

PART I**ENTERPRISES AND URBAN POLICIES****Guest editor: Solange Montagné-Villette****INTRODUCTION**

The first part of this issue of *European Spatial Research and Policy* focuses on the economic determinants of urban development. Theoretically, in capitalist economies companies are not directly involved in urban policy. This is especially so in France where the central, regional and local government are in charge of urban development. With three different examples it is shown that businesses do play a huge role in the design of cities.

Solange Montagné-Villette, in her article 'Company Presence as a Marker of Urban Development in France', recalls that already in the 19th century many cities were created or developed in France around companies such as Schneider, Dollfuss, Michelin... After presenting a historical background of the business presence in cities, the author analyses different aspects of its influence on urban space and policies, more or less affecting its features. Special attention is paid to spatial planning, as well as to housing issues and social policy.

At a different scale Boris Lebeau in 'Urban Authorities and Economic Sectors' shows that currently local authorities encounter huge difficulties in controlling the adverse nuisance effects of settlements and businesses. Referring to the *communauté d'agglomération* Plaine Commune in the Parisian metropolis, he shows the joint effort to manage economic activities, also attempting to structure new industries. In particular, textile, audiovisual, and environment sectors are taken into consideration. The author also presents the main features of the planned local tax reform, focusing on its possible negative consequences resulting from further separating local authorities from the business companies.

Finally, in the third paper – 'Spatial Theory, Temporality and Public Action', Jacques Fache offers a more conceptual analysis of these data and calls into question the theory of centrality. The author formulates hypotheses referring to

the role of innovation in the acentrality of space and the process of adapting economy in a new deal, concerning territory-plan and politics. He concludes by expressing the need to create connection between theory and political sectors which tackle territorial development problems.

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