

GROWTH OF HIGH-SPEED TRAIN SERVICES AND URBAN AND BUSINESS TOURISMS IN FRANCE PERSPECTIVES FROM PARIS AND OTHER FRENCH CITIES

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ABSTRACT

In France, since the 1980's, High-Speed rail and train services have mainly been developed in radial axes from Paris. Linked to new High-Speed Train (HST) services, regional French cities expect a lot of positive effects, especially in terms of urban and business tourism development. Given that these forms of tourism are characterized by short-stay, they can benefit from HSR services, whenever necessary facilities and amenities are present.

In regional French cities' perspective based on HST services, Paris and the metropolitan area, that count almost 12 million inhabitants, are seen as a major potential market for tourism development. However Paris is also in the heart of the French High-Speed Line network. Nevertheless until today, research has only been focusing on the regional cities. The link between those services and urban and business tourism in the capital, Paris, has never been analysed. However it seems to be interesting to analyze the link between High-Speed rail and train services and urban hierarchy. Revealing a missing point of view, the Parisian case, this paper calls into question the local expectations linked to HST services and completes the literature on this subject. In the past few years, with new projects of rail stations, High-Speed infrastructures, and services have sparked up the debate, interesting more and more stakeholders in Paris metropolitan area. This analysis will also point out these new stakes.

Keywords: High Speed Train (HST), urban and business tourisms (tourism attractiveness), French regional cities, Paris metropolitan area, (Spatial competition)

INTRODUCTION

In France, since the 1980's, High-Speed rail and train services have been mainly developed in radial axes from Paris. In 2011, high speed rail (HSR) system had 30 years and a rail network of 2037km. High speed trains (HST) reach the speed of 320 km/h and use a high speed dedicated line network, offering performance and frequency. The French network is specific. Major axes are specialized on dedicated lines, the HSR. Also, this network is connected to the conventional rail network, and HST rolling stock is compatible on both networks, allowing a large and direct accessibility of HSR services in French territory. In France, there are less than 20 stations on HSR but about 200 stations served by HST (Figure 1).

At that time, this network compatibility is a French specificity, compare to Japanese or German networks. Its development is based on nested stakes: reach of technological progress, commercial strategy, French planning, European positioning etc. The South East HSR, linking Paris and Lyon has been inaugurated in 1981. It's the first axis of a star network around the French capital. It reproduces the historical morphology of rail French network, centered on Paris. According to the national society of French railway (SNCF), 2 billions of costumers travelled with French HST and over 83% of French use it at least once. It is a commercial success and a technological showcase for the French historical operator – the SNCF. Local authorities claim to be connected, on behalf local economic development. With the development of the network, analysis in terms of impacts and structuring effects of HSR on local economic development, that is a determinist approach had been contested (Offner, 1993; Vickerman, 1991, Klein, 1997, Plassard, 2003, Bazin, Beckerich, Delaplace, Masson, 2006a; Blanquart, Delaplace, 2009,) and nuanced. However, HSR is still feeding high expectations for local authorities. Henceforth, HSR is a tool, and local stakeholders are looking for strategies of valorisation (cf. Bazin, Beckerich, Blanquart, Delaplace, Vandenbossche, 2011, for a review about this point). This article is concerned with expectations for tourism development. Actually, linked to new HST services, regional French cities expect a lot of positive effects for tourism, especially in terms of urban and business tourism development.

If in some cases, a tourism development is mentioned without specifying what kind of tourism (ISIS, 2004), urban and business tourism generate the most interest (Amiard 1997, Bazin, Beckerich Delaplace, 2010, 2011; Manonne 1995; Masson, Petiot, 2009; Urena et al, 2009, cf. Bazin, Beckerich, Blanquart, Delaplace, Vandenbossche, 2011, for a review about this point). Local expectations have changed in 30 years of HSR services in France, but one thing seems generally overlooked: if HSR services irrigate the French territory, they mostly contribute to reinforce the heart of the network, Paris and its region. These expectations are based on an implicit but systematic assumption: HSR services are expected to contribute to the touristic development in regional cities, capturing the Paris tourists. Paris and its metropolitan area, that count almost 12 million inhabitants, are considered as a major potential market. Until today, research has only been focusing on these cities. The link between those services and urban and business tourism in the capital, Paris, has never been analysed.

This communication questions expectations according to which HST services give birth to a tourism development. This paper sheds light on a paradox. The link between HST and

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tourism has been only studied from the point of view of regional French cities. But Paris and its metropolitan area also benefit from the new HST services. This research is based on a literature review and an analysis of urban and business tourism development in both regional French cities served by HST and in Paris metropolitan area. Local authorities of regional French cities produced a lot of reports and strategies which illustrate expectations according to which HST services give birth to an urban and business tourism development. But there is very little literature on the Parisian case. Revealing a missing point of view, the Parisian case, this paper calls into question the local expectations linked to HST services and renew the literature on this subject. Nevertheless, in the past few years, with new projects of rail stations, High-Speed infrastructures, and services have sparked up the debate, interesting more and more stakeholders in Paris metropolitan area. This analysis will also point these new stakes.



Figure 1 – High speed lines vs high speed rail services in France (2012)

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The analysis of the literature reveals that the expectations for tourism development are located in regional French cities. The stakeholders develop strategies linked to the development of the network. It creates global dynamic of project. Also Paris, initial heart of the French HSR network is only analyzed as Parisian tourist demand (I). Paris has been perceived more as a touristic market connected to the HSR than as a touristic destination reached by HSR. Surprisingly, local stakeholders in Paris region have not developed an overall strategy but dashed strategies. It is changing; Paris area is no longer seen as lines served by HSR but as a system (II)

I. HSR SERVICES AND TOURISM IN FRANCE: HIGH EXPECTATIONS OF REGIONAL CITIES FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

I.1 Expectations in regional French cities for urban and business tourism development by the HSR services

Urban and business tourisms seem to be the forms of tourism that are likely to benefit from a HSRS (Amiard 1997; Bazin, Beckerich Delaplace, 2010, 2011; Manonne 1995; Masson, Petiot, 2009; Urena et al, 2009, cf. Bazin, Beckerich, Blanquart, Delaplace, Vandenbossche, 2011, for a review about this point).

Urban tourism concerns numerous activities (visits to museums, cultural heritage, food tasting, shopping, events, etc.) which may have little relation. It concerns mainly individuals or couples from diversified socio-economic groups with, sometimes a high sensitivity to price. It is usually short stay tourism (two or three days) for example during weekends. This kind of tourism is growing significantly with the growth of the short-break holidays and, in France, the reduction of working time (35h).

Business Tourism which is a tourism with business purposes includes Congress, conferences, symposia, seminars, incentives or workshops, etc.. It is also short stay tourism (two or three days) but during the week and it is characterized by individual or collective travels. They don't pay directly the journey, because it is supported by their organization. Indeed; the decision to attend a conference of business is not an individual one but is made primarily by companies or governments. Like other forms of tourism, this tourism is characterized by a shortening of stay. The sites are generally located in the downtown area. With accessibility and accommodation capacities this is the first three criteria for selecting a site.

Consequently, the presence of a HSRS can be important for business tourism stakeholders since it allows fast access.

When HSRS is opening in a city, stakeholders in new served cities have many expectations in terms of tourism development. They estimate that they can attract the clients from the Ile-de-France region.

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For example the opening of the East European High-Speed Line in 2007, and the improvement of the accessibility ought to make the Lorraine corridor more attractive (ISIS, 2004a, p. 49). Specifically, Metz, Nancy and Epinal served cities (cf. Map 1) ought to benefit from tourism development: cultural tourism in general and also business tourism in Metz and Nancy (ISIS, 2004b).

In the same manner, in 2005, the Alsace region considered that HSRST was an opportunity to renew the tourism offer by attracting clients from Paris region. (CESA, 2005, p. 8).

A tourism development is also expected in the cities that should be served by Southwest Line (Bordeaux, Narbonne Toulouse (cf. Map 1), etc. (SETEC, 2005). It is the same in the France-Comté region and particularly in Besançon (cf. Map 1) which is characterized by an important architectural heritage (Villes européennes de la grande vitesse, 2009).

More recently, within the public debate about the New Line Paris-Normandie, all the stakeholders of the Basse-Normandie region who participate to the debate expected a tourism development (Guingand, 2012). The Basse-Normandie region being a short-stay holiday destination for Parisian clients, the growing accessibility is expected to reinforce its touristic situation. It is the case in Caen (cf. Map 1) particularly concerning the cultural, memory-based heritage and the business tourism (Communauté d'agglomération de Caen la Mer, 2011).

In the same manner, within the public debate about the High-Speed Line LGV Paris Orléans Clermont-Ferrand Lyon (POCL), Roanne (cf. Map 1) expected to develop events and gastronomic business tourisms (Roanne, 2011). The business tourism is the more concerned tourism (SETEC, 2005).

Ex post, sometimes a touristic dynamism is noted, but sometimes for a short period and under certain specific conditions.

I.2 Impacts of the HSR on tourism development: Mixed results ex post...

In Tours, where the HSRS was opening in 1990, the touristic activity was growing (+ 8% from 1994 to 1999) (Buttet et al., 2001), but it is very difficult to estimate the role of HSRS in this growth. In the Provence-Alpes Côte d'Azur region, 2 million additional tourists would have come between 1997 and 2003. The tourism Observatory considers that they are due to HSL which was opening in 2001 (CRCT PACA). From 1996 to 2009, the number of congress days held in Marseille was growing from 109 021 to 294 124 (Ville de Marseille, 2011, p. 8). In the same manner, urban tourism in would have been boosted by the Mondial in 1998 and HSRS in 2001.

A year after the East European High Speed Line opening, in Strasbourg, the number of French nights was growing around 7% (Tourisme-Alsace, 2008). In Nancy as in Metz, the nights have also grown. Nevertheless, two years after the HSRS opening and for all the served cities, Strasbourg seems to be alone to take advantage (INSEE, 2009). In 2009, the occupancy rate had returned to the level before the HSRS but with a growth of +6% of the offer of rooms. But in Metz as in Nancy, the hotel occupancy rates are lower than they were before the HSRS (-4.7 points for Metz, -3 points for Nancy). According to INSEE, between

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2007 and 2008, the length of touristic stays is being reduced in nearly all areas concerned by East-European HSL (INSEE 2009).

The served cities are very interesting for business tourism stakeholders.

In the case of Le Mans (France), a city close to Paris (55 minutes by HSRS), business tourism was growing: the number of congress grew from 15 in 1987 to 30 in 1993. At that date, 70% of the clients were coming from Paris region and 70% of the congressmen, were coming in Le Mans by HST (Amiard, 1995, p. 56). In the same manner, in Tours, business tourism was limited during 1980's (10 congress in 1984, 22 in 1985). In 1993, i.e. after the HSRS opening, it grew to 120 and 134 in 1996 (Faye, 1998). But as in other cities, the growing accessibility induces a decrease of the length stay. In Lyon, HSRS contributed to the business national congress growth, the length of stay decreased from 2,3 days to 1,7 in 1993 (Mannone, 1995, p. 280).

In Dijon by contrast, business tourism did not grow and HST seemed to gain more profit to Paris (Mannone, 1995, p. 174). The location of the congress center, not close from the train station could be a reason. In Beaune, it is after the HST arrival than the Congress center was created. But HSRS seems to play an important role in its activity development. Indeed, without it, some manifestations would not take place there (Mannone, 1995, p. 212). In Chambéry as in à Grenoble, if HSRS has improved the accessibility, the congress development is more linked to world-famous research centers which are located in these two cities and able to generate such an activity (Mannone, 1995, p. 356).

In numerous cities, amenities and global accessibility seem to be more important in the business tourism development.

More recently in Strasbourg between June of 2005-2006 and June-December 2007, the activity of Strasbourg Events has grown significantly: + 12% for the number of business manifestations ; + 11% for national and international manifestations, + 23% for the seminar days and + 40% for the sales of meetings realized by business Hotel (Tourisme-Alsace, 2008).

In Reims, HSRS promoted business tourism within the context of the current economic crisis. The reservation planning of the congress center was fulfilled two years before the HSRS arrival (in 2007) whereas previously it would not. The congress number grew from 16 in 2005 (including 4 international) to 19 in 2007 (including 2 international) and to 27 in 2010 (including 9 international) (AUDRR, 2012). But the occupancy average length has decreased 3,81 days in 2005 to 2,68 in 2010 (AUDRR, 2012).

If, in certain cases, urban and business were boosted, numerous conditions are necessary.

1.3...and under specific conditions

If train is not the only transport for urban and business tourisms, HST is nevertheless very interesting. In their analysis of the impact of HSR on urban and business tourism on French cities close to Paris in France, Bazin, Beckerich Delaplace show that this kind of tourism may be favoured by HSR for at least four reasons (Bazin, Beckerich Delaplace, 2011):

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First, urban and business tourism are short stay tourism (two or three days) especially during weekends for the first and during the week for the second. Consequently, using HSRS avoids the fatigue of driving, congestions and parking difficulties in city centers.

Second, in some countries and during certain times of the year, especially with some promotional offers, it can be cheaper than the road trips when travelling alone or in couple. Third, compare to airplane, it can allow saving time particularly when the station is located in the downtown.

Fourth, it is very interesting for cities in which amenities are concentrated in downtown of easily accessible. The compactness of the city and performing intra-urban transportation networks from the train station allow that the time saved during the train journey has not been lost to destination.

Fifth, the sensitivity to quality and speed of transport service are very important.

Finally, it offers advantages due to the growing concern for sustainable development. HSRS present better ecological assessment than other means of transportation. For example, according to ADEME, for a journey from Paris to Marseille, CO₂ emissions in grams per passenger-kilometre (g/pkm) are around 2.7 g/pkm by High-speed Train, 153 g/pkm by airplane and 115.7 g/pkm by car (EC, 2009, p. 96).

But the urban and business growth can only occur if the HSRS is very good during the weekend for urban tourism and during the week for business tourism. A timing (departure of trains at regular intervals) is important for business tourism. Furthermore, urban and business tourism cannot develop without important touristic amenities (Bazin, Beckerich, Delaplace, 2011, Manonne, 1995, Masson, Petiot, 2009) and, for business tourism, hotel infrastructures in terms of quality and quantity and on this point, french cities face problems.

Moreover, appropriation strategies must also be implemented in terms of tourism activities. In such a case, tourism stakeholders are very important. Conflicts particularly in terms of communication can blur the city image. To ensure that this does not happen, it is necessary to create coordination between the different stakeholders about the destination promotion, governance is central. Last, the role of the SNCF (the French operator) is central. Indeed, based on sales promotion, short term dynamics have been observed, for lines Paris-Strasbourg for example. Furthermore, the SNCF has been developing strategies link to special events in destinations, like Christmas market. SNCF has even been reinforcing services for special events, during the Grande Braderie of Lille for example.

Touristic destinations are looking for partnership to develop this kind of strategy. They expect to hold tourists. Because, HSR is faster to both reach and leave destinations. Destinations are working on touristic offers, on touristic goods and services and also on specific local services (Pecqueur, 2001; Mollard, Pecqueur, 2007). Night-times events are other strategic developments to foster night-stay.

II. HSR SERVICES AND TOURISM IN FRANCE: THE PARISIAN CASE, A PARADOX

Paris is a major urban destination for French tourist and his accessibility has been reinforced by the French High Speed Rail network. Compared to stakeholders' expectations in regional cities, expectations have not been developed in the same way and at the strategic moment.

As a touristic destination, it interesting to precise than touristic practices have different levels which can be associated with mobility and transport networks: a central part near the Seine, highly touristic, a second level, covering the city of Paris and its immediate suburbs (subway network), and some major touristic satellites like Versailles or Disneyland ® Paris (served by regional transit network) (Duhamel, Knafou 2007; Jolly 2013). The Parisian destination is together urban, metropolitan, regional destination, covering more than the central city.

Due to historical and cultural offers, touristic facilities and its accessibility, the Parisian region is the first tourist destination in touristic arrivals. For French, according national and regional observatories, this is second region for visiting, and the first for both urban and business tourism. Actually, Paris is very attractive for French and European tourists. Urban tourism of French has been developed since 1970's. This clientele has tripled between 1970 and 2010 (OTCP, 2011). For Parisian observatory, this is a high development of court stay, linked to evolution of French society (French laws (vacation, labour laws) development of transport networks and higher accessibility (development of technology in networks, in particular increasing internet accessibility and spread of tourism and travel etc.). In 2011, with more than 31 millions of touristic arrivals, the Parisian region concentrated 34% metropolitan tourist night-stays in France (CRT Île-de-France, 2012). About business tourism, the Parisian region concentrated 60 to 80% of the market depending of the sector (seminar, congress etc.) (Pelisson, 2011, CRT 2013).

Paris is a major urban destination for tourists, as well on the French market. In fact, its accessibility has been reinforced by the development of French High Speed Rail network and his connection to European network. France is characterised by a historic political and economic centralism on Paris. It explains why HSR services had highly concentrated on the French capital and also why those services had never been studied. Actually, there are a few literatures and studies on HSR in Paris area. An explanation of the HSR service in the Paris metropolitan area (I.1) will contribute to analyse why stakeholders' strategies have been more dashed (I.2).

I.1 High speed rail services for Paris Destination

As a touristic destination, Paris is more than Paris municipality. It is also true as HSR destination. The HSR service has two levels in the Parisian region. First, Paris central is served by HST from all French territory in 4 stations, Paris Lyon, Paris North¹, Paris East and

¹ Paris Lyon and Paris North Central Train Station are also concerned by an important international HSR trafic, served by Eurostar, Thalys, Lyria, Thello etc.

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Paris Montparnasse Central Train Stations. Each station is served by a line link to a specific area in France : south west in Paris Montparnasse Station, South – South East in Paris Lyon Station, Paris East in East Station and North in Paris North Station. These 4 stations are departures or terminal stations. Transfers between two stations are not easy.

The second level of HSR services is regional. There are 3 regional stations, called interconnection stations: Massy HST Station, CDG Airport HST Station and Marne-la-Vallée Chessy HST station. They are reached by HST from all lines and located on HSR. In 2012, among all destinations served by HST in France, only 13 were not directly connected to a Parisian of Francilian Station (SNCF, December 2011).

The idea of HSR services to Paris is associated with the first HST, back in 1981. The last new station served by HST in the region is Paris East Central Train Stations in 2004. All other has been inaugurated for HST between 1981 and 1994. Compare to regional cities, Paris do no appear like new project for HSR. However, HSR trafic has double between 1999 and 2009 in Paris region. The development of the network and new services in France has a multiplier effect on the Parisian service. On the destination perspective, the HSR service has been reinforced.

In 2010, 92 millions of HST passengers transited in Paris region. 90% of them used Central Stations. But, in the interconnection stations, the number of passengers is increases rapidly. For years, for the SNCF, the interconnection stations were not clearly associated to Paris. But during the last decade, the strategy has changed. Because Central stations are only reached by a part of France, the interconnection ones became more strategic. There is a new perspective on those Stations, questioning the service of a destination or of a specific local point.

Compare to the rest of France, there is a gap. The HSR service is not studied by scientist or stakeholders. For the last decade, issues appear on the system, more as the heart of the national HSR network than on local issues. Also, link to debate on planning issues for the “Grand Paris”, a new perspective spring up. In the same time, there is a reflection on new projects of HSR in France (Paris is concerned as the heart of the network) and even in Paris region. In that context, there is a new vision of HSR in Paris, also for local stakeholders. In this perspective, both central and interconnection Stations are thinking for planning and commercial strategies.

I.2 Tourism and HSR services, a local identification in dotted line

Over years, a global strategy has never been developed on HSR services and tourism in the Parisian region. After the success of the Paris-Lyon, the progressive strengthening of HSR services has not been studied. And impacts have never been estimated. Recently, touristic stakeholders have been more and more interested by HSR issues. Actually, HSR service is identified as a tool ex post. In the context of accessibility issues, it could be a potential for

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new strategy, based on both actual services and new transport projects. However, from planning and transport issues, tourism is not considered.

Stakeholders' speeches are changing. Touristic stakes link to HSR are especially associated to Marne-la-Vallée Chessy Station, which served Disneyland® Paris. For central services, HSR appears as an explanative factor *ex post* (OTCP, 2010).

Of course, the good accessibility has been promoted, in France and Europe. HSR service is a marketing tool. Some campaigns have been developed, but always short one, on a new market, like in 1995 on the British market (OTCP). It was short term strategy, and on specific market. For example, with the first HSR, the Parisian Tourist Agency established a partnership with the SNCF. They opened a desk at Paris Lyon Central Station in 1981, the two other at Paris North and East Central Stations. This partnership is cancelled in 1997. Finally, in 2008, new desks opened in Paris Central Stations, established with a new partnership between the Regional Tourist Agency (CRT) and the SNCF. Governance explained that situation, for touristic stakeholders, and with transport's ones. For the last years, there are to major evolution. First, HSR appear less like a marketing argument and more like a potential tool. Second, it is now identified as a potential tool for global strategy.

Furthermore, since 2008, the Regional Tourist Agency has established an annual investigation in HST, departing from Paris to French and European cities. They can estimate the touristic traffic using HSR. Also for the first time, they can establish touristic profiles for HSR travellers. However, those data could be used for more studies. Also, they choose to investigated travellers living from Paris Central Stations and Marne-la-Vallée Stations, other stations have not been consider as strategic ones. They are not involved in new projects in the Parisian region. Expectations are really different, in time and space, than stakeholders' expectations in French regional cities.

Concerning new projects, tourist is not a stake for planning and transport stakeholders. About the link between touristic development and HSR services, Marne-la-Vallée Chessy Station appears like a single experience. About the touristic potential, there is no other Disneyland Park in France or Europe. In 2011, there were 3 millions of HSR passengers using that Station. 66% were there because of Disneyland Parks (SNCF, CRT 2012).

However, over the last two years, majors HSR stakeholders speak up for an evolution of the HSR services in interconnection Stations (SNCF, 2011, RFF, 2012). They could become departure or terminus Stations, improving the service. Alors, some touristic stakeholders imagine new development for those Stations, base on the model of air low cost (Brault, 2010). If a railway development would be really different, a new project have been developed. The SNCF created a new HSR low cost branch, OUIGO, serving south lines. Marne-la-Vallée Chessy Station has been choosing to be the Parisian Station. It is an important symbolic evolution. Indeed, the touristic stake is involved. This station, linked to Disneyland Parks, is a touristic destination in the Parisian destination, strong enough to support this new development.

CONCLUSION

This article is concerned by the way stakeholders consider the link between HSR services and tourism development. This analysis shows that expectations are developed in regional cities, reach by dynamic of projects. It also compares those expectations and the results observed. In the case of urban business tourisms, if evolutions have been identified link to new HSR services, they largely depend on local conditions and resources. Also, it depends of the stakeholders involved and the way they are organized. Furthermore, observing those evolutions on years can reveal the ephemeral nature of these developments. In addition, these expectations are based on a systematic capture of Parisian tourists.

The HSR service is only envisaged towards the regional cities. This one-way reading is not considering the continuous reinforcement of HSR service in direction of Parisian region. However, this area concentrates French demand for tourism business and is very attractive on the French market of urban tourism.

It's reveals a paradoxical situation. The HSR services of Paris is perceived as good and equal, his reinforcement has never been analysed, and the question of touristic valorisation by HSR services has been developed locally.

For the past years, there is evolution from both touristic and transport stakeholders. There are lot of debate on metropolitan planning and the "Grand Paris". Also, HSR services is now analysed on a local partisan perspective, leading to investing possible tourism developments. Far all that, the interaction of touristic and transport stakeholders is an issue, between them, and all together.

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