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, and Slovenia also suffered a high impact of the crisis.

The crisis exacerbated some existing problems such as aging, unemployment or obsolete economies. The result has been the appearance of territories with little chance of being competitive. Nor should we forget

that the economic crisis is a brake on the cohesion process. Not only do differences between Member States increase, but there are strong divergences within Member States.

One possible solution is the real development of territorial cohesion, linking it to the creation of functional territories. This, according to Walsh (2016), should respond to the following objectives: 1. Favour And d) large metropolitan areas (1.5 million inhabitants and more). OECD (2013): Definition of functional urban areas (FUA) for the OECD metropolitan database. On this issue can also be seen Dijkstra L., Poelman H (2014). A harmonised definition of cities and rural areas: the new degree of urbanisation. Working papers, 01/2014, European Commission, economic development by strengthening vertical and horizontal (economic) relations; 2. Achieve efficiency in the provision of public services. Territorial planning would contribute to this by favouring the necessary synergies; 3. Reduce environmental impact; 4. Improve understanding of functional relationships, i.e., develop multilevel governance. In this case, a certain degree of economic autonomy would also be needed in the distribution of aid, and policy in decision-making. In all this, decentralization will play a fundamental role. In addition to management and decision-making capacity, sub-central levels of government, especially regions, will have to observe the principle of responsibility for designing the regional development of their territories.

This paper is structured as follows after this introduction: Section 2 reviews the principles governing the concept of territorial cohesion, not to mention the context of the current programming period (2014-2020) and the Europe 2020 strategy; Section 3 analyses the territorial distribution of competitiveness based on the Regional Competitiveness Index in its latest version of 2016; Section 4 includes the study of the French case and the third stage of the decentralization process, analysing the positive and negative aspects of it. The final section provides briefs conclusions, in addition to bibliographical references.

2 TERRITORIAL COHESION AND THE EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY

When we talk about territorial cohesion, it is necessary to consider a series of concepts that overlap and interrelate: polycentrism, territorial cooperation, multilevel governance, and an integrated approach to territorial fact. Territorial cohesion could be understood as the balanced distribution of human activities in the territory. It entails the transfer in terms of territory of the aim of sustainable and balanced development, assigned to the Union in Article 3 of the Lisbon Treaty:

The Union shall establish an internal market. It shall work for the sustainable development of Europe based on balanced economic growth and price stability, a highly competitive social market economy, aiming at full employment and social progress, and a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment. It shall promote scientific and technological advance.

Included after the reform promoted for the 2007-2013 programming period, the territorial dimension had been gradually gaining institutional recognition since the first mention in the Second Cohesion Report (2001). The amendment of the Treaty at the Lisbon Summit of 2007 - signed on 13 December - retains the previous references to territorial cohesion and incorporates new ones in Title XVII which becomes "Economic, social and territorial cohesion", as well as to include in Article , and within the objectives of the European Union, the promotion of social, economic, and territorial cohesion and solidarity between Member States. The territorial dimension is fundamental if cohesion is really to be achieved, and more in the context of an increasingly wide and diverse geographical area, as indicated by the Council in 2006: "it will help to develop sustainable communities and to prevent uneven regional development from reducing overall growth potential".

This incorporation of the territory into regional development strategies has had two main pillars: spatial development, which involves planning, cooperation and combating regional divergences through the Structural Funds; and a specific attention to cities on Urban (both the pilot project and the later Community Initiative). The incorporation of the territorial dimension into the cohesion process marked the start of the 2007-2013 programming period, reinforced by two key texts: The Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities.

Territorial cohesion involves equal access for citizens and economic agents to services of general economic interest (SGEI), irrespective of the territory to which they belong (Article 16 of the Treaty).

However, the realization of territorial cohesion needs a new concept of governance that simplifies "the processes of regulation and intervention of the public powers and facilitates the decision-making of the other social agents, especially the economic ones" (eg Farinós, 2008: 12). The main objective will be, then, the effectiveness and efficiency of the public policies on the territory and its development. We are, therefore, also referring to the concept of planning (economic) or land-use planning. It has different characteristics both at Member State and Community level. In the French case, 'Aménagement du Territoire' would imply a social and fundamentally economic construction on the territory, linked to the idea of nation, while the concept at the community level would be more linked to cooperation of different actors - public and private - in all sectors, which would imply a decentralized and multilevel understanding (eg Faludi, 2005).

Apart from the differences mentioned, territorial planning has two good points of support: the principle of subsidiarity - that is, ensuring that a decision is taken at the closest level to the citizen - and political-economic decentralization, because it is imperative that subnational or sub-central governments, whether regional or local, have a certain normative and decision-making capacity.

About the current programming period, the territorial dimension of the Structural and Investment Funds is much more pronounced than in the previous period. The Common Strategic Framework (CSF) includes a section dealing with the main territorial problems. States are required to carry out an analysis of the potential and development capacity of the Territories. Likewise, it is expected that States will ensure the complementarity of European territorial cooperation programs with country-specific programs within the investment objective for growth and employment.

The latter relates to the Territorial Agency of the European Union 2020 which, in turn, takes into account both the V Report on economic, social and territorial cohesion and the Europe 2020 Strategy (E2020S). The achievement of the E2020S is linked to the "policy-making in the territories" (§1). Eurostat's report on socio-economic indicators³ shows that some of the objectives related to competitiveness factors are far from being achieved. Employment, expenditure on R&D, greenhouse gas emissions, early leavers from education

3 THE TERRITORIAL DISTRIBUTION OF COMPETITIVENESS

The concept of competitiveness is, basically, linked to urban areas. However, the economic and financial crisis of 2008 has shown that it is not the urban areas that have best behaved during and after the crisis. Dijkstra et al. (2015) have divided into four types of regions: rural, urban, intermediate, and rural urban near cities. It is these last two that have shown a better performance in the rate of economic growth and employment. Depending on their geographical location, the behaviour of these territories has also been different (see Table 1). In EU-15 economic growth followed the urban hierarchy during the first period of the crisis. Nonetheless, capital cities and non-metropolitan regions were the hardest hit. By contrast, in the EU-13 the medium and small metropolitan areas were the best performers, maintaining the growth rate and curbing the loss of jobs (Dijkstra et al., 2015).

Average annual real change in %	2000-2008			2008-2011		
	GDP per head growth =	Productivity growth +	Employment per head growth	GDP per head growth =	Productivity growth +	Employment per head growth
EU-15						
Capital metro	1.44	0.88	0.56	-0.79	0.34	-1.13
Second-tier metro	1.29	0.70	0.59	-0.76	0.15	-0.91
Smaller metro	1.20	0.67	0.53	-0.59	0.24	-0.83
Non-metro	1.15	0.75	0.40	-0.77	0.20	-0.98
Total	1.27	0.76	0.51	-0.70	0.24	-0.94
EU-13						
Capital metro	5.49	3.64	1.85	-0.26	1.04	-1.30
Second-tier metro	4.85	4.08	0.78	1.43	1.30	0.14
Smaller metro	3.66	3.56	0.09	1.38	1.17	0.21
Non-metro	4.47	4.45	0.02	0.57	1.70	-1.13
Total	4.88	4.31	0.56	0.66	1.44	-0.78

Table 1. GDP per head growth in EU metro regions 2000-2008 and 2008-2011
Source: Dijkstra *et al.* (2015: 946).

Figure 1 summarizes all the constituent elements of regional competitiveness in a pyramid scheme that is based on eight fundamental elements (environment, decision centres, social structure, regional culture, economic structure, innovative activity, regional accessibility, and skills of workforce). On this basis are the five axes that will show the competitiveness of a territory: research and technological development, SME development, FDI activity, infrastructure and human capital, and institutions and social capital. The goal, at the top of the pyramid, is to maintain standards of quality of life, namely the welfare state.

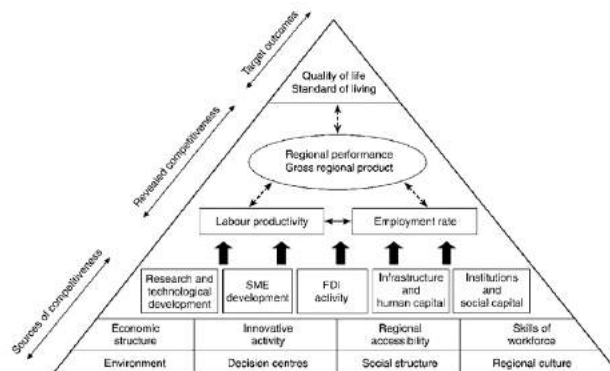


Figure 1. Pyramid model of regional competitiveness
Source: Gardiner *et al.* (2004: 1048).

This section is based on the regional competitiveness indices carried out in 2010, 2013 and above all in the last edition of 2016, which include 262 regions. As we have already mentioned, competitiveness has become a fundamental objective of cohesion policy. It is also part of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The underlying idea behind the competitiveness value is that this factor can reduce interterritorial differences. Thus, after the existence of the "blue banana" in the 90's of the last century, the RCI seem to confirm the configuration of networks of cities that contribute to organize the territory around them. We would be facing competitive territories that distribute population and resources to those who are not. However, on the Map 3 showing the evolution of the index over the three reports made, the existence of centres and peripheries is clear.

The development of the Regional Competitiveness Index (RCI) raises two important questions about the territory: one is the unit on which to work, being the most practical option to resort to NUTS (Nomenclature of Statistical Territorial Units); And the other is the choice of regions, since in several notable cases such as Greater London, administrative regions – linked to statistical units and sub-central levels – are intertwined with functional regions, more linked to the very concept of competitiveness. Another aspect to consider is territorial diversity in urban and rural areas, as well as intermediate areas, in the sense that creativity linked to innovation and therefore to competitiveness seems to be related to urban areas, be they cities or the so-called region-cities. The following figure (Figure 2) shows the key elements of territorial development, showing how the economic development policy – supported by a strong emergence of the city-region – is one of the cornerstones of the triangle that revolves around the territory and is completed by economic competitiveness and creativity, all elements interrelated.

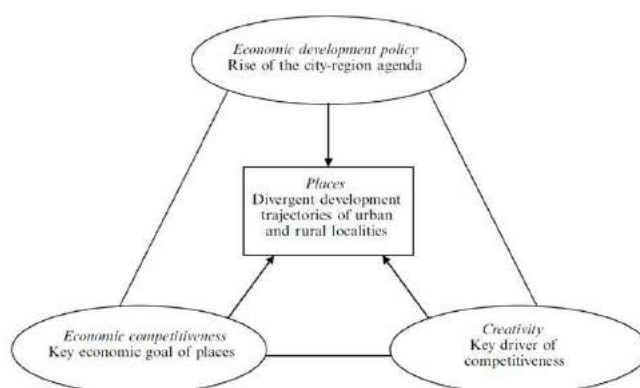


Figure 2. Conceptual framework for territorial development
Source: Huggins and Clifton (2011: 1343).

If we review the pillars of each of the factors at the regional level in the case of France, we will obtain an image of the development of each of them in the configuration of competitiveness. Thus, with regard to institutions, while France is in 11th place, when descending to the regional scope Brittany is the best situated territory followed by Aquitaine. In the case of macroeconomic stability, only the state level is possible, with France occupying the 16th position. Infrastructure Île de France ranks first, followed by Nord-Pas-de-Calais and Alsace. At the other end are Corse, Limousin and Brittany. In the pillar of health, Île de France returns to occupy the first place, followed at distance by Rhône-Alpes. Finally, basic education is analysed only at the state level and France ranks 16th.

Region	Institutions	Infrastructures	Health
Île de France	120	14	29
Champagne-Ardenne	143	71	187
Picardie	121	35	196
Haute-Normandie	155	81	182
Centre	118	83	172
Basse-Normandie	129	148	180
Bourgogne	132	93	183
Nord-Pas-de-Calais	131	23	197
Lorraine	145	88	167
Alsace	133	46	121
Franche-Comté	128	98	173
Pays de la Loire	139	116	162
Bretagne	48	175	193
Poitou-Charantes	91	150	164
Aquitaine	75	158	155
Midi-Pyrénées	136	155	36
Limousin	117	203	179
Rhône-Alpes	89	86	81
Auvergne	125	172	170
Languedoc-Roussillon	134	142	184
Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur	149	106	140
Corse	164	240	166

Table 1. Basic dimension. Regional ranking, 2013

With regard to efficient factors, higher education and lifelong learning have a better situation in Île de France and Alsace, while Corse and Bourgogne occupy the last positions of metropolitan France. Île de France, Limousin and Aquitaine are at the top of the ranking in terms of labour market efficiency, while Languedoc-Roussillon, Picardie and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur are last. In the case of market size, the best situated region is Île de France, followed at considerable distance by Picardie and Alsace.

Region	Higher education and lifelong learning	Labour market efficiency	Market size
Île de France	49	66	2
Champagne-Ardenne	162	141	135
Picardie	146	153	58
Haute-Normandie	151	143	82
Centre	188	109	107
Basse-Normandie	199	107	144
Bourgogne	217	132	136
Nord-Pas-de-Calais	123	137	81
Lorraine	137	144	112
Alsace	82	111	69
Franche-Comté	155	119	129
Pays de la Loire	141	118	127
Bretagne	117	62	142
Poitou-Charantes	206	100	147
Aquitaine	184	98	139
Midi-Pyrénées	145	110	148
Limousin	181	76	163
Rhône-Alpes	144	117	95
Auvergne	200	126	145
Languedoc-Roussillon	167	174	149
Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur	153	149	116
Corse	247	133	215

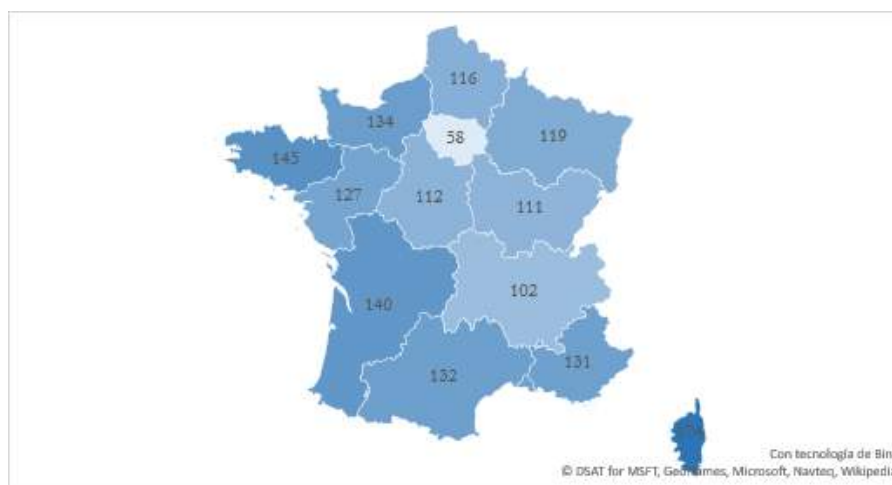
Table 2. Efficiency dimension. Regional ranking, 2013

In the last group of factors, technological readiness has two sub-pillars corresponding to the national and regional levels. The first one covers the business environment, while the second deals with variables related to personal use (individuals and households) of new technologies. While at the national level France is at an intermediate level, at regional level the differences between Île de France - followed in this case by Aquitaine, Midi-Pyrenees and Limousin - and the rest of the regions, with Nord-Pas-de-Calais in the worst place. The pillar of business sophistication highlights the situation of Île de France, Rhône-Alpes and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur are the best located, while Picardie, Basse-Normandie and Auvergne occupy the last positions. Finally, the pillar of innovation has three key centres: Île de France, Midi-Pyrénées and Rhône-Alpes. In this case at the other end is Corse, Poitou-Charantes and Bourgogne.

Region	Technological readiness	Business sophistication	Innovation
Île de France	103	3	13
Champagne-Ardenne	127	164	201
Picardie	127	132	158
Haute-Normandie	127	101	100
Centre	127	75	121
Basse-Normandie	127	126	146
Bourgogne	127	140	173
Nord-Pas-de-Calais	142	63	154
Lorraine	123	115	149
Alsace	123	87	70
Franche-Comté	123	136	116
Pays de la Loire	133	67	131
Bretagne	133	90	80
Poitou-Charantes	133	95	174
Aquitaine	109	70	92
Midi-Pyrénées	109	55	16
Limousin	109	138	162
Rhône-Alpes	137	40	41
Auvergne	137	125	127
Languedoc-Roussillon	118	69	124
Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur	118	44	51
Corse	118	180	227

Table 3. Innovation dimension. Regional ranking, 2013

The following map shows the 2016 competitiveness index applied to the new regions. The data of Île-de-France make a marked difference with respect to the averages of the metropolitan territory. The indicated indices respond to the average of the metropolitan territory. The indicated indices respond to the average of the old regions .



Map 1. Distribution of the Regional Competitiveness Index. France, 2016
Source: Annoni, *et al.* (2017). Annexes.
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/maps/regional_competitiveness

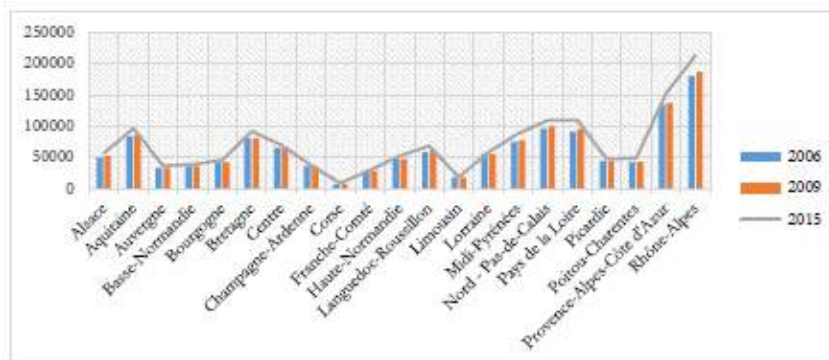
The diverse levels of development that the factors analysed show us their relationship with the French decentralization process. Territorial disparities respond to several factors, including population, employment, 'metropolization' policy, and innovation and competitiveness clusters, among others.

4 FRANCE AND THE DECENTRALIZATION PROCESS

In a broad legislative framework, Law No. 2015-991 of August 7, 2015 on a new territorial organization of the Republic (NOTRe) has consolidated the region as a territorial collectivity (Constitutional reform 2003) with broad powers: to promote economic, social, sanitary, cultural and scientific development of the region, support access to housing and improve housing conditions, support municipal policy and urban renewal, and promote education and management policies and equality of their territories, as well as ensure the preservation of their identity and the promotion of regional languages while respecting the integrity, autonomy and powers of departments and municipalities.

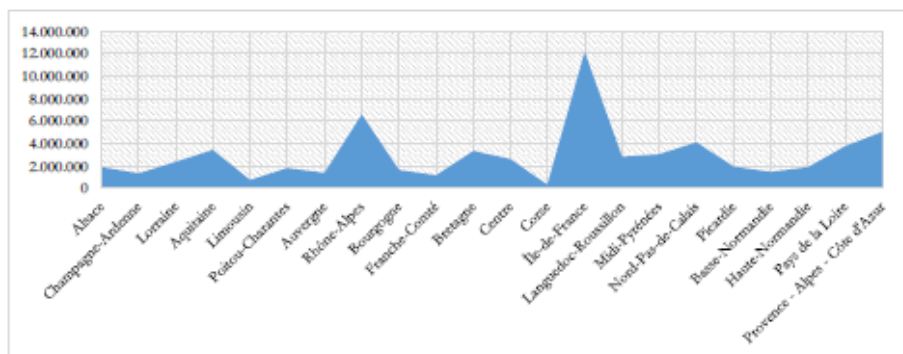
In addition, a process of fusion of municipalities, started in the 90's of last century, has accelerated, which has changed the map of the country at the local level. At present, the following groups are distinguished: a) 196 agglomeration communities including 4,610 municipalities and accommodating 21,813,717 inhabitants. b) 11 urban communities that group to 359 municipalities, and total 2,534,713 inhabitants. c) 13 metropoli that include 676 municipalities and a population that ascends to 15,275,673 inhabitants.

The reduction of 22 to 13 regions in metropolitan France is a consequence of the entry into force - in January 2016 following the election of the regional councils - of the Law of 16 January 2015. The modification of the regional map has resulted in the apparent reduction of interregional differences in both demographic and economic terms from the statistical point of view. However, GDP data (Graph 1) show the regional differences as well as the territories with the highest economic growth. Île-de-France, not included in the graph, is a third of the national total.



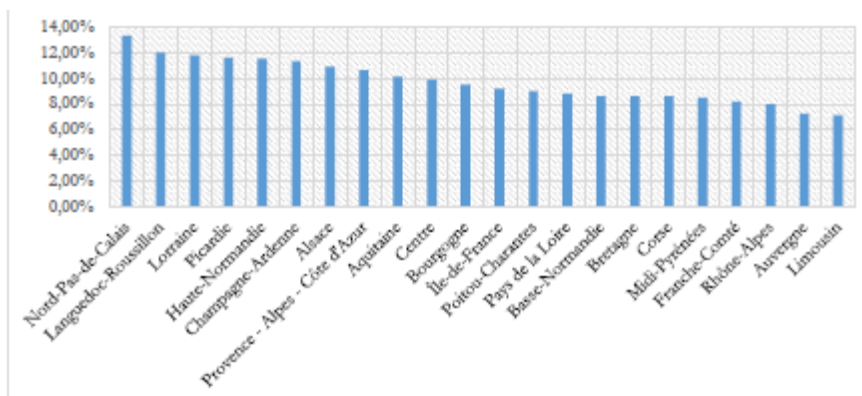
Graph 1. Gross domestic product at current market prices by region, 2006-2015
 Source: Eurostat

Brière and Koumarians (2015) argue that the new regions are more homogeneous in demographic terms, since they combine territories aged with others that maintain their dynamic of natural growth or by migratory flows. However, there is also an unequal distribution of this population (Graph 2) favoured both by a process of 'metropolization' - which implies the increase of the weight of large cities by increasing population, the density of communications networks and the concentration of organisms of all kinds - as well as by the attraction of employment poles that include agglomerations and urban areas.



Graph 2. Population at regional level, 2016
 Fuente: Insee.

We have already mentioned that one of the main elements of territorial inequality is the unemployment rate. The latest data published by Eurostat in April 2017 indicate a national total of 10.1% for 2016 (Graph 3). Above this average are the following regions: Champagne-Ardenne, Picardie, Haute-Normandie, Nord-Pas de Calais, Lorraine, Alsace, Languedoc-Roussillon, and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur. The causes include obsolete economic sectors, the absence of skilled labour or the lack of innovative sectors that create jobs.



Graph 3. Regional Unemployment Rate, 2016
 Source: Eurostat.

Given the attraction of urban areas, the enlargement of the regions' perimeter implies – as Lajudie (2014) points out - that each one has a metropolis (M) or an urban community (UC) , reinforcing its competences, especially in terms of transport and economic development, by strengthening relations between the metropolises and their regions, adapting infrastructures, allowing mobility and, in general, favouring the diffusion of growth from dynamic urban centres, is a way of ensuring the prosperity of all the territories. This also contributes the existing 68 competitiveness clusters (April 2017). Its main objective is to develop the competitiveness of the French economy by combining firms, training centres and public and private research units in a given territory (eg Hussler et al., 2013). However, their mapping on the regional level shows an uneven distribution of the metropolis , as shown in the following map. Even so, it should not be forgotten that some of these clusters include secondary areas besides the main one, contributing to the dynamization of a wider territory.



Map 2. Distribution of competitiveness clusters
 Source: Commissariat général à l'égalité des territoires (CGET) et Direction générale des entreprises (DGE).

5 CONCLUSIONS

The question is whether the economic crisis has shaped new territories that not only favour sustainable economic development but also have a long-term continuity. That is, we are not facing a basically functional restructuring that ceases to be if the socio-economic circumstances change.

The creation of the 13 regions in France, following the principles of spatial planning that contributes to the reduction of territorial disparities, demonstrates the need to be accompanied by a decentralization process. If, as Pasquier and Kernalegenn (2017) argue, the main element of legitimization of the reforms carried out is good governance, it will be necessary for the regions to be able to decide on incomes and expenses that meet the needs of their territories.

Despite the positive effects of a supposed greater economic coherence and a better decision-making response, Amabile et al. (2015) emphasize in their conclusions the following aspects: firstly, the possibility that some departments may remain in a similar situation, i.e. isolated without strong economic relations neither within their new region nor with their neighbours; Secondly, no matter what the new regional capital, new imbalances will be created; And, finally, it may be the case that the functional area of some territories change region, increasing relations with external spaces to the new region.

The analysis of the factors that have been considered for the elaboration of the competitiveness index shows a great divergence between the old French regions, being above the average Parisian region in most of the factors. However, it is a good guide to design regional policies that respond to the needs of each territory. These policies based on horizontal transfers or fiscal measures should ensure redistribution. We are talking about ensuring a fairer distribution of economic, social, and territorial character. The main problem in the French case is that, so far, has not been able to speak of effective fiscal decentralization, since reliance on state transfers is very high.

As Faludi (2013: 1304) states, "Territorial cohesion is thus said to promote a better balance between competitiveness and equity by 'spatialising' the European model of society." This may well be the aim of the newly established (May 2017) 'Ministère de la cohésion des territoires', whose subjects of work include the city and territorial planning.

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