

## INTER-REGIONAL POLARISATION AND THE TERTIARISATION OF SOCIETY

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The development of France since the Liberation has been marked by two major trends: — 1) the polarisation of space, the unequal development of regions, not only in physical terms (rural depopulation) but especially in terms of power, incomes and skills; and 2) the proliferation of tertiary jobs, in contrast to the collapse of primary jobs and the slow growth of secondary jobs. It is generally thought that the present crisis will accentuate the second feature: jobs created in future (if any are created) will almost all be tertiary. We will not discuss the validity of this hypothesis here, but we will seek to evaluate its consequences in relation to the first feature: will this development of tertiary employment also have a polarising effect on French space?<sup>1</sup>

To this, liberal economists answer 'no.' This question is located at the meeting place of two bodies of doctrine bearing on the first and the second points respectively: W. Rostow's doctrine on 'take-off' and Colin Clark's on 'the three ages of development.' According to Rostow's thesis, the spatial units (regions or nations) among which we find uneven development can be thought of as children as conceptualised by Piaget: they will all pass through the different stages leading to adulthood, and the fact that they were not all born on the same day explains why they are not all adult at the present moment. Countries (or regions) 'in the course of development' have not yet reached the stage of adolescence: 'take-off.' They are simply backward; one can only be patient. Colin Clark goes into greater detail with this universal history of development: after the 'primary' age (agricultural) comes the 'secondary' age (industrial), then the 'tertiary' (post-industrial). The 'industrial take-off' of those regions of France which were still agricultural at the Liberation took place essentially under the presidencies of De Gaulle and Pompidou. Their stage of tertiarisation will follow, and thus the whole of France will be able to take equal advantage of post-industrial civilisation . . .

This is not how we see it. Our earlier papers on the structuration of space in France [7,8] were inspired by the now classic critical theses directed by Marxists against the theory of 'stages of development' in the 1960's. This critique can be applied with even greater relevance to inter-regional relations since,

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without national frontiers as *a priori* divisions, socio-economic relationships evidently constitute regions. The structure of space (economic and social) is, in fact, only the material dimension of social relations. There are no 'poor' or 'under-developed' regions: there are only regions of poor people, the unemployed or 'marginals,' and this is the case because definite social relations polarise wealth and poverty, power and dependence, and distribute them in space. Polarisation between two spatial units does not therefore indicate that one is 'behind' the other, but rather that one complements (and opposes) the other under the domination of the 'centre,' i.e., the spatial ensemble characterised by the coherent development and concentration of the hegemonic mode of production: capitalism. This is the reason why inequalities increase *with* development: one can speak of the 'development of under-development.' This expression is not mistaken if we abandon the narrow (1950's and 1960's) conception of 'under-development.' We understand more clearly today that to be 'under-developed' does not necessarily mean to be without industrial employment, but to be lacking in skilled employment, decision-making jobs. This was the important lesson of the beginning of the 1970's: the revolt against establishments exploiting unskilled workers, the 'pirate-factories' of the West of France, which had led to a certain type of industrial development that was quite successful in terms of numbers of jobs.

Will the same apply to 'tertiary development'? To answer this question we must know why the tertiary sector develops and, especially, which part: does the tertiary sector itself produce polarisation or, on the contrary, as the optimists believe, is it the cement of social equalisation?

## 2. THE PROLIFERATION OF TERTIARY EMPLOYMENT

We can define as tertiary activities all those which are not involved in the development of capital in the material production of commodities. *A priori*, this definition allows us to distinguish two groups of tertiary activities: those connected with pre-capitalist forms in the French social formation and those connected with the actual development of capitalism.

The first, often described as 'archaic,' include a large part of the liberal professions, commerce, artisans' activities . . . Even in the case of the second group, the *modern* tertiary sector, we must make a distinction since the division of individual activities does not exactly coincide with that between economic units (business or other organisations). In an industrial organisation, a division of labour tends to develop between intellectual and manual workers, those who make decisions and those who carry them out, between the functions of production, commercialisation and accumulation of capital: which creates corresponding 'tertiary activities' in the secondary sector itself and (in the primary sector). Subsequently certain of these functions may become autonomous, the object of the activity of separate economic units, which then constitute branches of the tertiary sector (commerce, banking, R and D, etc.), to which must be added the public sector, especially concerned with the reproduction of the

general conditions for capitalist development (administration, teaching, health, etc. . . .): all of which I shall designate 'external services.'

The most spectacular phenomenon in France's recent development, the 'proliferation' of the modern tertiary sector (Thévenot [13]), is therefore the result of a triple movement which basically arises from the laws of the division of labour under the domination of capitalist relationships (Freysenet [4], Lipietz [10]).

1) The manufacturing division of labour separates intellectual activities within enterprises in the secondary sector.

2) The social division of labour separates tertiary activities from these enterprises into a tertiary sector.

3) Capitalist accumulation in general, and more particularly this process of the division of labour, requires the development of a sector especially involved in the expanded reproduction of the 'general external conditions' of capitalist development (administration, teaching, health, etc.).

The first result of this analysis is that the development of the tertiary sector is the exact complement of the deskilling of activities which are, strictly speaking, secondary, since it results from the increasing autonomy of the intellectual aspect of labour. Now this initial (and very crude) division of labour has an immediate regional dimension, entirely characteristic of the industrial development of the 1960's: with the explosion of the Paris tertiary sector, there is a corresponding generalisation of unskilled industrial employment in the provinces, whether by the creation of sweat-shops in rural areas, or by deskilling in former industrial regions.

As regards the development of public service activities and administration, although their position within the tertiary sector remained practically constant from 1954 to 1968, they increased by leaps and bounds from 1968 to 1975. These changes are important and have a spatial dimension in themselves. Public employment plays an important part in the social regulation of regions: by the absorption of hidden unemployment, or by the creation of other deliberately fostered tertiary jobs (garrison towns, etc.).

Let us dwell at greater length on the significance of this increasing autonomy which contradicts the idyllic vision of 'post-industrial society.' The polarisation of industrial employment is a well-known phenomenon. It is the product of the real subsumption of labour to capital. Capital is not simply content with the formal domination of the producer based on wage labour. The deepening of capitalist relations of production involves a take-over of the intellectual powers, of the 'know-how' of the direct producer.

This trend came to a head, as it were, in the 1950's, especially in the highly organised engineering industries producing capital goods and consumer durables: 'Fordism,' characterised by an extreme fragmentation of the labour process and the incorporation of 'know-how' in machinery (Lipietz [10]). This principle of organisation of work allows the separation of three functions at the

heart of the production process: design and organisation, finishing and skilled manufacturing, fitting and assembly. In turn this separation of function gives rise to a fragmentation of the labour market according to the skills required, making it possible to break up processes of production and spread them out among different pools of labour. But this polarisation between 'intellectual/skilled' and 'manual/unskilled' activities is illusory. *For at the very heart of the tertiary sector polarisation is increasing along the same lines.*

These trends are confirmed to a remarkable degree by Thévenot's analysis of employees [13]. For example, within companies the development of data processing tends to make accounting clerks redundant. In compensation a massive polarisation of jobs in data processing develops: at one extreme, 20,000 engineers and senior technical staff, at the other, the 103,000 operators and card punchers. Naturally, while at the first pole there is one woman to ten men, at the bottom of the scale we find 26,000 women to . . . 800 men! *Feminisation* can properly be taken as an indirect, but accurate, index of proletarianisation, of the de-skilling of a job. Combined with statistics on pay, it makes it possible to elaborate on this fundamental phenomenon: *the polarisation of tertiary employment.*

This division of labour actually within the tertiary sector (both internal and external) is undoubtedly much less developed than in the sphere of industrial activity. But that is exactly what should concern us: if the starting-point of the tertiary is a situation in which manual (or rather deskilled) labour and intellectual (skilled) labour are generally merged, it means that the development of the tertiary sector, accompanied by a polarisation, is laying the foundations of a new spatial separation and a new form of inter-regional polarisation.

The chief result of our analysis is that *the proliferation and polarisation of tertiary employment are two related phenomena because they stem from a single cause: capitalist accumulation and the tendency towards the division of labour which it engenders.* This can be through the absorption of new spheres by capital, or through the deepening of the division of labour in spheres which it already dominates. If we are moving towards a tertiary capitalist society, it will be a polarised one.

We also know that these same laws of capitalist accumulation will bring about another polarisation — this time between regions.

### 3. THE REGIONAL DIMENSION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF FRENCH CAPITALISM

In our previous work (Lipietz [7, 8]) we showed how the articulation of capitalist accumulation with the survival and reproduction of pre-capitalist modes of production had brought about the unequal development of French regions between 1789 and 1945. Certain regions had seen the more or less harmonious development of industrial capitalism; others remained dominated by petty commodity production, based on agriculture. The unequal exchange

between these modes of production had imposed a cumulative uneven development in these regions, some becoming rich, in labour-power, profit and accumulated capital, at the expense of others. These relationships, based on the exchange of commodities between regions specialising in different *branches*, can be described as an 'external articulation.'

By contrast, after 1945, monopoly capital was able to profit by the 'chess-board' of unevenly developed regions offering pools of labour at various wage levels and of different degrees of skill. Hence we see regions finding themselves *integrated* with what we have called *branch circuits*, with regional specialisation no longer by branch<sup>2</sup> but according to the different *types of labour* involved in the branch, and which can be spatially separated because of 'Fordism.'

The articulation of these 'branch circuits' tend to assign three types of 'vocation' to regions: — 1) Type 1 regions, poles of financial and technological management; 2) Type 2 regions, skilled manufacturing (which presupposes an 'industrial past'); 3) Type 3 regions offering reserves of labour that can be regarded as unskilled and with a very low value of reproduction, since they are produced by the disintegration of other modes or by the decline of obsolescent industries corresponding to an earlier stage of the division of labour. In areas like these activities such as assembly (using unskilled workers) are developed.

Eventually, regions of Type 4 might even be recognisable, in which rural depopulation has already gone so far, in the external articulation phase, that no further modern industrialisation is possible. These regions have a tertiary 'vocation' all of their own: tourism and military camps.

Empirical tests fully confirm this analysis. First of all, the 'socio-economic profiles' of the regions (Queennec [12]) but also of the conurbations (Pumain [11]), allow us to arrange them in huge geographical 'patches' which can be easily interpreted within the framework of this theory. In other respects analyses of recently established industrial plants (Hannoun & Templé [16]) and of the factors governing the job structure of industrial organisations (Gaspard [5]) clearly confirms the existence of 'branch circuits.' It is particularly clear as regards the spearhead of France's 'industrial transformation': engineering industries. The control centre of the whole structure is, of course, the Paris region. Analysis of skilled jobs and of the location of head offices (Bricquel [2]) shows that no other region can compete with it: the differences between provincial regions are minor compared with the gulf separating Paris from the provinces. However, there is a danger that efficiency will be reduced above a certain level of centralisation. It can then be advantageous to reserve the technological direction of the circuits, together with relative financial autonomy, for super-regional metropolises. In reality there seems to be only one region of

<sup>2</sup> Thus one often hears of 'regional despecialisation' (see, for example, Durrieux [3]) without seeing evidence of any new specialisation.

this kind: Rhône-Alpes. Nevertheless we should consider a final possibility: the establishment of a complete branch circuit based on a regional centre.

It should be noted in passing that we have put forward evidence of a mechanism of spatial polarisation of at least a part of the tertiary sector: tertiary activities linked to the direction of the labour process, those of technical control, research and design. The basic result is that the division of labour within the branch circuit concentrates technical tertiary employment in the Paris region and, to a lesser extent (which we will examine below), in a certain type of metropole, while creating unskilled industrial employment in peripheral or 'reconversion' regions. Considering just tertiary employment within industry, examination of Table 1 (taken from Gaspard [5]) shows that in practice the 'internal services' linked to the labour process (the product of the separation of intellectual and manual labour) only develops in a certain type of region (which in the present case excludes even Nord) but is not limited to the Paris Region; on the other hand the 'internal services' linked to the circulation of capital only really develop in the Paris Region, and especially in Paris itself.

Already this suggests that the thesis of 'late development' should be rejected and that the thesis of inter-regional structural polarisation should be accepted. But for complete proof, its validity must be tested on all sections of the tertiary sector.

#### 4. REGIONAL DISPARITIES IN TERTIARY EMPLOYMENT: THE LESSONS OF THE 1975 CENSUS

We have relied on analysis of the census by region, by branch of economic activity, by skill, and by socio-professional category.<sup>3</sup> I will not enlarge here on the difficulties resulting from the crudeness of the statistical divisions. We have confined the study to a sample of eleven regions which we regarded, *a priori*, as representative of the different regional types. For these regions we have worked out an 'index of relative over-qualification' for each of the employment structures, by comparing the ratio of the size of the most highly-skilled and least-skilled categories with the equivalent national average ratio.<sup>4</sup> The results can be summarised qualitatively as follows.

<sup>3</sup> We have observed the standard classification of industries:

Engineering, Intermediate Goods, Traditional consumer goods, Food, Construction; and as regards the so-called Tertiary sector, we have grouped the branches (NAP nomenclature) into: Commerce, Personal Services, Business Services, Finance, Non-commercial, Transport and Communications. For skills we have grouped the headings given in the DPJ classification into Highly skilled, Skilled and Unskilled for secondary jobs, and into Senior, Intermediate and Employee levels for tertiary jobs. See Lipietz [9] for further details.

<sup>4</sup> For a given population, let  $A$  and  $B$  be the extreme points in the categories listed in the classifications. The suffixes  $o$  and  $i$  indicate France as a whole and the region  $i$  respectively. Our index of relative over-qualification is

$$I_i = \left( \frac{A_i / A_o}{B_i / B_o} - 1 \right) \times 100$$

TABLE 1. Distribution of Industrial Employment by Function (in %) in Some Typical Departments, 1971

	Pro- duction	Organi- sation, Adminis- trative Control	Technical Services (Research Testing, Inspection)	Financial Adminis- tration	Storage, Packaging	Com- mercial Functions (Distri- bution Marketing, PR)	Others	Total
Dordogne	79	5	2	7	6	1	0	100
Nord	70	7	4	9	8	2	0	100
Bouches-du- Rhône	59	8	10	12	7	3	1	100
Hauts-de-Seine	43	7	14	20	7	8	1	100
Paris	32	4	6	32	8	17	1	100
Total	65	8	5	11	7	3	1	100

Source: Gaspard (5)

#### *Polarisation between Paris and provinces*

There is only a single Type 1 region in France: the Paris Region. This is the most highly tertiary region (in proportion) but, first and foremost, it is where industry is most developed, where the part played by the modern engineering industry is greatest, where the role of highly skilled tradespersons in industry (and particularly in engineering) is most significant. It can be expected that, as far as the tertiary sector is concerned, it is to the rest of France what towns are to the countryside.

However, we must analyse this more closely. The tertiary sector serving the population (shops, services to individuals) is scarcely more important in Paris. But if we look at services linked to capitalist and industrial development (the financial sector, business services), the difference becomes much more striking: 5.1 to 2.0; 6.9 to 2.9 (see Table 2). It is even clearer if we confine ourselves to financial management and R and D (e.g. BERU [1]).

The social division of labour (between branches) thus already polarises the relationship between Paris and the provinces. But the same applies when we look at the division of labour *within the branches*, that is at the skill structure. The relative over-qualification of white-collar workers is +24 in Paris, while everywhere else it is either negative or zero.

The root of the phenomenon is, without doubt, to be found in the division of labour within the production process (see Table 3). A comparison between Paris and the provinces of the importance in industry of researchers, designers and technicians with that of unskilled workers, shows that it is twice as great for the first group in Paris, and half the size for the second. The index of relative over-skilling reaches the level +112, and +160 for the engineering industry alone!

The skill structure of the tertiary sector thus extends step by step from this source (see Table 4). Relative over-skilling is still +46 for services within industry, +30 for external services. Note that as far as 'non-commercial

TABLE 2. Structure of the Employed Economically Active Population (in %) and Skills of 'White Collar' Workers, 1975

REGIONS	France	Provinces	Reg. Paris	Rhône-Alpes	Nord-P.C.	Alsace	Centre	Bretagne	Midi-Pyr.	Lang.-Rous.	Prov.-C.A.
Primary (P)*	10.1	12.7	0.9	7.4	5.6	4.9	13.4	23.2	18.9	16.4	6.7
Secondary (S)	38.5	39.2	36.2	44.0	48.3	46.6	40.1	29.1	32.1	28.1	31.7
of which: Engineering (E)	10.4	9.6	31.1	12.2	8.4	13.3	13.0	6.7	5.9	2.6	6.1
Intermediate	8.7	9.1	7.1	11.2	15.7	9.8	7.7	3.2	6.5	6.2	6.6
Consumption goods	7.5	7.9	6.1	10.0	12.9	11.0	7.0	4.3	7.6	4.9	3.6
Food	2.9	3.2	1.8	2.4	3.6	3.6	2.8	4.4	2.5	2.7	2.8
Construction	9.1	9.4	8.1	9.2	7.7	9.0	9.7	10.5	9.5	11.8	12.5
E/S	26.9	24.5	36.2	27.2	17.5	28.4	32.3	22.9	18.4	9.2	19.2
Tertiary (T)	51.4	48.1	62.9	47.6	46.1	48.4	46.4	47.7	49.0	55.5	61.6
of which: Commerce	12.9	12.8	13.5	12.3	13.6	13.4	12.3	12.4	12.5	14.2	15.8
Personal Services	9.6	9.2	11.0	9.6	7.8	9.7	8.4	9.1	9.1	11.4	12.8
Business Services	3.8	2.9	6.9	3.9	2.7	3.0	2.8	2.2	2.5	2.9	4.5
Finance	2.7	2.0	5.1	2.2	2.0	2.4	2.2	1.7	1.9	2.2	2.3
Non-commercial	16.3	15.7	18.4	14.2	14.5	14.5	16.0	16.9	17.7	18.4	18.7
Transport & Communications	6.1	5.5	7.9	5.6	5.5	5.4	4.8	5.5	5.1	6.3	7.5
<i>Socio-Professional Structure of Tertiary Employment</i>											
Senior Staff (SS)	6.7	5.4	11.3	6.2	5.0	6.7	4.8	4.8	5.8	6.2	7.2
of which: females	23.2	22.9	23.7	23.8	20.8	22.0	22.8	22.6	26.7	23.0	22.4
Intermediate Staff (IS)	12.7	11.5	16.9	12.9	11.7	12.1	11.0	10.7	11.7	12.0	13.1
of which: females	45.2	44.6	46.6	45.6	40.7	39.2	45.5	45.9	47.0	48.0	44.5
Employees (E)	17.7	15.8	24.0	17.5	16.3	18.0	15.4	12.9	16.3	16.1	18.3
of which: females	63.9	62.1	68.1	63.0	58.8	62.7	65.2	64.4	58.5	56.4	62.4
<i>Relative Over-qualification</i>											
SS/E	-9	+2	+24	-7	-19	-2	-18	+1	-6	0	+4
IS/E	+2	-2	-2	+3	0	-7	-2	+15	0	+3	0

Source: Lipietz [9]

TABLE 3. Skill Structure of Service Activities within Manufacturing, 1975

REGIONS	France	Provinces	Reg. Paris	Rhône-Alpes	Nord-P.C.	Alsace	Centre	Bretagne	Midi-Pyr.	Lang.-Rous.	Prov.-C.A.
Structure of Employment Related to the Labour Process in Manufacturing (% of Secondary Employment)											
Highly Skilled	8.3	7.0	13.5	8.5	6.2	5.9	6.6	5.8	8.2	6.5	8.9
Skilled	37.7	38.0	36.5	36.4	35.8	35.6	39.0	41.9	39.0	42.8	46.5
Unskilled	36.3	40.1	21.7	37.8	43.3	42.4	40.1	39.1	36.0	35.8	28.2
Structure of Employment in Engineering Industries (% of Their Total Employment)											
Highly Skilled	13.3	10.3	21.2	12.0	10.1	8.4	8.8	8.7	17.7	11.1	15.8
Skilled	17.7	14.5	26.1	17.2	14.4	13.7	13.0	12.9	21.2	24.1	17.8
Administrative	33.4	34.3	31.0	34.1	39.8	34.7	31.8	36.0	33.0	29.8	48.7
Unskilled	35.5	40.8	21.6	36.7	35.7	43.1	46.3	42.4	27.9	34.8	17.7
<i>Proportions of Service Employment in the Secondary Sector that is Highly Skilled (HS) or Administrative (A) in relation to total Regional Employment (R) in relation to Tertiary Employment (T), and in relation to Total Secondary Employment (S)</i>											
R	HS	A	HS	A	HS	A	HS	A	HS	A	HS
T	3.2	6.7	2.7	5.7	4.9	10.2	3.8	7.7	3.0	7.0	2.7
S	6.2	13.1	5.7	11.9	7.8	16.2	8.1	16.2	6.5	15.1	5.7
	8.3	17.4	7.0	14.6	13.6	28.2	8.5	17.1	6.2	14.5	5.9
Structure of Service Activities in Manufacturing											
Senior	18.3	15.4	24.0	16.5	15.2	17.1	15.1	14.3	15.4	16.1	18.5
Intermediate	41.5	42.3	40.0	43.0	39.8	37.1	42.1	44.0	42.6	43.3	45.3
Employees	40.2	42.3	36.0	40.5	45.0	45.8	42.8	41.7	42.0	40.6	36.2

Source: Lipietz [9]

TABLE 4. Skill Structure of the Tertiary Sector, 1975

REGIONS	France	Provences	Reg. Paris	Rhône-Alpes	Nord-P.C.	Alsace	Centre	Bretagne	Mid-Pyr.	Lang-Rous.	Prov.-C.A.
Skill Structure of Total Employment in the Tertiary Sector											
Senior Employees	11.0	9.7	14.5	10.7	9.0	11.4	8.6	9.4	10.7	10.7	10.9
Intermediate Employees	22.0	22.3	21.4	22.8	21.7	20.7	21.4	23.0	24.0	23.0	21.4
	46.7	46.4	47.2	45.7	46.4	45.3	48.0	44.6	46.1	45.5	47.2
Proportions of Tertiary Employees, by Skill, in Total Regional Employment (%)											
Senior	5.6	4.6	9.1	5.1	4.2	5.5	4.0	4.5	5.3	5.9	6.7
Intermediate	11.3	10.7	13.4	10.9	10.0	10.1	9.9	11.0	11.8	12.8	13.2
Employees	24.0	22.4	29.7	21.8	21.4	22.0	22.3	21.30	22.6	25.2	29.1
Structure of Tertiary Employment in "Non-Commercial" Activities (%)											
Senior	15.6	14.5	18.9	16.8	14.0	18.8	12.0	13.9	16.3	16.6	15.6
Intermediate	27.2	29.0	21.9	30.0	31.7	27.8	26.0	29.3	29.7	27.6	23.5
Employees	44.1	43.1	47.4	39.1	42.7	38.7	46.5	43.9	41.1	42.8	46.0
Proportion of Wage-earners in "Commerce"	75.3	73.8	80.6	72.9	74.7	85.0	74.7	73.1	68.5	69.5	72.2

Source: Lipietz [9]

services' alone are concerned (where the need for equality of access to public services might have imposed some uniformity) there is still a relative over-qualification of +22.

It is quite logical that relative over-qualification should be much more marked in internal than in external services but it does also give rise to grave doubts about the future of tertiary polarisation. If we look more closely, we see that, even for the 'pure' tertiary sector, the difference in skills arises primarily from the fact that the highest skilled — the decisive — branches are concentrated in Paris, and owes less to a division of labour within these branches. The fact is that the ('manufacturing') division of labour within these tertiary branches themselves is not (yet) very developed.

In this sense one can say that the development of the tertiary sector has not yet begun to produce its polarising effects: they are still to come. But it is clear that the Centre region, which felt the first effects of 'tertiary decentralisation,' has an external services structure which contains the smallest share of skilled jobs and the largest share of deskilled jobs. There, relative deskilling has already reached the level of -24! The 'pirate-factories for unskilled service workers' have already arrived!

#### *The future of the old industrial regions*

These are represented in our sample by three regions: Rhône-Alpes, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, and Alsace, in which the structure of primary/secondary/tertiary activities is similar. However analysis of socio-professional categories in the tertiary sector does show a slight relative under-qualification in Alsace (-2) which is rather more marked in Rhône-Alpes (-7) but which reaches a record level in Nord (-19).

The only important difference in the structure of activities is the unusually small role played by the modern engineering industries in the secondary sector of Nord. This feature identifies that region as an absescent industrial centre: Nord typically appears to be a Type 2 region, specialising in traditional, industrial manufacture. This is the industrial region where skilled workers and technicians are the most numerous in the modern engineering industries. On the other hand, this type of industrialisation produces a regional tertiary sector with quite a lower than average proportion of skilled workers. The relatively high degree of skill in Alsace remains to be explained. This paradox arises from the special history of Alsace, which only recently experienced inter-regional specialisation within France. However, Rhône-Alpes leaves Alsace behind in the 'Research and Advice to Firms' branch — by twice as much in the relative density of services. This confers on the former, as does the spread of head offices, the status of super-regional metropolis (see Table 5).

#### *The future of the former agricultural regions*

According to our theoretical typology, two broad futures are possible for the old agricultural regions: either integration within externally dominated branch

TABLE 5. Density of Business Services, 1971  
(Provincial Average = 100)

	Alsace	Bretagne	Nord	Rhône-Alpes
Research and Advice	117	36	85	230
Financial Control	140	76	99	120
Services to Firms	192	68	95	142

Source: BERU [1]

circuits, with specialisation in unskilled assembly work (Type 3), or the continuation of rural depopulation without industrialisation (Type 4).

In our sample, Centre and Bretagne represent two stages of integration. Centre is already highly industrialised: it is the standard illustration of 'industrial dispersion' from the Paris Region; the share of engineering industries there is the highest in the provinces. However, the productive structure in these industries is also the worst (fewest decision makers, most unskilled workers).

There is no reason to be surprised, therefore, that for white-collar socio-professional categories as a whole Centre has a relative under-qualification almost as bad as Nord. In comparison, Bretagne, with a similar proportion of tertiary employment, much more agricultural and less industrial, also seems . . . much more skilled as regards its tertiary sector! The explanation is simply that the capitalist division of labour reached Bretagne quite recently. But the employment structure in the dynamic engineering industries is in line with that typical of Type 3 regions (few researchers or designers, many unskilled workers) while the structure of Breton industry as a whole is still characteristic of small-scale craft industry (more skilled than unskilled workers). Supporters of the related theses of Rostow and Colin Clark, who hope for an 'industrial take-off' followed by a post-industrial tertiarisation, region by region, should consider this example. If industrialisation is to proceed there as it has done up to now, Bretagne will no doubt 'catch up' to the stage of industrialisation, and then of tertiarisation, that Centre has reached . . . but it will be on the basis of a relative deskilling of its tertiary sector.

Unless . . . unless there is a possibility of the development of complete branch circuits, centered in the region itself. We do have an example of what is possible: the Midi-Pyrénées region. Although this region resembles rather more a Type 4 (if its migratory flows are taken into consideration) it displays quite a well-skilled tertiary sector. While, as we shall see, this is not exceptional in the South it has, in particular, a high level of skills in its services within industry: the proportion of technicians and researchers closely follows Rhône-Alpes. The cause is obvious: the predominance of the aircraft industry. One can thus ask why this effect does not occur in Bretagne? It seems to me that one reason is that the social regulation of these dominated regions presupposed a constant outward flow of young people. Whereas in Bretagne, unskilled people were leaving, in Midi-Pyrénées as in Midi-Méditerranéen, the emigrants were more highly skilled (at least to the extent of having primary and secondary education).

The branch circuit established in the integration phase rather resembles the type of emigration of the previous phase. Only a profound and prolonged version of an extremely voluntarist policy, working on the whole social system, could significantly raise the level of skill in the tertiary sector of the West by allowing the establishment of complete branch circuits. However the most likely outcome is that research centres will develop in the South (in Provence-Côte d'Azur), with the manufacturing and assembly centres in the North and West . . . if the new International Division of Labour does not push them out to the Third World!

*The 'Sunshine regions': 'post-industrial' already?*

These last comments draw our attention to those regions which one might be tempted to label Type 4 but which have remarkable levels of services, both in quantity and quality: Languedoc-Roussillon and Provence-Côte-d'Azur. In these areas the tertiary sector appears stable from all points of view, and, often, even over-qualified. Being less 'integrated,' these regions experience capitalist polarisation to a lesser degree, and the history of their urban systems makes them sources of skilled emigrants. Secondary schools and universities in these areas, as in the Mezzogiorno, often serve as storehouses for concealed unemployment among the children of the traditional petty bourgeoisie.

However, it would be mistaken to regard this Southern tertiary sector as simply camouflaging latent unemployment, especially among graduates. At least in part this tertiary employment corresponds to a real inter-regional division of the modern services: tourism, health, etc. But there is better to come. In Provence-Côte-d'Azur it is obvious that the relative over-qualification of its tertiary sector affects even the services in the secondary sector. The effect on the engineering industry is particularly clear: the ratio of researchers and controllers to unskilled workers reaches Parisian levels!

Two tertiary structures thus overlay one another in these Mediterranean regions: one related to an under-developed region (i.e., developed in distorted fashion by external domination) and the other, a very modern, skilled, capitalist tertiary sector: modern tourism, specialised health centres, university or even industrial research.

We must pay very close attention to the geographical socio-demographic movements in order to avoid the illusion that these regions undergo a direct transition from a 'pre-industrial' to a 'post-industrial' stage. In reality it seems that the modern services being established in Languedoc-Roussillon is ruining the local tertiary and primary sectors, blocking the development of the secondary sector, forcing young people to leave, while modern tertiary jobs are taken by immigrants (who are sometimes local people returning). And whatever the circumstances, highly-skilled jobs, even in industry, do not necessarily involve decision-making.

## 5. CONCLUSION

One thing is clear from this argument. The growth of tertiary employment does not, in itself, have any 'equalising' effect between regions; on the contrary, it is the fomentor of a double polarising potential:

— either the tertiary sector develops through the division of labour (agricultural or industrial) according to its manual and intellectual content, and these components are distributed in different regions within the primary and secondary branch circuits;

— or within the tertiary sector itself a division of labour develops between decision-making and execution.

The synchronic study of the working population in 1975 shows a state of inter-regional polarisation of the tertiary sector closely following the polarisation of skills in the branch which was the driving force of French post-war growth: the engineering industry. Diachronically, we must be content with the evidence of the changing structure of 'white collar groups' (socio-professional categories) since the 1962 census (Table 6). The Paris Region doubled its relative over-qualification, Bretagne lost its relative over-qualification, Rhône-Alpes which was at the national average became relatively unskilled, and only Languedoc-Roussillon remained stable! The theories of 'delayed tertiarisation' or those which consider only the reduction in inter-regional specialisation *between branches* (forgetting the increasing specialisation *among skilled workers*), are thus blown apart.

The tertiarisation of society is the twin sister of inter-regional polarisation; they stem from a single cause: the form of the division of labour imposed by capitalist accumulation, and they mutually reinforce one another.

We must therefore scrutinise carefully not only optimistic theorising about a spontaneous evolution towards a regionally balanced post-industrial era, but also the rather static vision of the relations between an (industrial and tertiary) centre and an (agricultural) periphery. From the moment that these relationships are recognised as the spatial dimension of the dynamics of capitalism there is nothing to prevent an understanding of the industrialisation

TABLE 6. The Development of Relative Over-qualification, 1962-75

	1962			1975			Relative SS/E		Over-qualification IS/E	
	Senior Staff (SS)	Intermediate Staff (IS)	Employees (E)	SS	IS	E	1962	1975	1962	1975
France	4.0	7.8	12.4	6.7	12.7	17.7				
Ile-de-France	7.4	12.4	20.8	11.3	16.9	24.0	+10	+24	-5	-2
Rhône-Alpes	3.7	7.6	11.4	6.2	12.9	17.5	0	-7	+5	+3
Languedoc-Roussillon	3.3	7.3	10.2	6.2	12.0	16.1	0	0	+14	+3
Bretagne	2.2	5.1	6.3	4.8	10.7	12.9	+8	-1	+27	+15

Source: Lipietz [9]

or even the tertiarisation, of the periphery. However, such industrialisation, or tertiarisation, would be 'deformed,' 'misshapen,' *dominated*. Undoubtedly counter-tendencies, or at least pockets of resistance, exist. For example:

— the resistance in Alsace of an autonomous and relatively complete urban system;

— the attempts to the Rhône-Alpes region to gain pre-eminence as a super-regional metropolis;

— the establishment of complete branch circuits with centres in the provinces (the aerospace industry in Toulouse);

— specialisation by certain regions in certain highly skilled tertiary functions (university and industrial research in Provence-Côte d'Azur).

However, all these counter-examples should be placed in the framework of an inter-regional hierarchy centered on Paris . . . or abroad! There we touch on a decisive point: these counter-tendencies can only be consolidated (at the cost of a highly voluntaristic Spatial Policy) if France's place in the International Division of Labour is not totally disturbed by the Crisis!

However that raises broader questions . . .

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