

# DEBATE

## Jeremy Smith

Thank you very much for this very interesting analysis and information on economic development, communities and their inter-relations. However, you say that towns and cities are not yet relevant to this framework. This may be bias on my part, but nothing you said convinces me that we can do without local and regional governance. If people and networks cannot be correlated in a conventional and traditional way, we must seek another and quite different form of governance. I am impressed by the study but I not yet convinced of the consequences and conclusions presented for our towns, cities and regions. However, I may be wrong...

## Nadine Cattan

No. You are not wrong. I may have exaggerated but by referring to towns and cities I want to draw attention to the fact that we must move away from continuous and delineated boundaries. We must consider regions as discontinuous, as a network.

## Jeremy Smith

Is this governance between public and private stakeholders of a wider region, including towns and cities on the other side of the world?

## Nadine Cattan

Absolutely.

## Jeremy Smith

Thank you for this very interesting presentation which I believe, on reflection, should include the other European countries in the map since the networks continue to operate across borders and even globally. My second observation concerns your excellent remark on the Erasmus programme and on student exchanges. Let us imagine for a moment that regional and cohesion policies are organised in the same way, perhaps which would be much easier.

## Nadine Cattan

Thank you for your views on Europe and on other parts of the world. We would like to extend this research, at least in Europe. The question has arisen several times this morning and it arises in all international bodies and organisations: the lack of data on flows. We will try and pursue our work in this direction.

## Kathy Pain

This was an excellent presentation. Every study looking across different kinds of functions, urban functions, different sizes of urban area and what complementarity exists at different scales, etc. is fantastic.

Just on the point about the regional aspects: Does it matter? Doesn't it? The conclusions from the POLYNET study were that we are never going to find administrative boundaries that fit functional areas because these are very dynamic. So in terms of what you said, I really agree about the need to change systems of governance and I do not think it is necessarily up to regional official government bodies.

The other observation I wanted to stress, since it has been mentioned, is that it is necessary to look beyond France, to the functional European scale and global scale. Something I did not mention in my presentation which very much supports your results and emulates this kind of geography that you are showing here, is that if you look within national boundaries, the functions occurring outside are very important and much needed and, as you said, global functions are now increasing in many more places.

Something else I did not mention - and that may be interesting for me and you in thinking about our future research- is the different kinds of urban roles and functions identified in North West European global mega-city regions in the Polynet study. When you study a global city network associated with different sectors across the producer services, changes in city specialisations are occurring at the same time as the global shift of city network connectivity that you would not ordinarily notice. You saw the global network connectivity changes I showed between 2000 and 2008: Cities in general are catching up with Saskia Sassen's top global cities, London, New York and Tokyo, as well as changing their global rank order, and they have complementary functional and scale specialisations. I think that in the main we have similar findings.