CENTERS AND CENTRALITY:
REFLECTIONS ON FRENCH CITY DESIGN

by

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Some pages in the original document contain text that runs off the edge of the page.
This research looks at the tradition of centralizm in France and its implications on city design.

The geographic and administrative centralization of France is a process due to a set of random events and deliberate choices. The very special relationship which was built throughout this process between the central governments of France and Paris was dramatically expressed in the design of Paris. Chapters I and II look at the history of this centralization, the evolution of Paris design and discusses the formation of a design model of urban center.

Chapter III and IV show how this model was adapted to the modern urban scale, at first in the French colonies and then in the Paris region.

A parallel intent of this thesis is to discuss the meaning and the implications of designing centers as opposed to environments with centrality. Chapter V elaborate on this theme and document it through the Paris' region newtowns experience.

Chapter VI is a final discussion of the information and the concepts presented in this study.

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CHAPTER I
A BACKGROUND TO THE PLANNING OF FRANCE AND PARIS.

Introduction.

It is probably a rather banal observation to say that France is, for a long time, a country with a tradition of highly centralized administration. I am not sure, however, that the foreign observer can measures how much the central administration really impacts on everything that is planned, developed or restructured in France. I would think that it is really hard for a foreigner to imagine how much the central administration decides and structures the future of France and the daily life of its citizen.

Indeed, the goal of this section is not only to provide the reader with the information that would help him to situate and appreciate the current trends of the policy of urban planning in France but also to give him a sense of this particular system.
At first, it is important to understand that if the centralization of France does not constitute a very remarkable event at the world scale its political and administrative organization differentiate it from the rest of the western european democracies. In effect, France has had a strong central government for a long time which is not the case of its neighbors. For instance, Germany as we know it today is rather new. Until recently, Germany was a collection of sovereign and independent states that eventually federated.

Therefore the first question to answer is to understand the forces that historically made possible the centralization of France.

1 Urban Planification in France.

1.1 The political process of centralization in France.

The rise of Paris dominance over the rest of France can be explained, I believe, by the fact that French nobility never assumed (or even attempted to) the administration of its territory. Instead, far from playing a responsible and positive role in fostering local development the French nobles contributed to the decline of their regions. They were uniquely interested by themselves and in selected aristocratic matters. Their economic basis being provided through the system of servage that entitled them to take automatically possession of a large part of the peasants crops the nobles had, in effect, no incentive to think to down to earth matters such as to organise the economy of their region. In fact, they were more a plight than anything else: One of their main occupation was to
battle between each other, thus destroying the crops of the peasants depending on their enemy. Not to speak of the expeditions of the wandering knights or the tribute that the peasants had to pay in goods and men for the crusades.

At the opposit of the nobility, the merchant class had to find a way to construct an environment, secure enough to protect its industrious activities. Since the bourgeois were rich enough, they proceeded to buy their independance from the nobility. The system was the one of the "Chartes", a legal document, a contract between the bourgeois patrons of a town and the nobility, that gave to the former the right to administrate their own city. These Chartes were quite specific and had to be often amended to match new developments of the commercial activities. A constant and crucial term of the Chartes, however, was that any men placed under the protection of the patrons of the cities would become a citizen, that is a freeman. The citizen status obviously attracted the peasant-serfs and was instrumental in concentrating population and wealth in the cities. It is in this framework that the bourgeoisie prospered enough to ultimately become the strong political and financial force that, in alliance with the Monarchy successfully undermined the Feudal order.

Before embarking in this determinant political shift the bourgeoisie had already affected the cities in three ways: 1- The bourgeois contributed to transform the socio-professionnal structures (specifically in the construction sector - a fact that triggered important changes in the way buildings were to be constructed). 2- The guildes were developing new facilities for the city. 3- The rich merchant introduced a new component to the fabric of the city: the urban palace. The palace was a reflection of the bourgeois as much as the castle and the cathedral had been for the nobility and the clergy. If the castle was austere and isolated for military reasons, the palace of the bourgeois was comfortable, provided with modern
facilities and integrated in the city. For instance, the palais of Jacques Coeur, a merchant of international importance, was equipped with sanitary facilities that were inexistant, later, in the Palais de Versailles.

The interest of the bourgeois in improving and modernising was not limited to its own habitat and lead him to consider the city globally. It is thus logic for the bourgeois to control the corporations of the building sector. The fifteenth century will be a strategic moment in the history of construction: In this period of crisis of the Feudal structure, the organization of construction jobs will be marked by a determinant evolution. At the end of the 100 years war the organization of work is determined, unified and reinforced. The method of penetration of the corporations (quite similarly to what happened with the chartes) consisted in purchasing the position of principal master of a specific craft. This had been made possible by purchasing from the King the "Lettre de Maitrise" during the Sixteen but specially during the fifteen century. King. This was a dramatic change to the way to access to the position of master for which the postulant had, traditionally, to pass through a series of steps and competitions showing its exceptionnal skills in the craft.

The arrival of the affairist bourgeois at the head of the corporations introduced the division of work within the corporations between the entrepreneur-bourgeois who manages to get the commission, the material and the capital for the entreprise and supervise the work and the craftsmen being simple executant-workers. The influence of the bourgeois-entrepreneur and the bourgeois-client changed the methods of construction (from wood to stone) as well as the nature of domestic construction and by and large the nature of the city fabric. The emergence of the principal master will introduce an element of rupture in the collective production of the Middle Ages and the city fabric will
ultimately shift from the Medieval continuum to the discontinuity and the hierarchy of urban spaces of the classical town.

The changes in the urban fabric proceeded from the transformation of the social structure during the fifteen and sixteen century. In Feudal society personal power is represented by a high rank in the social hierarchy or a religious title. The monarchy and the aristocracy will maintain their social status at the cultural level. The laicization of knowledge takes here all its sense. Knowledge will no longer be the prerogative of the religious order; it will be integrated by the new class in power which will make it its own prerogative. French Renaissance will express the cultural brilliance of the King and its court. In this context, the edifice acquires a cultural power. The institution of the state backed by the rising bourgeoisie is developed together with the codification of space. This code is based on an order of human thinking that equalizes knowledge of the world and action toward the world and gives to the perception and the intervention on space a structure of thought traducible through the means of central perspective. E. Panofsky has wrote of the symbolic form of the central perspective and shown its use by the architect humanist of the Renaissance.

The intellectualization of the process of conception of the buildings form will lead to the emergence of a new specialist, the architect who will introduce the transformations in the city.

We have just see how the bourgeoisie incrementally built its power. At first the bourgeois bought their freedom then proceeded to control sectors other than the trade to reorganise the urban society at their image. Logically a point arrived where the Feudal system was an obstacle to the further expansion of the activities of the bourgeoisie and where the latter was strong enough to act against the former. This was the time of the historical alliance between the bourgeoisie
and the monarchy that led to the installation of the supreme monarchy in place of the feudalsim.

This, in turn, implied the concentration of the administration around the king and marked the end for the possibility of an autonomous development of the region. All the societal developments that the bourgeoisie had introduced at the city scale (the division of labor, the specialization, the rationalization of the city, etc.) were transferred at the scale of the state which was to be ruled by the powers concentrated in the royal administration. This was the starting point of the concentration of France over Paris which Napoleon I, the Revolution and the II Empire further emphasized. Of course, several towns with well organized bourgeoisie continued to expand as already well as important towns such as Lyon or Marseilles. It is true to say, however, that the gap between Paris and the rest of France began to really increase at this point.

1-2 The genesis of centralism - a gradual process.

However, this centralization over Paris did not reach a critical stage at once. In the 16 century the court stayed in the departments of the Seine and the Loire. Paris is only the biggest town of France. In 1789, Paris had become France itself. The moral separation between Paris and the provinces starts with the concentration of the intellectual world in Paris. The Parisian snobism is an object of amusement for Corneille in the play 'Les Precieuses Ridicules' in 1689 but no more than fifteen years later the derogatory expression 'La Province' appears. During this epoch everyone that 'counts' is grouped around the King sun, whereas the rest of the nation is conscious of its inferiority. Tocqueville remarks that the important printers that existed in the Provinces in the 16 and the beginning of the 17 century have all disappeared, although a greater quantity of books is published during 18 than during the 17 century.
However, under Louis 14 there is an attempt to plan urban development in the regions. Even thought the king as an agent in each department, this agent, l'intendant has a fair amount of leeway from the central government and is thus able to adapt himself to the specificity of the local populations and their customs. Thus under Louis XIV, 40,000 kilometers of road are constructed all over France that still constitute, today, the basic structure of the French road network. The main towns of Province begin to play the role of regional capitales thanks to redevelopment schemes of great urbanists such as Turgot in Limoges. The Intendant of the king suggest rather than he orders. The province have a relative autonomy in their management. The region of Languedoc, for instance, collects its own taxes. The Encyclopedists are in favor of the decentralization. In short, this is the 'Golden Age' of the Administration.

In 1793, the Convention named a small body to take care of the territorial organization of the republic. This committee had three basic ideas: One was to destroy the despotism of the Intendant du Roi, the second was to create administrative divisions that would be functionnal and adapted to the means of communication, the third idea was a fear of Paris' preponderance.

The first idea resulted in the creation of a departemental assembly that worked with difficulty for three years. The second resulted in the definition of a geographic limit that have lasted until the present: the departement. This new administrative entity was smaller than the royal 'Generalite'. Its boundaries were defined by the following criteria: A trip back and forth from the most remote part of the department to its capital had to be completed in one day on horse back. The Constituante also acknowledged the regional specificity in its geographical definition of the departments. By doing that, according to the geographer Jean Brunhes, the Constituante brought back to life entire provinces.
The Revolution, contrary to what have been said did not 'balkanize' the provinces to better assume the domination of Paris but tried to define practical as well as locally sensibles departemental boundaries.

1-3 The reinforcement of Parisian domination.

As a man of war Napoleon Bonaparte considered the civil society in the image of military society. As soon he is named Consul, he replaces the 'Directoires de departements' elected at the second degree, by state employee that can be replaced at will: the prefects. Thus by an irony of which history is accustomed, the departements will serve goals symmetrically opposed to the one they were created for. The 'Prefets' and 'Sous Prefets' become the instrument of administrative centralization. As Tocqueville commented it: "From the guts of a nation that first got rid of the Monarchy came at once a widespread power, more detailed, more absolute, than the power that had been exercised by any of our Kings.". It is curious that, although both royalists and Republicans agreed on its excess,

the military centralism, born with Napoleon I, remained unchanged by the following, although extremely different, regimes: The Restoration, the July Monarchy, the Second Empire and three successives republics. The explanation seems to lie in the fact that this was a matter of convenience for structurally unstable regimes and, in the case of the Second Empire, corresponded to the prevalent political conceptions of the bourgeois societe.

However, the Napoleonian centralism would have remained limited, at least in scale, if the world had not witness an economic change. The Eotechnic phase of the water and wood complex as defined by Geedes and Mumford was replaced by the poleotechnic stage of coal and steel complex that introduced a direct
relationship between size and output. Thus, the industrial geography of the western world changed from a decentralized to a centralized pattern. This trend was multiplied, in France, by the decision to centralize the train network around Paris, thus concentrating the bulk of France’ industry in the Paris region. The fact that there was a general consensus to design a system that was so dramatically favoring Paris and preempting the regions economic development is revealing of the power of the centralist ideology on the politico-administrative class at that time. In effect, there was no economic or technical justification for such a decision. In fact, the construction of the railroad network was a real chance to redevelop the economy of the regions; a chance that was purposely unused. Such an opportunity was not to exist anymore: The very fact of the desequilibrium between Paris and the province made extremely difficult any attempt to decentralize. The planners of the Fifties, for instance, although they were generally favorable to the economic decentralization of France (the influential pro-decentralization manifesto of the geographer Gravier was published in 1947) had to balance the need for regionalization with the necessity to consolidate the investments already made in Paris which were essential for the economic future of France.

All the other european railroad systems have a decentralised structure. In the Netherlands, Utrecht is the center of the railroad network - not Amsterdam; in England, although London is central the system provided for many transversal lines. On the contrary, the system designed by the engineer Jean Baptiste Legrand provides only one transversal west-east line which was designed because of the political pressure exerted at the Assembly by Lamartine (then also a congressman). However, this line was so under equipped that it was quicker to fret the material through Paris than to use it. The transit, in Paris, of the fret was then compulsory because of the distance that separated the stations terminating each regional line.
The public works of Haussmann will organize (and reinforce) the urban consequences of the economic centralization of France over Paris. The question of centralization will began to be discussed only in the 1950, some tentatives of ‘deconcentration’ planned by the state in the mid-Sixties. The French society had to wait for the radical critics of the events of May 1968 to seriously examine the question of regionnalisation versus economic centralization, local autonomy versus administrative centralization, local identity over republican unity and the like.

Yet, as of today, the debate remains essentially political and reaches extremely slowly the phase of implementation.
V. Le règne de Philippe Auguste

1180-1223
II PARIS

2.1 Paris, a thousand years of formation. (From 360 to 1360)

In 360, Lutece takes the name of its people, the Parisi and becomes Paris. In the Fifth century the Roman Empire collapses. The Paris region becomes a Gallo-Roman state which, until 486, resists to the invasions of the Francs. In 508, Clovis settles in Paris for strategic reasons. The Kings transform Paris into a Christian town that rivals with Tours, then dominant. The political supremacy of Paris remain stable until 600 when it is rivaled by several cities. Paris, however, remains prosperous.

The Carolingien kings inherit a town of 20,000 to 30,000 inhabitants. However, as the Empire extends to Germany and Italy, Paris loses its central position. Its development slows down. Aix becomes the Imperial residence but Paris is still an economically important city. From 845 to 861, Paris is attacked by the Vikings but ultimately resists to the last attack in 885-886. As the Vikings are settling in Normandy, Paris becomes ‘Place Frontiere’. This strategic position will play an important role in the future of Paris. In effect, as a new Viking invasion is menacing the city the king is settling again in Paris and the Viking threats will keep him in Paris.

An important part of Paris destiny is then played. Thanks to the king, the city will escape from the pressure of the nobility. At the same time, Paris does not participate in the ‘Communal revolution’ and will not have a ‘Charte’. Its inhabitants will be ‘Bourgeois of the King’. The return of the king triggers numerous restorations and constructions. The Town follows the common pattern
of the 'double city' is divided in two parts: the 'bourg' and the 'cite'. The cite is animated by numerous important works such as the construction of the kings palace and the new cathedral Notre-Dame. The city as a whole expands quickly. The active economic centers are the bourg Saint-Marcel and the bourg Saint Germain. Paris, in the 12 century, also experiences an intellectual renewal.

With the kingdom of Philippe-Auguste, Paris is (end of the 12, begining of the 13 century) not yet the capital of France but has definitely a leading role. Its strategic position and the policy of an authoritarian king will trigger some new developments. Because of the proximity of the English, the kings commands the construction of a defense wall which measures 5300 meters into which is integrated the Louvre castle. The wall protects 250 hectares of land and achieves the unity of the town. The protection of the walls attracts more population, a migration encouraged by the king. Philippe-Auguste wants Paris to become the center of action of the monarchy. The walls, the permanent storage of the archives after 1194, the important judicial function performed by the Palais; all these elements contribute to this scheme. Paris becomes a prominent center of the intellectual and religious life. As the new enceinte wall is just being finished, many settlements are already expanding at its periphery. The kings will have to grant the right to construct outside the walls in 1240.

In 1261, Saint-Louis, a very powerful and charismatic king, reorganise the administration of the city which he splits in two between the 'Prevot des Marchands' for the local affairs and the 'Prevot du Roi' for the affairs of the state. The enlargement of the king palace, the construction of Notre-Dame and of new pavilions for the market of 'Les Halles'; the fame of the university are shaping the physionomy of Paris of the 13 century. At that time, Paris also
becomes the center of Theology as the fame of the king transforms it as the capitale of the Diplomacy.

Some essential characteristics of Paris are then taking place. The rural suburbs will not evolve drastically until the 19 century. The role of Paris as a capital; as well as the government of France by the Parisians will be definitely decided with the integration of the feudal nobility of the region into the royal administration. Also, very importantly, it is the time of the passage from the Ancient national road network, centered around Lyon, to the modern road network centered around Paris.
VI Louis VIII et Saint-Louis
223-1270

Basilique de St-Denis (neph et transept)

Grange bataillée (fortifiée)

des chanoines de St-Opportune

Montorgueil (voie)

St-Étienne-du-Mont (1er)

S. Louis

223-1270

Grange bataillée (fortifiée)

des chanoines de St-Opportune

Voirie

Agrandis. des Halles

Grande aux-Clercs

2e Parloir aux Bourgeois

Hôpital-Dieu (agrandis.)

Petite Seine

Maladrerie St-Germain

Hôpital de Navarre

St-Séverin (reconstruction)

Couvent des Cordeliers

Hospice des Religieux de la Ste Trinité (Mazarin)

Collège du Trésorier

Chartreux

Collège de Sorbonne

VAUGIRARD

Maison de campagne de St-Germain-des-Prés

Commanderie

des Hospitaliers de St-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas

Donjon des Hospitaliers de St-Jean

Collège des Bons-Enfants d'Arras

St-Germain-des-Prés (reconstr. du couvent)

St-Étienne-du-Mont (1er)

Hôpital de Lourcine

St-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet

Abbaye St-Victor (cloître, chap. de

St-Etienne-du-Mont (1er)

1er No

VAUGIRARD

Maison de campagne de St-Germain-des-Prés

Commanderie

des Hospitaliers de St-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas

Donjon des Hospitaliers de St-Jean

Collège des Bons-Enfants d'Arras

St-Germain-des-Prés (reconstr. du couvent)
2.2 Paris, capitale of France.

Philippe le Bel amplifies these trends by centralizing the administration of France in Paris. The king develops the administrative services and reorganizes the Palais de la Cite. Paris is then a city housing 80,000 inhabitants of which 10,000 are students. It is a very high density for the Middle-Ages: 182 inhabitants by hectare. Venice, Milan and Paris are the three large towns of Europe. From 1300 to 1360, Paris becomes an international financial place. Paris is not only the capitale of the unique large state of Occident; it is also the main diplomatic and universitary center.

A new war triggers the construction of new fortifications in 1356. Their construction will be supervised by Etienne Marcel, the Merchants' Provost. The new wall will protect 166 additional hectares than the wall of Philippe Auguste did. Paris now covers an area of 439 hectares. At the same time, the Parisians become conscious of the importance of their support to the king as well as of the potential menace they represent for him. In 1306, a first riot moves Charles V from the Palais de la Cite, too central, to a residence close to the gates of the city. A short time after, the king will settle in Vincennes, a bourg located just outside Paris. The castle of Vincennes is fortified to resist any possible attack of the Parisians.

During the first half of the 14 century, Paris experiences many troubles revolts and occupations. The Anglo-Bourguignonne domination, the civil war that results will end an era of Paris which had lived for thirty years in a mood of besiege. Many unkept buildings will collapse during this period and the density of Paris diminishes. In 1450, Paris will take off again. Around 1500, the density is again very high. However, Paris is the economic center of an area ranging only from 50
to 200 kilometers. It is a town without industry. Paris does not have a bank, but is an investment center. In reaction of the riots of the preceding epoch, the king strictly controls the city. He supervises the activities of the merchants and reduces the independence of the University which had been politically active during the riots. Curiously enough, it is when Paris is officially promulgated capital of France that the king leaves Paris to settle on the Loire river. The royal administration, however, remains in Paris.

De Philippe le Bel
à Charles V 1270-1380

a/ la vie civile
2-3. Paris and the problems of the large town:

The public works of the Kings.

In the 16th century, medieval Paris enters a crisis. The town has reached its natural limits: the swamps. The authorities simultaneously discover the problems of the large town (150,000 to 200,000 inhabitants): the difficulty of organizing the food delivery, the police, the cost of maintenance, etc.

Paris expands within itself, its free spaces are constructed. The Louvre is renovated and the construction of the Tuileries palace outside the walls begins. The necessity to construct the palace will trigger the extension of the walls to the west. In 1566, a new defense wall is constructed: Les Fosses Jaunes.

The rents increase and around 1650 the lower income segments of the population will have to share a house between several families. The hygienic habits of the Middle-Ages decline while some neighborhoods become excessively dirty. A problem of circulation arise. Francois I is asking aligned and straight streets. In 1563, the parliament asks for the outlawing of the private carrosse (coaches).

The economic activity slows down, a type of Parisian bureaucrat emerges, a social category which will not favor the economic dynamism. The city of Paris lends money to the king and constructs a new Hotel de Ville. The Parisians are upset by increasing fiscal charges. In addition, religious troubles are bursting all over the country. The city rebels against the king that besieges it and suppresses all its privileges.
The confiscation of the city privileges concentrates all the decision power in the king hands. This fact, coupled with the repercussion, in France, of the Italian Renaissance will trigger the kings' policy of public works.

This policy will be continued from then on by all the kings and will dramatically change the city fabric. It is important to realize, that, until then, no open space had been really designed in Paris. The only exception is the 'Place de greve' which is really an open piece of land connecting the Hotel de Ville and the main port of Paris. This was not, by any means, a urban square as they began to be designed in Italy in the Quattrocento.

What had been designed until then were important buildings such as the kings' palace, Notre Dame, the university, churches and the aristocratic and bourgeois hotels. But in the 16th century and extensively in the 17th century the design will focus on open spaces. In the 16th century two important projects are launched. The first one, the restoration of the Louvre marks the interest of the king for Paris (although he was residing in Fontainebleau). The works begin in 1531 after the Louvre had been deserted by the kings since 1380. The second one, the construction, outside the walls, of the Tuileries palace and related pleasure gardens announce a new era for Paris. The idea of gardens outside the walls is the introduction by Catherine de Medicis of a new idea of Italian derivation. The Tuileries, according to E. Bacon will "(...) set in motion a thrust of design which conveyed the energy, previously compressed in the city walls, across the countryside " (1). Indeed, the protection of the palace of the Tuileries and the gardens, previously designed as a self contained independent structure, by the new wall of the Fosse-Jaunes will launch the extension to the west of the city.
The construction of the first Royal squares inside Paris will only begin with the return of the king, Henri IV, to the city. The city had been largely destroyed by the religious wars, the rents had been reduced of a third or were simply unpaid. Paris knew a general climate of violence which provoked the merciless repression of the king and his friend, the Merchants' Provost. Henri IV decides to tackle the problems of the city globally. He cannot, however, draft a master-plan as the one that already existed in Amsterdam since 1606, but he will embark on a very ambitious policy of public works which will reanimate the town and serve the prestige of the king. His leading planning principle is to juxtapose to the ancient neighborhoods new areas that would be more open and ordered and would connect themselves with the old town.

Henri IV is, thus, renovating the Pont-Neuf. In the process, he decides to destroy the houses that were constructed on the bridge to clear the vista of the Louvre. This decision, based on the abstract urban theories or the Renaissance, is a precedent for all the designs to follow. It also constitutes precedent for the clearance of all the houses built on the bridges of Paris. Henri IV connects the Pont-Neuf with the rue Dauphine to the south and with the place Dauphine in the centre. In the Marais, one major operation: The Place Royale. At first planned as an economic nuclei, the square becomes the multi-purpose room of the aristocracy. The square is not connected to the traffic and the statue in its middle will be erected later.

One major project, the Place de France, will be abandoned because of its economic impossibility. However, the project marks a change of scale both in terms of area and meaning in comparison to the Place Dauphine and the Place Royale. In effect, these two squares came out of objective needs (linkage, socio and economic needs) while the latter was purely spectacular and monumental, the
triumphal entrance to Paris. The Place Dauphine project was a sort of 'urban surgery' connecting, over the Seine two districts of Paris, creating a place for popular manifestations such as fairs and markets: the bridge itself. The entire operation was probably subsidized by the aristocratic hotels surrounding the quiet Place Dauphine (originally closed on her third side). If Henri IV does not have the financial means of a spectacular policy, the following kings will have it. However, in his attempts to monumentalize the city, Henri IV will make compulsory the alignment of the houses, forbid the corbelling and the wood construction - although he will not succeed in enforcing these new laws.

Under Louis XIII, the city grows without control and is characterized by the important activities of speculators which will develop new neighborhoods. A new problem irritates the Parisians: the multiplication of the coaches. A promenade is then constructed: Le Cours la Reine.

As Europe faces a general economic depression between 1650 and 1730, the extraordinary expansion of Paris slows down under Louis XIV. The economic situation worsens and violence explodes again in the city. The town falls again under the control of the king. With Louis XIV and Colbert, the organization and the rationalization of the city, of art and architecture, began with Henri IV will really start. In order to effectively control Paris, a new position is created: the Lieutenant de Police, until then a prerogative of the Merchants' Provost. The Lieutenant de Police, La Reynie, proceeds to suppress the homeless shelters and gets rid of the last area controlled by the thieves. The municipal lighting and the paving of the streets of Paris is extended but the city remains dirty because of the passivity of its inhabitants. The first exact plan of Paris is drawn (as opposed to the aerial views of the 16 century) that allows to follow the evolution of the capital. Paris is liberated from one of its two boundaries: The swamps and the
defense walls. In effect, Vauban has fortified the frontier leaving Paris relatively safe from the invasions. Paris expands on its periphery, specifically on the west side with the Faubourgs of Saint Germain and Saint Honore. The place Vedome is then a large speculative project of aristocratic hotels.

Paris is not only the capital but the economic center of the kingdom. A value market appears, the state and royal manufactures are employ several thousand of workers. At the same time the problems of the city are amplified. A great number of private squares of the church and the aristocracy (including royal properties) will be open to the public. The delivery of food to Paris becomes a national problem. The monarchy is alarmed and thinks of the destiny of the great cities of Antiquity which, as "(...) they had reached this sort of excessive size had bear in themselves the seeds of their own destruction." The ultimate reaction of the monarchy to stop the expansion of Paris is to withdraw from the Tuileries to settle in Versailles in 1680. It is a very well thought strategy (the creation of a satellite town) which is, however, not pushed all the way. In any circumstances, this decision comes too late. Paris is then the capital of the intellectual and the scientific, a world center for the religious activities that seriously rivals Rome.

During the 18th century, Paris expands very quickly in conjunction with the economical take off of the century but, also, in relation to local factors. One of these factors is the tendency, all along the century, of the court to desert Versailles and to settle in Paris. In 1724, the king tries again, unsuccessfully to set a limit to the city. The period is characterized by the intensive construction of buildings, some of which reach up to nine stories.

The necessity to plan this growth becomes urgent. The big operation is the Place de la Concorde planned under Louis XV. The place de la Concorde is the
product of an "Urban Art" which has reached its climax. It is designed (in 1753) to articulate together the new developed feaubourgs Saint Honore and the Chaussee d'Antin with the great axis of the Tuileries and the vegetal perspective of the Champs Elysees designed by Lenotre (on the model of the Versailles garden) which vanishes at the infinite.

It is important to realize how much the "Urban Art" of the kings has evolved from the punctual development of isolated royal squares to the development of an overall system which connects the city altogether. In the early developments of Paris, when it was still divided between the Cite and the Bourgs (the Ville double) its unity had been given by its defense walls. This had in fact been true all along the development of the city which remained essentially poly - nuclear, that is structured with different centers each of which has a precise function but none of which being dominant. Each of the centers was independant and had specific boundaries and specific populations. The only link between these feaubourgs and their population was the fear of the invasion. This was reflected by the behavior of the institution none of which tried to plan for the larger community but for its own purpose and community. It is only when institution, the state, and one function, the administration (the bureaucrat parisian) becomes dominant in the city that Paris will be conceived of and planned as a whole. The urbanism of the kings is not only 'great' because it succesfully faces the problems caused expansion of Paris and proposes skilfull solutions to problems such as circulation and the interconnection of several areas it is great because it imposes one order, demonstrates one power over the city space through the interconnection of monumental spaces and the standardization of the street scape. In short, the urbanism of the kings begins within the aristocratic values of separation and privacy but it ends to the contrary transforming the empty spaces of the city into the public manifestation of the state.. This creates a precedent
and will be the basis of the urban design of all the following central administrations of France: the I and the II Empire, but also the modern plans of today.
CHAPTER 2
FROM GRAND DESIGN TO DECADENCE.

Introduction.

It is the bourgeoisie of the second Empire that formulated the plan that would dramatically transform Paris—and by spillover effect—its entire region. In effect, Haussmann approach to the planning of Paris was radically different from everything that had been designed until then. Paris, of course, had evolved under the kings. But the kings' approach to planning had evolved slowly. The plans of Haussmann, on the contrary, were characterized by a dramatic change of scale of intervention that the urbanism of the kings had in a sense prepared and announced. If the kings had over the years perfected the art of urban design (l'Art Urbain) Haussmann invented the science of urbanism and introduced the scale in which we live and at which we plan today.
La IIe République
Napoléon III 1848-1870
Édifices publics et habitations
Restructuration and extension of Paris under the second Empire: The public works of Haussmann.

Haussmann marks an important shift of attitude towards the city. This is firstly because his rational is not guided by one set of criteria objectives but rather by a multiplicity of them. His approach to the city is not piecemeal but forms a whole. In planning the city, Haussmann exhibits the qualities of a bourgeois multiplied by the ones of an energetic civil servant. His preoccupations are multiple. As a bourgeois he is eager to match the grandeur of aristocracy. Therefore, urban design in Paris must be more spectacular than it ever was. In fact, not only the new Paris of the second Empire must encompass "Grands Projets" at the monumental scale but in fact it is central Paris in its totality that becomes monum. In effect, if a monument like the Invalides (a military hospital) is the appropriate metaphor for a military power such as the one of Napoleon the first, the appropriate metaphor for the colonialist and affairist bourgeoisie of the second Empire extends to the city itself. The project has changed scale and objective. What should be monumental, what should be an appropriate metaphor? In what part of the city should the bourgeoisie inscribe the symbols of its dominance? Quite logically it is what characterize the bourgeoisie (its dynamism, its mobility) that will serve as a metaphor: It is the avenues and the railway stations placed at their end —the modern means of communications—that are the framework of Haussmann plans. It is quite clear that the avenues and the stations are not merely "functionnal". The avenues are emphasized by the continuous stone facades and the stations are carefully calculated to fit in a monumental vista. The residents and prominent users of the avenues are bourgeois: The former looking at the sight of the latter strolling (like in a parade!) along the avenues by foot or carriage—To see and to be seen. Moreover the very scene of the daily activities in the avenues is the one of a
dynamic economy occurring in an appropriate environment where everything happens in an orderly fashion - as opposed to the chaos of a market day in the medieval city. This is also a metaphor for the commercial society of the second empire. The facades are the decorum that emphasize the new urban scene: the commercial scene. When the aristocratic reflexe was to hide from the public, the bourgeois wants to monopolize the public space.

However the ‘technical approach’ to the city is a crucial one that even the need for spectacular urban design does not surpass. In effect, the avenues are actually linking economic nuclei. Haussmann is very concerned with constructing up to date sewage systems and servicing the city with an extensive urban furniture. Indeed the engineer which is commissioned to solve these problems will innovate in a large domain, ranging from water ducts systems design to traffic studies. This is the Paris of “le Confort Urbain” of “les Commodites Urbaines”. With the engineer, the technical precision appears in city design: This is evident for one that compares the absolute straightness of the boulevard Sebastopol to the narrow and rather sinuous pattern of the previous north-south connections: the rue du faubourg Saint Denis and the rue Saint Martin. The conjunction of the need to transform Paris as a large spectacular entity and of a very practical down to earth spirit resulted in a very curious and innovative approach to the buildings that represented past powers. Where the governments would have previously ignored, destroyed or let collapse the monuments marks of preceeding powers; Haussmann chooses to actively coopt them. The monuments are purely recuperated and integrated to the new city planning concept. Why should you waste these resources that can promote the city? On the contrary the monuments can be helpful to achieve a successful marketing of the city. You want to make them even more visible than before and associate them to your scheme. The way to achieve this is in fact rather simple. You just need to increase the space
around the monuments and connect those spaces to the general circulation network. The "parvis" of Notre-Dame is a point in case. Haussmann considerably enlarge it so that the monument is not anymore a metaphor of the catholic church, only, but - primarily - of Paris.

There is another criteria for the design of Paris. This is the one of security and control. Although it has been very often exaggerated, this argument remains valid. I believe it has two aspects. The new avenues are really very efficient access for the troops. But they also have a spillover effect, that, over the years can be even more efficient than the troops. It creates an unprecedented gentrification in the areas they serve and isolate other areas that then collapse economically and physically. This is true for popular neighborhoods such as the "quartier Mouffetard".

However it would be untrue to describe Haussmann as a machiavelic, class conscious planner. This would not account for all the reformist, enlightened aspects of the urban policy of Haussmann. In fact, these aspects really come from the influence of Napoleon III who, having been lived in London, is very impressed by the English hygienic theories and experience of squares to fight the epidemic, the pollution and so on. This realm will account for all the squares and woods planned by Haussmann. The woods were implemented in the periphery whereas the squares were mostly constructed (for obvious reasons of capital) in the areas outside of the wall of the Fermiers Generaux annexed in 1861. These areas are also interesting because they constitute another part of the Paris of Haussmann where he planned rather different things than in the new enlarged and rationnalized center.

Haussmann not only increased the scale of planning thinking; he increased the size of the city. The expansion of central Paris was not really a new fact since
it was at the origin circumscribed to the île de la Cité and then expanded to the
arrondissements along the right bank until the peripheral faubourgs and the
quartier Latin‘‘cristallized’’themselves into the center. Since the dynasty of the
Capetiens the kings had tried to stop the expansion of Paris by constructing walls
that they had later to destroy under the housing developments pressure. However
it is the first time with Haussmann that someone had made the decision to
expand Paris and planned it. Quite significantly the new areas were planned on a
different scale than the center but rather at the one of a village or more
precisely at the scale of the old faubourgs. The peripheral settlements
consisted of the suburbs that were edificated under Louis - Philippe ( since 1830 )
outside the belt of the Fermiers Generaux. Before the “Murs d Octroi” ( a wall
constructed between 1784 and 1791 where anyone entering the city had to pay a
fee.) were demolish the city housed some 1,200,000 inhabitants in its relatively
small perimeter of 3,288 hectares. The annexation increased the city to 7,088
hectares (2 times the original size) for a population of 16,000 residents (+ 400,000
inhabitants) as of the January 1, 1860. The annexation was a rather ambitious
project. In effect, the new sector was only serviced by small suburban roads and
consisted of a number of speculative housing projects that had been anarchically
constructed in the last 20 years. The development and the linkage of a road
system was one problem. The second one was to create neighborhood centers,
dynamic and autonomous enough to attract and retain the surrounding population.
Traditionally, the method to create centers was to edificate a church whose
weekly services assured the prosperity of commerce. Since the first Empire the
animation of the neighborhoods had been achieved through the construction of
important peripherical markets that decentralized the principal market, called Les
Halles. This favored the permanence of commerce through the concentration of
clientele. Spontaneously, an agglomeration of vital functions began to
incrementally encroach the church to ultimately become what constitutes the
Haussmannian program of the center: The church flanked with the school and the fire brigade barrack and the Mairie (with a night asylum), the square and the market. The church of "La Villette" constructed between 1841 and 1844 is a good example of this model. To the market and the church the second Empire added the square that symbolized the generous dreams of the Emperor, who saw in it a tool to 'moralize' the workers as well as an hygienic principle. As I mentioned before the squares were always scarce and small in central Paris for obvious economic reasons. But in the peripherical neighborhoods, they were larger. As a matter of fact, a hierarchy of open spaces had been established by Haussmann on the basis of their frequation. The neighborhood square was intended for the daily uses, the larger urban park was located at proximity of the users housing while the suburban woods planned for exceptionnal use were implemented at a remote location. However, the most important innovation of the second empire was the 'Mairie'. Since 1830 the mairie emerged in its double vocation as an official and administrative facility but also as a 'commissariat de police', permanence of the national guard, 'office de bienfaisance' and even as a popular universsity. From all these aspects, emerged the Mairie in his final modern version, that is both as a social center, a barrack and the secular temple of civil marriage.

In conclusion.

The second empire had a very clear vision of what should be done with Paris. The operation was divided into two steps. At first the historical Paris had to be enlarged, rationnalized to become the symbol -at the world scale- of colonial France. Secondly, a number of sub-centers, autonomous - but not independant, from the principal center- were planned to revolve around it. The two parts were to form a new entity. This is, I think, very clear when one looks at the very
deterministic and particular way in which the ancient suburban municipalities were replaced by the larger new neighborhood centers. In effect, they were systematically planned in a different location. None of the 'mairies' of the ten new arrondissements was located in a pre-existing center. Moreover, each of the new centers—even if they were placed in a different location from the pre-existing ones—was arranged to be connected to the new general road system. The planning of Haussmann introduced the notion of the hierarchy of centers (that itself introduced a hierarchy of open spaces, roads etc...) This idea of smaller centers, autonomous in daily life but economically and politically subordinated to the larger will be at the basis (at another scale) of the 1965 scheme for the Parisian new towns.

Although the urbanism of Haussmann was not regulated or formulated by a rigid theory (it was a practice of constant adaptation to circumstances; a dynamic and pragmatic approach); it was always inscribed in a global vision of the city. If Haussmann urban practice is characterised by a succession of decisions it was nevertheless conditionned by a permanent global conscience of the whole that guaranteed the continuity of the concepts through multiple decisions. This pragmatic approach guided by a kind of overall concept is also a characteristic inherited by the planners of the Paris region in the 1960's. However, their success in keeping the continuity of the concept and in achieving projects of quality can be seriously questionned, specially for the decade following 1965.

II The Commune.
The important shifts that had appear in the social structure of Paris (the number of workers living in Paris had increased whereas the number of artisans and bourgeois remained stable) were traumatic for the city. Paris, was, traditionally, a city where the social classes were equally represented with, perhaps, a greater representation of the lower middle class (Artisans, etc...). The concentration of the proletariat in Paris is one of the major causes of the troubles of 1871. After the Communne the social relationships are poisoned. The multiplication of denunciations clearly demonstrate the social rupture of the city between the rich and the poor neighborhoods and even between the lower bourgeoisie (the artisans) and the proletariat, who, until then, were unified.

III The Third republic between 1871 - 1914.

During the third republic (1871-1914) not much is done to ameliorate the condition of Paris. The financial charge inherited from Haussmann the lack of authority, the indulgence vis a vis of the speculators will mark this epoch. Some remaining works of Haussmann will be executed, such as the Avenue de l'Opera but, basically, the projects of this period are a multiplicity of unrelated operations which are sometimes carried out without any regard to the old fabric. The Universal Expositions of 1878, 1889 and 1900 will leave a number of monuments which were not related to any plan and moreover were implemented in already well structured neighborhoods. Most importantly, the suburbs, where the bulk of the expansion now occurs because of the lower rents (The elevator has appeared, in Paris, unifying the social composition of each building) are now growing without any control. The Habitations a Bon Marche (low income housing) are the object of discussions but will not be concretised before 1896. Paris is, more
than ever, the capital of the literary, artistic and scientific world. The nightlife will develop with the progress of municipal lighting All of this formed, in the Provinces, a brilliant image of Paris, partly mithycal, that played a key role in the people's motivation to immigrate from the country.

IV The third republic between 1914 and 1945.

Introduction.

The very success of the policy of concentration on Paris became very quickly a major problem. The convergence of the railroad system into Paris, the massive migration of the labor force contributed to form around the capital the greatest industrial center of the country with 1,250,000 workers in 1933. From 1911 to 1936 some 60,000 inhabitants flowed back from Paris to its suburbs. In 1936, Central Paris is only the dense center (2,829,753 inhabitants ,365 inhabitants by hectare - 6 times the density of New-York city) of an agglomeration of 6,190,457 inhabitants. In the course of 70 years, before the crisis of 1929 the population of the city had increased by 70% ; the population of the suburbs by 500%.

4-1 Paris.

A.Sutcliffe remarks that 1914 marks the begining of a period of "abondunment of Grand-Design" in central Paris. A strong conservationnist partyrty was building himself. The administration had to compromise with it by hiring the urban
historian Marcel Poete in the Paris Extension Committee. After the war the annulment of pre-war projects was inevitable. Yet, the public Committee was opposed to the complete renunciation of these projects. It wanted to proceed on the basis of a scheme reduced to more manageable proportions. However, the committee decided, in 1921, to not use the right of expropriation (widely used by Haussmann) , a decision that seriously precluded the implementation of any scheme. " Naturally enough, we shall evict tenants only if it is possible to do so. It is not our intention to run the risk of aggravating the rent crisis." (|) A further discouragement to continue the public works was the impossibility to tax betterment values. Also, in order to save expenses, the city had to buy the buildings necessary for the implementation of the schemes only when they would reach the market. (rather than to proceed by eviction and pay high compensation fees.). One last factor argued against the public works policy: street improvement was no longer considered to be as effective a public health measure and had therefore to be justified on traffic grounds alone. A subsequent improvement of the traffic would have necessitated an enormous expenditure of the state.

This conjunction of elements lead the authorities to judge that the age of the great streets improvements was over. The few schemes completed between 1918 and 1939 were only made possible by the piecemeal purchase of individual properties , or by collaboration with some private interests as with the Samaritaine ( a large retail store) in 1929 for the widening of the banks of the Louvre.

In any case, by the late 1930's, it was generally argued by the authorities that new streets to be of any real use for solving traffic congestion should at least measure forty meters wide. The idea of a new scheme based on such street dimensions being infeasible; the policy adopted was just to let it go. Perhaps the
automatic traffic lights introduced in 1923 was thought of as the panacea for all traffic problems.

However, it is more likely true to say that the mood was just not right to undertake large and courageous redevelopment schemes. In addition, the demagogic freeze of the rents started the degradation of a large part of Paris housing stock. But it is in the suburbs that the inaction of the authorities had the more dramatic effect.

4-2 The suburbs.

As a result of the double effect of the high rents of the wealthy parts of Paris and of the degradation of the housing stock due to the rent freeze; the lower income segments of the population had to flow back in the suburbs.

The decision to construct the metro within the city boundaries (and avoid the penetration of the suburbs) did nothing but to increase the existing distinction between Central Paris and its suburbs, between privileged and underprivileged districts.

Nothing is done in terms of green space either. Although a project to transform the old fortifications and the military zone into a green belt is studied; the demagogy of the responsible and the pressure of interest will terminate the project before it had even taken off. The zone will only receive a few amenities (sport facilities, the Cite Universitaire). Instead of a large redevelopment project the zone will be covered by so many shacks (This until the late forties) that the zone became synonymous with slums. The only reaction of the authorities is as irresponsible as the decision to freeze the rents in Paris. In effect, the Loi
Loucheur, voted in 1928, encourages the individual construction in the suburbs. However, the law falls short of providing a plan to organize the new dwellers. As a result, thousands of hectares of land are covered with dwellings to which no infrastructure is provided and which are often located as far as 45 minutes of walking distance from the railway station. The daily displacement of the working population is counted in hours as the charge of the public services skyrocket.

The terrible life conditions of the suburbs, their social structure being predominantly composed of the working class, the feeling that the suburbs are left alone by the government— all those factors contributed to the formation in the suburbs of a politically radicalized enclave. In effect, only the communist party takes care of the problems of the suburbs and provides the organisational skills that the suburbs desperately needs. When a communist mayor is elected he tends to be an efficient manager for its collectivity. This explains why, ultimately, the suburbs will fall, almost uniquely, under the control of the communist party and of some progressive socialists. The suburbs will be nicknamed the “Red Belt”. 
CHAPTER III
EMERGENCE OF THE MODERN FRENCH URBANISM THEORIES.

Introduction.

Paradoxically, it is in the period where nothing is actually planned for Paris and its agglomeration that the French urbanism will mature. At first the theoretical principles will be developed in Paris and, later, those principles will be applied in the colonies.

This movement is started by two interconnected realms. The first comes from the architects. The writings of Camillo Sitte and his school had succeeded to win a place for the architect in the town-planning process. It is then quite natural that architects would be instrumental in the establishment, in France, of urban studies and town planning as disciplines in the early 1900. (The word urbanism was first coined, in France, about 1910.). Rome-prize winning architects, working academically at the Villa Medici between 1899 and 1909, such as H. Prost, E. Hebrard, L.Jausselly, T. Garnier and D.A. Agache will formulate the principles, conceptions and professional objectives which were to constitute, later, the
fundaments of French planification. They rejected the academic work on single monuments of the Beaux-Arts in favor of a comprehensive approach on the larger and more complex urban scale. They were very active in the formation of the "Musee Social" (an institution devoted to examine all the aspects of urban planification) and of the Societe Francaise des Urbanistes in 1911.

The second realm came from a larger movement of awareness of informed professionnals. They were people as different as industrialists, catholic militants, trade unionists, sociologists, geographers, criminologists, politicians and governemental and municipal officials. All those people formed a network of 'progressives' which paralleled and supported the research of the new "Architects-Urbanists". Some tentatives of a multi-disciplinary approach to town planning were ried by the prefect, Justin de Selves. He set up the Paris committee as a mixed committee of municipal officials and outside experts. The committee released in 1913 a report on the Paris agglomeration. Although the Committees’deliberation were of a purely explanatory nature, it recommended that a plan should be studied on the Seine departement as a whole.

Nothing tangible, however, was to be achieved by these movements in the context of Paris: The Paris Committee recommendations will disappear in the post-war period whereas the architects of the "Musee Social (despite the urgence of the urban situation) will not be able to find a commission at the urban scale in France.

In order to find such work, they will go abroad, essentially to the colonies. The colonies were an optimal environment to test the implementation of the urban theories where the strong colonial power supressed all problems of resistance that one encounters through the usual procedures. The suburbs did not
constitute such an environment and it was probably judged by the central administration as too troublesome to organize. Moreover no profit was to be made from restructuring the suburbs (only costs could possibly be involved). In the colonies, the profit to be made was immense and was worth some initial investment.

1 Theory and city design in the colonies.

1.1 The objectives.

The connection between the politico-administrative sphere and the new architects-urbanists led to the urban colonial experience.

The outcome was twofold.

Firstly, starting with a critical analysis of the situation in France, architects-urbanists working in the colonies looked at the colonies experience as a social and aesthetic laboratory where they could test the efficiency of their principles and design before they could apply them to France.

Secondly, from the administration point of view, the architects could solve the problems of long time residence of the French in the colonies; they could design in the colonies an environment of quality with important facilities which would retain and attract the European population. They would also structure through the environment the assimilation of the native population to the French system (which a more valid long term control, than the military control of the first phase.)
The second point explains why the architecture of the newtowns referred to the local traditions but the urban design was typically French: the civic square, avenues, promenades and the like. On one hand was acknowledging the colonised culture and provided in the environment some signs to which the native population could refer (Thus facilitating their assimilation); on the other hand they expressed spatially the structure of the centralised power. The recognition of the cultural differences did not mean a belief in equality; on the contrary, architecture and urban planification were considered as the ultimate means to demonstrate the superiority of the French as a civilization, as a nation, and as the members of a race. Moreover, the newtowns would recall and demonstrate this superiority to the Europeans themselves.

Can we speak of machiavelism, of cynism or of cold machination? If we did we would have to try, however, to not look at the French colonists monolithically.

For instance, there was a genuine interest of the architects for the local building traditions. It might well not have been the case for the administrators. The administrators, themselves, did not necessarily understand their action as a vast operation of propaganda in the service of the imperialist power but rather as the "Mission Civilisatrice de la France". Foucault has described (La Volonte de Savoir, Rabinow, p125) this kind of behavior: "The rationality of power, it is one of tactics, often very explicit at the limited level where they are inscribed (...) the responsible are often without hypocrisy."

The newtowns were designed to express the hierarchy of cultures. The administrative sector, like the industrial and residential sectors involved a segregation of the populations. The mixing of the native and European population was avoided -it was supposedly as bad for the native cultural integrity as for the health of the Europeans. In any case, the spatial discontinuity between the native
and European towns is probably one of the most striking characteristics of the French colonial urbanism. One can also argue, however, that this planned discontinuity was not only a "colonial reflex" but was also imbedded in the architects Cartesian rationalization of the problem of the modern town. The project of the "industrial city" of Tony Garnier is a case in point. Garnier had design this project in 1901-1902 as a model for the future industrial town. This plan, situated in France, is divided into differentiated functionnal zones, linked together around an existing town which is saved for the unique purpose of tourism. It is a similar pattern that H. Prost will follow in designing the new towns of Marocco.

I will now discuss of two significant planning and design experiences of the colonies; Ernest Hebrard in Indochine and Henri Prost in Marocco.
PROJECT FOR A WORLD CENTER OF COMMUNICATION: E. HEBRARD
E. Hebrard is still residing at the Villa Medici while he works on his project of the "World City". His project, in a way, parallels the industrial city of T. Garnier in that they both attempt to master the modern scale of the city. Contrary to Garnier, however, Hebrard does not attempt to change the architectural style of his building neither does he tries to escape from the Beaux - Arts type of master - plan composition.

His innovation is programatic. Hebrard tries to conceptualize the programme for a city at the world scale, linked electronically to all parts of the world. At the center of its composition lies the "Tower of progress" from where journalists from all over the world are sending the news of each scientific discovery found in the city (at a high productivity rate since the city would house the international elite.).

We must not judge from the central idea of the project (which has more to do with the spirit of the epoch than with Hebrard himself) that it is another utopian city. It is, in fact, the contrary. Hebrard has a very pragmatic spirit and he devotes a lot of attention to the planning of the circulation system. He looks for the technology available for a rapid transit system. The circulation layout is a refined system of avenues, turnarounds, water-canals and undergrounds.

The urban design reinforce the social segregation. The lower class residential neighborhoods are spatially separated from the center of the town (where all the monumental buildings, the great axis and the administration is housed) by a large canal. These neighborhoods are planned to be self-sufficient environments with their own theatre, museum, school and, of course, mairie.
One can notice that Hebrard does nothing more than, in fact, systematize and expands the principles that Haussmann had used in Paris - principles that could not have been totally systematized in Paris. The projects that Hebrard designs are, in essence, the city as Haussmann had seen it.

It is a city with lots of open spaces; an efficient city featuring the best traffic system possible, infrastructure network (power station and treatment plan for the town are centralized in one location), a city which, in general, will use the most advanced technologies. The city is transformed into a program of modern functions served by a rationalized environment. It is also a town that features an hierarchy of centers, creates a specialization of neighborhoods clearly separated and organize spatially for social segregation. It is striking that the program for the neighborhood centers is so similar to the one planned by Haussmann in the annexed parts of Paris.

The World city is symptomatic of what French urbanism will turn out to be until very recently. The city is considered rationally as a program of several functions which should be served by a spatial composition which should maximize their interaction and additionally be "beautiful". If those requirements are worked out the city should be a success and its inhabitants happy. Foucault spoke of this kind of program: "(the programs) are rationally calculated prescriptions to organize the institutions, to design space and to regulate behavior."(2)

This is precisely the task as formulated to Hebrard by the Gouverneur General du Vietnam Maurice Long. Hebrard had to design the administrative reorganization and the civic grandeur of the major towns of Vietnam. In addition Long wanted to
design, in Dalat, a summer station where the Europeans could recuperate. Hebrard was in charge of designing Dalat's detailed master plan as well as the administrative buildings, the sport facilities and the housing. In Hanoi the project was to restructure the administrative center: "The objective is to assemble all the administrative functions to one point in a manner suitable for a great country" stated the Governor General. If the long term strategy of the governor was to achieve the cooptation of the Vietnamese population to French values by designing such an environment and intensifying education programs it was not supported by all the colonial population. A hard-line tendency existed among the colonials and was supported by the professional group of the Public Works engineers formed in the "Grandes Ecoles" such as l'Ecole des Mines, l'Ecole Polytechnique, l'Ecole des Ponts et Chaussees and l'ecole Militaire Superieure. (It is worth noticing that the same Ecole des Ponts et Chaussees and the Ecole polytechnique provided, the former, the engineers, the latter the technocrats responsible for the worst developments of the fifties and early sixties, in France.)

In any case, the divergence of views is well exemplified by the difference of urbanisation as it happened in Saigon were the extremists colonials predominated and in Hanoi were the central authority exerted a severe control since it was to be the capital of the French administration. In Saigon a military engineer had designed a plan for a town of 500,000 inhabitants unrelated to the economic resources and the French population at the time that was characterised by an approach featuring military control design decisions such as large avenues but large open space. Moreover, in Saigon the speculation was so intense that it overwhelmed any attempt to comply with aesthetic considerations.

In his personal attempts to design Hebrard showed more subtlety and control. His plans were generally structured on several zones of which he had defined 4
types. The administrative center, the industrial sector, the recreationnal sector and the residential sector. In order to meet his objectives Hebrard worked out several zoning codes which were resisted by the colonials. Hebrard wanted to master the speculation and was criticized for this very reason. He attempted to use some new techniques such as statistics to plan for the future industrial expansion, project the need for sanitary installations and the like. Hebrard thought that he could at least slow down, if not stop the speculation in the name of the general interest.

A constant focus of Hebrard was to work at the centralization of the administrative and governmental buildings to express spatially the presence of the french model of centralized bureaucracy. In all his plans he pursued a second of his objectives of the world-city, the rapid transit circulation system. He implemented, in the 1920's, a network of tramways, paved the street with asphalt in Saigon and Hanoi. Hebrard was very impressed by the local architecture. He even made a fairly large journey to see the great monuments of Indochina. He hated the local European architects who persisted in constructing in the gothic style. He favored a comprehensive approach to the local traditions which would not be "pastiche", but would reinterprateate the native architecture through the European culture.

In short, the contact between the races was judged as a good thing, on the condition that this contact would be organised, stratified and mediated by the urban environment. Accordingly, an administrative reform was undertaken to integrate the local elites in the institutions.

PALACE OF THE GOVERNOR IN HANOI.
1.3 H. Prost and Marocco.

Thanks to a stronger control over the regions of the Maghreb (North-Africa) the achievements of French colonial urbanism in Marocco were realised at an even larger scale; that is at the scale of national and regional planning.

In effect, the example of Marocco shows the case of a country whose traditionnal urban and regional structure, although perfectly viable, was radically transformed for the sole purpose of the french economic and military interest. There was traditionnally four main centers in Marocco. Three of them were located in the interior of the country (Marrakech, Meknes and Fes) and one along the coast (Rabat-Sale). These cities had developed at a continuous pace and in a relative harmony; the sultan settling in each of the towns for a year. This allowed the town to keep a dominant place in their region for which they served as the central market. In addition, Marrakech, Meknes and Fes were integrated in a larger commercial network of international trade, since they were located on the road through which all the goods from West - Africa were transported to Europe.

The crystallization of the administration in the town of Rabat-Sale in a typical french bureaucratic and centralistic way and the development of existing and new coastal towns disrupted the traditionnal regionnal equilibrium of the country.

To the traditionnal organization of the city, where each neighborhood was autonomous and responsible for its maintenance, each merchant guild responsible for its own souk (market) and each religious organisation responsible for the maintenance of the mosques and schools the french colonialism imposed the municipality. For the Islamic law that allocated, to anyone, the right to freely use of the street space for any activity and for any one to construct corbelings
THE GRAND PLACE OF CASABLANCA (ex PLACE LYAUTEY)

THE BEAUX-ARTS ENSEMBLE OF HENRI PROST.
above the street; the French substituted the Code Napoleon that strictly prohibits
the rights enumerated above.

Finally, for a street network based on the circulation of camels; the French
substituted a urbanism based on vehicular circulation.

Although the first Europeans had settled in the Medina the first decision of the
Marechal Lyautey was to separate the Maroccan and European towns while
creating the latter at a distance from the former. Two reasons were provided for
this decision. Firstly this would preserve the cultural integrity of the Maroccans
and second, it would provide the space needed to design the modern towns the
Europeans were seeking, with all the hygienic and spatial requirements necessary.
Contrary to what had been argued, Prost and Lyautey did not want to totally
segregate the new towns, but were in favor of a controlled assimilation of the
local elite and its settlement in the new towns - an idea that Hebrard had reused
in Indochinae.

In any case, Prost was the first urbanist to have ever planned on a larger
scale without constraints. Berlage in Amsterdam, R. Unwin in Hampstead for
instance had only worked on extension projects within existing towns only. Prost
not only had to plan a large urban complex but had to integrate it in a regional
scheme. Thanks to his Parisian contacts with the Musee Social, Prost was able
to write a set of regulations codifying the architecture, the zoning and the
standards (specifically for hygiene). All the municipalities had to establish a Plan
Directeur and to create the local service for the control and the enforcement of
the regulations (1914 decree). It was not easy to find the competent staff.
Moreover, the speculation had burst and was almost out of control. Prost himself
describes the situation of Casablanca in 1914 as an “incredible chaos” where the
large estates constructed all over the place could have been, each “a possible center for the new town” and where an active speculation had “greatly hindered the action to which we owe the Casablanca of today.”. The land prices were so high that “lower income families had to group together to be able to build a small house several kilometers from the center.”. (3)

In Casablanca the work of Prost was essentially to build the administrative center and was the only place were he succeeded in designing a “Beaux-Arts ensemble”, thanks to the use of the Zone Non-Aedificandi. This ensemble, the place Lyautey regrouped the principal administration around a square. This square served later as the prototype of the civic square in all the municipalities of France. The rest of the town, in contrast, was built in a pretty chaotic manner.

In 1917, it already appeared to the authorities that they should plan a new settlement for the rural migrants. Because of the war no credits were available from the French government so that a rather complicated financial package had to be set up between the municipality, an Islamic institution in charge of the maintenance of the mosques, the Habous, and the land was given by a wealthy Jewish land owner. Prost gave the job to one of his closest collaborators, Laprade. Laprades’ approach to the medina was romantic and formalist. Although he was extremely sensitive to the genius-loci and to the local architecture in general, he adopted the attitude of an painter-architect rather than of an urban planner. His approach fell short of understanding the cultural and economic needs of a rural population as foreign as himself to the local kind of habitat. The new medina was quickly unable to house all the incoming migration and was, moreover, largely housing the richer families of the old medina. Another strategy was employed for the extension that consisted of 20 hectares of land serviced by a grid system of roads and the infrastructure on which the population
was allowed to construct themselves. ( The first site and service project? ). This project was more successful in meeting the original objectives. However, the French urbanism, in Marocco, essentially accomplished projects of the first type rather than of the second.

The town of Rabat clearly illustrates this point. In Rabat a series of factors had permitted the construction of formal projects. The direct control exerted on the town by the authorities between 1929 and 1930 made possible the construction, as planned, of all the administrative buildings. In terms of the objectives fixed by Prost it was a success. He had meet his two principal goals: To create a series of gardens inside the town and to bring the railroad to the heart of the city. As Prost put it himself, the construction of modern facilities and the design of the civic center were essential, the rest was secondary. This realisation, however, had been conducted in a structural void, since all the speculation had been artificially frozen. In the outskirts of Rabat and Casablanca, however, Prost had “succeeded” in creating the terrible conditions that already prevailed in the Parisian suburbs.
THE SUBURBS OF PARIS IN THE THIRTIES
The Paris suburbs: The urbanistic discours. The elaboration of strategies. The implementation of a technocratic planning structure.

"Poor suburbs of Paris, doormats of the city on which everyone wipes their shoes, spits and passes through, who thinks of them? No one. Overburdened with factories, cut up in rags, they are nothing but a soulless country, a damned workcamp, where smiling is useless a wasted effort, suffering obscur, Paris, "heart of France", what a joke! What an advertising! Its suburbs all over that collapse! Permanent martyrdom of hunger, of work (...) Who pays attention to them? No one of course. They are ugly and that's all"

Louis Ferdinand Celine,
Preface a Albert Sarouille, "Bezons a travers les ages"
Paris, Denoel, 1944.

Celine's description of Paris suburbs is particularly evocative of what the suburban life had become by 1944. I have already described how the policy of "laisser-faire" had characterised the authorities' behavior during the 1914-1944 period. In this chapter I will therefore discuss the different strategies of intervention which were conceptualised at this epoch. This is of interest to us because these schemes were similar, in essence, (and in structure of implementation) to the plans adopted, in 1965, for region of Paris.
In 1944, it is not exaggerating to say that Paris had found again, in the suburbs, its Feaubourgs of the pre-Haussmann period. The incapacity of the authorities to react to this situation might be explained by four factors:

1- The atmosphere was still affected by a negative reaction to Haussmanns' public works. (influence of associations for the conservation of Paris.)

2- The political class in general was not much interested in the suburbs. Perhaps all the attention (and the money) was turned into the colonies.

3- Even if they had wanted to implement a global plan in the suburbs the authorities would have had to deal with a number of 'difficult' municipalities.

4- To perform such a task required the building of a political consensus which was not an easy task.

5- No one really knew how to plan such a large and complex agglomeration.

In fact, it seems that this period served essentially to respond to these questions. The politico-administrative sphere, the architects, the economic leaders proceeded to exchange ideas, information, proposals to ultimately arrive at some sort of consensus. If the war had not happen, would these theories have been concretized? I would tend to think so. It is significant that major urban planning research continued during the war and that the Vichy government had promulgated in 1943 the 'Charte de l'Urbanisme'.

The problem of the suburbs could not have been ignored too long. For the political class they were a social and economic chaos, for the 'Avant-Garde'
architects a spatial and visual one. Between the political class and the modern architects began a marriage of interest.

The analysis of the progressive politicians begins with a horrified discovery: "(the suburbs) are the result of the multiplication of unplanned developments where no gas, electricity, water or sewer service is provided (...) Where will the parks be if no land is reserved today for such a use? (...) Without a subsequent plan for the future there is no economically feasible maintenance, no comfort and no beauty for our large cities." (4)

This analysis of G. Risler (a public administrator who, incidentally had a great influence on Hebrard) is typical of the atmosphere that prevailed in the public among the public authorities who, ultimately, in March 1919, voted for the law Cornudet that made it compulsory for each municipality to draft a development plan. From the first competition for an extension scheme of Paris in 1919 to the application decree voted as a result of the 'plan Prost' in 1932, a policy of urbanism of the Paris agglomeration slowly emerged.

On the field, however, only the speculators and the private developers are active. It seemed that the proficiency of great schemes and concepts elaborated in the public realm was inversely proportionnal to the capacity of the government to actually implement any sort of operation. In fact, it is the more vague but grandiose and visionary concept which will gain a broad consensus: "Le Plus Grand Paris." (litterally the largest Paris).

F. Latour, the first to formulate the idea justifies it in relation to subjective concepts and symbolic imagery: "(...) I doubt that the capital of Elegance and Good Taste can, without damage, remain encircled by sordid settlements and the
noxious zone." (5). As Latour asks for a "dictator of the Paris region" his idea is carried out in a number of official periodicals. One of these periodicals, 'Le Grand Paris' essentially focuses on the administrative set up that the realisation of such a concept requires, leaving totally the architectural dimension. 'Le Grand Paris' argues in favor of the unity of the region beyond the particularism (that is, their autonomy) of the communes.

A more elaborated version of the 'Grand Paris' concept proposed by another official, Guerard, is particularly evocative of the official state of mind in regard to the suburbs. Their restructuration can only be succeed if there is tight control and an important direct participation of the state in the process. Guerards' proposal is to transform the Paris agglomeration into a "French Washington" where all the principal functions and administrations of the central state would be scattered all over the suburbs. (6)

Although this idea is perfectly consistent with the concept of centralism (it just proposes a change of scale of the center), it is opposed by a second "reflex", complementary to the first, which is the "crystallization" of the centre. The "crystallized" center had remained stable until Haussmann dramatically changed its scale. Perhaps it was too early (on the scale of history) to expand it again. It might be true that cities have to take some time to recover from their mutations and restructure themselves. In any case, the proposal of Guerard was not, at that time, considered.

In fact, it is only the industries that the authorities will agree to deconcentrate. "Since we all agree that Paris, capital of Elegance, should not be polluted by noxious fumes; it is legitimate to consider the industry as the enemy." But there is another kind of pollution that it is urgent to deal with: "In
addition to these aesthetic considerations we must worry of the socio - political aspects of this situation, which are rather depressing: when one thinks of the enormous influence that Paris exerts in both moral and material terms; one can seriously worry at seeing see the capital encircled by the “red belt”. There is, however, a possible solution: ” The medication against the red belt it is not the repression, nor is it the restriction, but it is the betterment (...) all of this can be translated in terms of urbanism; Let's transform the red belt into a green belt[6]In this declaration the political nature of the urban scheme is clearly expressed. The aim of the plan is not to better the living conditions of the working class, per-se, but to avoid that the terrible conditions of the suburbs tranform " the little estate owner in a revolter against the social order." (7)

The mythical vision of Paris as the capital (of France, of Elegance, etc, ) the broad vision of the Grand Paris, the obsession with a close control and preponderant participation of the state over any redevelopment process of the Paris region, will significantly complicate the task of the authorities to formalize and implement a scheme. The decision will only be taken when a strong leader will cut short the endless debates. This leader will be De Gaulle, and the time 1965. One can evaluate the amount of time lost in the process. This structural hesitation of the authorities is very well explained by the following analysis of M. Crozier of the "intellectual climate" of France before the sixties: " In French bourgeois society (...) the problems posed by change is responded to by an ever increasing centralization of institutions and of the system of social relations. As a consequence, a change in any part of the whole, even a minor one, really challenged the general equilibrium of society. (...) The successive steps of action are clearly seen but they are understood much more in a historical sense than in a prospective sense. More emphasis is placed on material determinism than on the mechanism of change of action or change,(...) Ends are discussed in relation to
moral and religious principles, and means are analyzed in a mechanistic perspective. They deal only with ideal functioning, the one best way, and refuse to take into account the role of the independant human element on which they must rely. (...) Substantive issues have thus to be dealt within such an intransigent way that they cannot be well understood, and one cannot either resolve them or make them advance in a rational way.”(8)

The only consensus gained in the Thirties was on the technocratic nature of the organization to be charge of the planning of the Paris region. All political parties (with the exception of the communist party which had an obvious interest in retaining the integrity of independence of the municipalities) agreed on the need of setting up a special body, directly related to the state that would take all the responsabilties in setting up the Paris regional plan. The Comite Superieur de l'Amenagement et de l'Organisation de la Region Parisienne replaced in June 1928 the Conseil General de la Seine. Thus, the elected officials were replaced by technocrats of the central administrations of the state, as the planners of the future of the Paris region.
CHAPTER IV
PLANNING IN THE POST WAR ERA.

Introduction

The policy of Haussmann had achieved what it intended to do. It is a model which is still praised (or attacked) today by many planners. However, as with almost any urban (or, largely, economic) strategy the solution contains the seeds of another problem. The suburbs began to develop themselves at an unprecedented rate and we have seen that the following governments were incapable of undertaking a subsequent strategy. The result, in the suburbs, is catastrophic. At the national scale it will increase dramatically the economic imbalance between Paris and the Region. Paris attraction became absolute because all the national railway and all the road networks converged in in Paris. In Paris were concentrated all the industries and all the intellectual forces of France. This, in turn, was another reason for more industries to locate in the Paris region—that is, close to the place where scientific discoveries were made and where a host of small size entreprises were located that could handle intermediary jobs. Wealth in
the Paris region was much higher than anywhere else in France; the wages were three times greater. This fact alone was enough of a motivation to attract all the skilled labor of France to Paris. This fact was again another reason for the industries to locate themselves in the Paris region. This circular movement is responsible for the unprecedented rural exodus that France experienced. At the same time several regions of France began to dramatically decline. The people were not only attracted to Paris because of the wages but also because of the incredible fame of “Paris, the City of lights”. The lights of the “confort urbain” and of Paris’ intellectual life.

1. The reconstruction.

1.1 The Political Situation

After the war, until 1954, when De Gaulle returns to power a series of unstable governments took office. This instability was caused by the structure of the ‘Parliamentary regime’; that is a regime where the assemblies (the Legislative power) had more power than the government (the Executive). This caused the governements to change as quickly as the alliance between the political parties would shift. As De Gaulle came back into power, he changed this situation by drafting a new constitution for the Fifth Republic that created a situation of “Presidential regime” where the power was, in effect, in the hands of the Executive, that is the government. The president replaced the prime minister as the leading figure of the government. Moreover, in a characteristic Gaullist conception the prime minister was the head of the political majority, while the president was the head of all the French. In defining this role of the president, De Gaulle was actually renewing the tradition of the charismatic leaders of France.
A tradition of leaders (Grands Hommes) that had come to power at crucial times of French history to save the country from dismemberment. Indeed, this kind of ruler managed France above the corporate interest and the political factions. This might explain, in part, why no plan for the Paris region had been implemented before the 1965 plan. Indeed, the Paris region was, in essence, a politically very difficult region to restructure. One could say that it really took all the power of De Gaulle to effectively launch a plan for the Paris region. However, other factors had played an important role. In effect, two reasons were pleading for a quick reorganisation of the French economic base. The first one was obviously to recover from the damages created by the war. The second one was to take care of the delay in the industrial development accumulated during the war and the physical destruction of several cities.

1-2 The economic situation and shifts in planning theory.

The reconstruction and the modernization of France was felt as the first priority. The problems that its own expansion had caused to Paris were considered a less urgent task that could be tackled later. In any cases, the reconstruction efforts were carried out at the Liberation, were carried out by the 'Delegation a l'Equipement National' which then included a smaller body called the 'Service a l'Amenagement du Territoire'. This service would later become more important as the 'Ministere de la Reconstruction'. The Reconstruction efforts did not focus on Paris which had been saved, whereas several cities had been totally destroyed by the bombardements and were reconstructed between 1947 and 1960. Two famous reconstructions of this kind are the one of Saint-Malo under the direction of the architect Louis Arretche and Le Havre under the direction of the architect Auguste Perret. However, a second element made the reconstruction efforts even
more urgent. After the war the country was facing a baby-boom. This phenomena was not due to the end of the war (as it was first thought) since this trend was repeated in 1947 and 1948. In fact, the explanation of this phenomena laid in the effect of the family legislation adopted in 1939 which provided financial incentives for larger families. At the same time France was witnessing a demographic rejuvenation. Consequently, France had to undertake a serious effort of economic rejuvenation. Jean Monet, as he was presenting the report for the plan in 1946, stigmatized the situation in the formula: "Modernization or Decadence". For the first time a coherent industrial plan supported by a massive involvement of the administration and a subsequent financial strategy had been developed. This effort was coupled with a sensitivity for a better geographical equilibrium of economic activities. Between 1945 and 1950 the first elements of a policy of "Amenagement du territoire" began to emerge. Such a policy was a breakthrough and had never been attempted before the war. Although no plan had been drafted for the Paris region, its expansion was envisionned in a very new fashion. The idea of its infinite expansion began to be seriously questioned. The example of the importance of London relative to the rest of England served as a reference. A. Demangeon, in his monograph of Paris, was very typically asking the question: "Is it good that this collosal town expand forever,attracting new inhabitants from all over the country?". In fact, this reversal of attitude came from the studies of a research group, composed mainly of technicians, who had worked, during the war at the 'Delegation Generale de l'Equipement National'. These researchers had documented some of the disparities of French regional development. These disparities became even more evident with the publication of a book written originally as a report for the 'Ministere de la Reconstruction et de l'Urbanisme' by a geographer: J.F.Gravier. The book "Paris et le Desert Francais" was a virulent essay against the centralization of France in Paris and the resulting decline of the French regions. Its tone was provocative:
"(...) So, in all the domains, the Paris region has acted, since 1850, not as a metropole irrigating its backcountry, but as a monopolistic group eating the national substance. The region of Paris multiplies, in the regions, the consequences of the first industrial revolution and sterilize most of the provincial economies (...). Paris has confiscated all the decision centers, all the conception centers, all the major activities and left to the rest of France the subordinnate activities. This relation of dependance is really a feature of a colonial regime. (1)

Three years later, Eugene Claudius Petit, the minister of reconstruction and urbanism enunciated a significant policy in a brochure appropriately named "For a National Plan of the Territory". The brochure argued for a national plan that would improve the distribution of the population of the country in relation to its resources. It called for the decentralization of new and expanding industries in regional centers as well as an even repartition of the universities and other public cultural facilities. Ultimately, the manifesto of J.F.Gravier and the Claudius-Petit marked the first reversal in the attitude of the administration towards urban and regional development. A number of actions were then taken such as the creation of a "National Fund for the Amenagement of the territory". However, the administration was resilient to the establishment of an effectively decentralized policy. In fact, all the changes were controlled and administrated by the technocracy with very little input from local officials and no consultation of the residents of the interested regions.
The need for decentralization was very real. If the expansion of several sectors of the economy had permitted sizeable increases in the populations of middle-sized towns such as Saint-Etienne, Lille, Nantes, Bordeaux, and Toulouse, in the first part of the century, and increases for Dijon, Reims, Grenoble, and Clermont-Ferrand in the second half of the century, the bulk of the nation's economic activities remained concentrated in Paris, Lyon, Marseille—the three largest cities. The structure of France urban pattern, however, did not imply such a concentration. On the contrary, it was characterized by a great number of urban settlements linked together by very well-developed road and railroad systems. However, if this network was leaving scarcely a corner of the country remote, it essentially consisted of a large number of small-sized roads and railroads that could only be used for people commuting and not for extensive industrial freight. This last type of activity was only possible along the very scarce main axes of circulation which divided economic France into two parts. The dividing line was drawn from the mouth of the Seine (Le Havre) to the mouth of the Saone-Rhone river basins (Marseille). Most of French industrial activity was located on one side of the line that is the North, the East, the Rhone valley, and the Mediterranean coast. These selective developments were rather logical since the east and the north had superior primary resources as well as a larger market with the foreign peripheral region, themselves very well developed. The Rhone Valley was the natural link between the north and the south (others path were unpracticable because of the two major mountains chains in either side of the valley: the Massif Central and the Alpes.). The cities on the Mediterranean coast had prospered since Antiquity thanks to the extensive trade with other cities of the Mediterranean sea. They had always been an important link in the commercial exchange between the Occident and the Orient. Some activity had developed on the other side of the line but it had never reached more than minor growth. "Excluding Paris, cities of 100,000 or more west of the Le Havre-Marseille
diagonal had about half of the population of equivalent cities in on the other side of the line; with the inclusion of Paris the ratio dropped to one to six. (2)

However, the growth of the wealthy regions themselves was offset by the one of the Paris region within the Seine Basin. “In 1861, this region had accounted for one out of every thirteen persons in France, by 1962 it contained one out every 5.5 Frenchmen” (3). This expansion was not surprising. Paris had been the political and administrative center of France since the Middle-Ages. The 18 Century had crystallized all of the French intellectual and artistic world within its territory. The second empire with Haussmann had transformed the city into an economic tool which had successfully attracted both the enterprises and the labor force. Finally, the July Monarchy had designed the Paris centered railroad system that would multiply all the preceding factors. The only east-west tranversal of the railroad network was not a decision of its designer, the engineer Jean-Baptiste Legrand but was a concession obtained by the author Lamartine (then also a deputy) after a particularly violent campaign in the National Assembly. The dominance of Paris resulted in an increasingly substantial population loss for the rest of the nation:

By the end of World war II, the vast majority of the eighty-nine departments in metropolitan France were experiencing a decided decline in population. This marked the culmination of a century-old trend: from 1831 to 1862, the number of such departments had risen from 0 to 33; by 1901 the number had risen to 45; and by 1946 it had reached 71” (4).

II Planification of Paris in the Fities. The First Schemes.

The first draft of the Paris plan was presented in 1950. A committee studied its more controversial elements and presented a report to the council in December 1951. Its proposals were mainly concerned with ensuring the easy
movement of wheeled vehicles over the next hundred years. Other fundamental elements were the reconstruction of Les Halles on the same site and the creation of a business district to the north of the right bank's center. Otherwise, the right bank center was little affected. The artistic importance of Le Marais was recognized. No street improvement of this neighborhood was planned since it would have resulted in the destruction of most of the greatest aristocratic hotels of the area (The hotels were concentrated along the potential new circulation axis). The proposal was heavily criticized because of the extensive demolitions and its failure to provide new buildings to replace them. In any case, the proposal was firstly too ambitious, secondly the proposed scheme was very unlikely to make a major contribution to the traffic problem. Its rejection triggered a brand new approach to the problems of the center. In 1952, several counselors presented a report calling for the improvement of the traffic flow by the decongestion of the center. They wanted to see parking restrictions imposed, parking lots and pedestrian subways built, the railway terminal moved to the outskirts, an express metro constructed and the Halles decentralized to the suburbs. Although the city authorities themselves were beginning to shift towards decentralization, the city council approved in 1953 the second part of a development plan. This decision, however, was purely academic since considerable delays were expected for its implementation due to a lack of funds. Meanwhile, the city and the government were studying new strategies to reduce the pressure on the city instead of attempting to meet ever increasing demands. This led to the study of a plan at the regional scale.

III The First Regional Plan: The P.A.D.O.G.
The recognition of the problem caused by the lagging regions and the development pressure in Paris and its suburbs caused a dramatic revision in the scenarios to be adopted in the future national plans. It was clear, however, that any new policy objectives had to be carefully balanced with the need to foster maximum growth for the nation—an objective in which Paris still had to play a predominant part. A second problem was that, in the postwar period, there were no instruments to conduct a policy of industrial relocation or to control the land for restructurations. All the tools had to be invented. It is the Mendes-France government, elected in 1954, that was the first to take a firm stand for decentralization. In September 1954, a law created a fund to facilitate the adaptation of industry and the industrial decentralization.” More importantly, a law of January 1955 made it compulsory to obtain a permit from the municipality, before the building of any industrial plot of more than 500 square meters of surface in the Paris region. The next government, the Edgard-Faure government, voted a number of even more ambitious laws that, notably, created the “Society of Regional Development” (S.D.R.). These institutions acted as banks whose specific aims would be to finance the economic development of the regions. Another essential part of the law was the related installation of the “Programs for Regional development”. The Ministry of Finance, however, refused to subsidize these programs. The principal interest actually lay in the fact that they defined specific territories that became the 22 current administrative regions. As these actions towards the economic decentralization of France were launched, the investment activity remained seriously depressed.

What was clearly needed in the 1950’s was the study of a new comprehensive global plan for the entire Paris region. In effect, the population had continue to grow when no effort had been made to give to the region the facilities it desperately needed. Then, in 1958, a group within the Ministry of the Reconstruction quickly drafted a plan called the Plan d’Amenagement et
d'Organisation Generale de la Region Parisienne (P.A.D.O.G.). The plan dealt with general principles but included no study on costs or staging.

Between 1958 and 1962, the ministry of construction, Pierre Sudreau, took up a number of actions in favor of Paris decentralization. He created the Institut d'Amenagement et d'Urbanisme de la Region Parisienne, a special organisation of planners and architects that would study and carry out metropolitan planning strategies for the Paris region. It is in a context favorable to the decentralization of Paris that the P.A.D.O.G. was approved by decree in August 1960, as an interim plan for the years 1960-1970. The philosophy of the P.A.D.O.G. was close to the one at the basis of the English experience and was, in fact, largely inspired by the Greater London Plan. The P.A.D.O.G. had several major goals: The first one was the stabilization of Paris. In order to achieve this objective it was proposed to reduce the growth migration to 50,000 a year (a cut of 50,000 to 80,000 of the annual volume of migration for the 1955-1960 period). This would limit the growth of Paris to 100,000 a year and keep the total 1970 population of the region at 9.4 millions. A second major objective of the plan was to restructure the suburbs of Paris which had been widely urbanized since the second empire and for which no plan had been studied (except for the Prost plan of 1934). It is in this area that the need for an important restructuration was the greatest. If the slums of the Zone had disappeared ten years ago, the structural problems of the suburbs had not been yet tackled. Once again, the official reaction was to create a green belt to aerate the fabric and control development. The second part of the strategy was to develop four principal and eight secondary nodes to revitalize the suburbs. These nodes would provide the suburbs with the facilities, the housing and the transportation network they missed. These nodes, it was believed would give the necessary "push" that would foster economic development in these depressed areas. A third major point of the plan was to develop a series of new-towns outside the influence area of Paris. These new towns would alleviate
the development pressure from Paris and its suburbs, making possible, namely, the creation of the green belt. Therefore, the new towns were planned to reinforce the economic development of the ring of existing secondary towns located within a range of 60 Kilometers from Paris. A last point of the plan was to divide the region of Paris into zones within which a specific range of taxes and premiums was used to encourage or discourage the location of industrial and commercial activity. In addition, a number of industrial areas and substantial subsidies programs were planned to effectively influence the relocation of enterprises. It is important to understand, however, that the planners always thought that they would have to accommodate the planned population growth within the existing conurbation - even if the P.A.D.O.G was a major effort to alleviate this growth in the future. The new nodes, in a sense, were planned to take accommodate the first wave of growth to come (relieving Paris center from more pressure and disturbance) while the effects of the new towns was not believed to be instrumental before a more distant future. It is in this perspective, that one can understand the development of the 'La Defense' operation which was located at the fringe of Paris and at the termination of the great perspective of the Tuileries. La Defense was a large complex of office towers, very similar to what was developing in the U.S.A.. The idea of the planners was to displace the construction of office towers outside of the city. An essential feature of the plan was to link the new nodes together with an adequate transportation system, based on a radiating network of motorways. A new express metro system (to be connected with existing railway lines) would provide rapid transit throughout the region and revitalize some of the more distant suburbs.

In short, the P.A.D.O.G. represented a policy of limitation of growth combined with the greatest possible measures to improve the services, equipment and amenities for those who would continue to live and work in the Paris region. The Ministry's official brochure on the P.A.D.O.G. stressed that the plan had the double
The task of establishing a balance between Paris and the provinces and of improving the living and working conditions inside the Paris region itself.

HYPOTHESE (NON RETENUE) DE VILLES NOUVELLES CONCUES COMME UNE "COURONNE" DE POINTS ISOLES

THE PARIS NEWTOWNS IMPLEMENTATION PROSEED BY THE P.A.D.O.G.
THE FIRST OF A LONG SERIE OF URBAN DEVELOPMENTS: LA DEFENSE
In conjunction with the urban policies enumerated in the Fifth plan a very ambitious plan was to be carried out in the Paris region. The plan had been studied by different agencies under the guidance of the newly created District de la Region de Paris. The district paralleled the current responsible agencies for the Paris region to, in fact, short-circuit them and facilitate the delivery of the programs and the implementation of the plan. (This strategy, incidentally, is very similar to the one adopted in Boston by mayor Collins with the creation of the B.R.A.).

The District supervisor was Paul Delouvrier a man who had the confidence of De Gaulle who had previously sent him in Constantine (Algeria) to manage there a very large housing plan. When Delouvrier meets De Gaulle to discuss the strategies for the Paris region; he is given the lapidary instructions: “It is important politically for France that Paris regains the image of a modern city. Order must be made in there.” De Gaulle knows that “something must be done, but he does not know what. In any cases, the Schema Directeur d’Amenagement et d’Urbanisme (S.D.A.U.) was published in 1965 and approved in 1968. The S.D.A.U. rejected and denied the strategy advocated in the previous plan, the P.A.D.O.G.. The idea of relieving the long term growth from the region and to divide it between the peripheral secondary towns and manage the middle term growth was judged as a retrograde, possibly Malthusianist approach. On the contrary, the plan proposed to accommodate all the expansion to come within the conurbation and to enhance the modern scale of Paris as one of the leading international metropolis. The only concession to the Paris centered growth was the provision of the Equilibrium Metropolis and the Development Corridors of the Seine and of the Rhone (with the Rhone-Rhin linkage project). But, even the plan for the Seine development corridor was marked by Parisian egocentrism: The S.D.A.U. does not
define a Parisian region closed on herself but (...) projects towards Rouen and the sea (...) the directions in which (...) Paris, if it is needed, will advance.” (5) This language, one might say, is almost a 'colonialist' language. In any cases, it is doubtless that the development corridors were profitable in the first instance, to the three major cities: Paris, Lyon and Marseille. In fact, the S.D.A.U. took its place in the series of decisions that had favored Paris during history. Consequently, the rational behind the plan was seriously biased by a realm of politico-symbolic gestures in which Paris had an incredible value. Indeed, the plan (as well as the way it had been drafted and carried out) was very reminiscent to what had happened under the Second Empire. The concept of “Grand Design” was back again as well as the set of conditions necessary to carry it out: a great political leader, a strong regime and an expanding economy. Even the special relationship between the political leader and the ‘maitre d oeuvre’ was replicated. In effect, one can say that Delouvrier was De Gaulle’s Haussmann without being far from truth. Unlike the P.A.D.O.G., the S.D.A.U. was not an ordinary document with legal value but an “instrument of orientation” for administrative action. This allowed for an extreme vagueness of the details of implementation, particularly for financing. It also gave the maximum leeway in its interpretation when those responsible had to defend it against the criticism of its opponents. This might also explains its literary rather than factual content. Montaigne, Peguy and Valery are cited. But the most significant quote is the one of the ancient greek author Seneque which was dramatically placed on the front page: “It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare, it is because we do not dare that things are difficult”. (1) This quote gives the dimension of the development to come. And, indeed, the plan is not the product of a narrow mind! The description of the objectives of the S.D.A.U. by Llyod Rodwin in his book ‘City and Nations is particularly evocative of the dimensions of the scheme: “...It proposed (the S.D.A.U.) a variety of innovations for the Paris region: three regional railway
express lines, ten principal radial highways plus secondary auto routes, three ring roads, the provision of essential utilities and community services in the outers areas and a major effort to change the form of the city by stressing east-west linear travel networks and growth patterns to reduce the traffic bottlenecks created by the older system. The plan sought to relieve population pressure by accomodating families in the outer city and in eight self-contained new towns, each serving about 300,000 to 500,000 people. The bulk of these ideas was incorporated in the Fifth plan. (...) The Schema Directeur did not spell out costs, priorities, or means. But one measure of the stragerring sums involved was that the estimated cost for the building of the metros and highways alone ranged from 20 million to 100 million francs ($5 million to $20 million by kilometer)" (6)

In order to offset the fuzzyness of the study, the plan needed a strong argument. Hence, all the dialectic effort of the S.D.A.U. was concentrated in the prevision of growth of the population from 8.5 millions in the mid-sixties to "14 millions inhabitants of the Paris region at the year 2000." This was based on a population growth of 150,000 per year over the previous twenty years and of 135,000 per year between 1954 and 1962. Of this approximatively 50,000 represented natural increase and 85,000 immigration. Even if immigration was stopped , the population of Paris would reach 11 million in 1985 based on these assumptions. To stop migration of its population over the next twenty years the regions had to receive at least 60% of all new industrial jobs.

These scenarios, however, were based on the assumption that the expansion would exclusively take place in the cities. The projected growth of Paris was calculated in comparision to urban France and represented an increase superior to the national average. The statement that " For the Paris region not to double before the end of the century, the totality of all the other towns of France should double." (3) did not take in account the possibility of development of the rural districts and of the small towns, although this had been the case in others
countries of Europe such as Germany and England. The British experience, for instance, was ignored or even travestied in the plan. The fact that the London agglomeration was, then, less populated than before the war was not mentioned. Instead, the numbers to which the plan referred to as the ones of the agglomeration of London corresponded, in fact, to the South-West of England.

It might well have been, in the thinking of the authors of the S.D.A.U., that one cannot launch such an ambitious project without frightening the public and thus 'manipulate' the numbers. But, if it was not on the basis of accurate projections; what was the force that did actually moved the system to implement such a difficult plan?

I will suggest a number of reasons. Firstly, there was a real preoccupation for the future of France. This was a real obsession for someone like De Gaulle, whose sincere and uninterested commitment to France was unquestionable. Yet, we know that, even though he was not interested in the details of the project, De Gaulle was the one that ultimately decided its form and scale. What is then the scale at which someone like De Gaulle thinks? It is the historical scale. His judgement and appreciation of France's relative position in the future world is based from the perspective of events such as Yalta. Yalta had been the traumatic lesson that taught De Gaulle that France could ultimately stop being one of the great nations of the world. And if there was one thing on which De Gaulle would not compromise it was "la grandeur de la France". In face of this perspective, of this terrible certitude that France could eventually become a secondary country, unaccuratenumbers had little importance. What does the year 2000 represents other than a symbolic time, a point intime when symbolic time, a point when France will have to have 'meet the challenge' of the modern world. The numbers projected for the year 2000 are not correct? They will be true 25 of 50 years later. At the scale of history this does not really matter. And if the population
is not there by this time, living in a powerful and organized metropolis, that certainly means that France "has lost her appointment with the future" that it had become a minor country of the modern world. This absolute vision of the modern world and of the need to modernize France by any means (that is to construct "American highways", American office space zones, American supermarkets, modern housing projects and the like) is very well expressed in this citation of P. Delouvrier "The France of 100 million inhabitants was dwelling in him (De Gaulle): I was fitting in his views."

These views, in any case, were placed by the authors of the S.D.A.U. in the realm of historical continuity. They emphasized the permanence, over time, of Paris as the center of France: "Celtic village, roman borough, town of the Kings that assembled France, capital of the state (...), common fatherland of the French and one of the prominent good of all men of this planet, Paris has already gone through 20 centuries (...). There is a permanence of Paris in its spirit and soul, a permanence of Paris "France of France". There should not exist a plan that fails to recognize this past and this permanence. The S.D.A.U. came at a point of recommencement of which the story of Paris is staked out. The S.D.A.U. also insists on the permanence of the functions of Paris: "Very early, a large town - since the Middle-Ages by far the largest town of France and for long the largest town of Europe - (...) Paris has always exercised four important functions: Paris political capital of the country, mother of university, religious center and merchant town." The plan then argued that, although the functions of university and religious center are not being questioned, the function of commercial center is endangered by national competition. In terms of the function of Paris as the political capital, the authors of the S.D.A.U. explain that it only has been questioned by "some Parisian political personalities that wished to have a mayor in Paris." or by "some fervent regionalist that believe that to decentralize the capital would activate the decentralization, or by some lover of new capital in the
fields." On the contrary, the authors of the S.D.A.U. argued that Paris should become "the living heart of the region and of the agglomeration in its new dimensions.". The new scale of the region did not imply by any means "...the immobilism of Paris intra-muros." This was "out of the question". Why? Because the ultimate goals of the S.D.A.U. were to multiply by three the role of Paris as a central place: "Paris will give to itself the means to play, in accordance with the needs of the end of the century, the following roles: 1- Its irreplaceable role of heart of the urban region in its totality. 2- Its unique vocation as the political, cultural and economical capital. 3- Its shared mission of European and Worldwide metropolis."

"So that Paris intra-muros, city more essential, will remain the most complete town of the world.". It is the Paris region in its totality, revolving around its ancient but renewed nucleus, that becomes, once more, the symbolic center of France: "So after the Civitas Parisorium, after the medieval town, after the 'Grande Ville' of the Enlightenment, after the agglomeration of the industrial era (...) we witness everyday the formation of the urban region of Paris."

In effect, a number of operations were carried out in Paris intra-muros. These restructurations resulted in the destruction of entire neighborhoods of Paris, namely in the 13, 15 and 20th Arrondissements which correspond to the territory that Haussmann had integrated into the city in 1861. These neighborhoods, which were one of the most essential elements of the plans of Haussmann were not considered to merit any effort of preservation as opposed to the Arrondissements of the historical core. A part of the question of the quality of their architecture, the inner ring and outer ring Arrondissements were different by their social composition:
the former were inhabited by the higher social classes whereas the outer ring Arrondissements essentially housed the middle and lower middle class. This circumstance should probably be also taken in account to understand why the restructuration of Paris systematically avoided the center but focused extensively in the outer ring Arrondissements.

In any case, a cheap imitation of american high-rises began to replace the traditionally low-rise fabric built until then. These new buildings not only destroyed the silhouette of the neighborhoods but they destroyed the spatial organisation and life, the sens of street, the mixed use housing commerce etc. In short, they destroyed a skillfully designed environment, perfectly suitable, for the development of neighborhood life for the sake of building a modern environment which provoked the disruption of scale and destructuration of neighborhood life.

The restructuration of the peripheral neighborhoods essentially consisted of housing projects since the development of facilities occured in selected locations such as La Defense, le Front de Seine, etc. This means that none of the productive investment was, in fact, geared to these areas that were to become dormitory cities under the conjonction of the physical destruction of their commercial base and the lack of investment to replace it. If this result was, maybe, not intentionnal in the planners strategy it was, I think, imbedded in their conception of modernity and their notion that some arrondissements deserved the bulk of the investments while the others had to serve as housing areas for the former. In any case, three operations were especially significant of this dichotomic view and of this strategy of concentration of investment.

The first and more important one was the one that had began with the P.A.D.O.G : the office complex of La Defense which was to be carried out and even
enlarged with the S.D.A.U. Interestingly, the site of La Defense was chosen later by the French director Jacques Tati as the setting of his movie "Playtime" which depicted the quest of a group of American tourists -lost in an 'Americanized' environment- for the "real Paris". Tati was ironic about the absurdity of such an environment where typical French characters of the lower social groups seemed ridiculously displaced as they attempted to live and work in an environment that tenuously resisted them. But the more acute of Tati's critics was perhaps reserved to the higher class of office employees that was (with various degrees of success) attempting to integrate this "modern" environment and its new laws. The object of the entire movie was obviously to warn the public of the risk of losing the essence of French spirit if a modernization policy of the environment and the society would be further(and blindly)developed. This message was eventually well understood by a large fraction of the French society and, in fact, further developed during the events of May 1968. These changes in the public thinking towards the problems of urbanization and architecture eventually prompted the new 'environmentalist' policy of Giscard of which I shall talk later.

Three other such nodes of development were programmed in Paris. The "Front de Seine" operation was developed along the river in an area adjacent to the site of the Tour Eiffel. Initially, it was planned to later develop a similar operation in the other side of the Seine which was almost entirely stopped because of the increasing resistance that such projects were to encounter. The part that got built, however, featured a "Manhattan-like" skyline with corporate office towers, an international hotel, a small number of expensive apartments in high-rises; the ensemble resting on a pedestrian slab under which was located the parking silos. In short, it was a miniature replication of the La Defense project on a smaller scale and with a hotel and some fancier shops, due to its central location.
Another similar project had been developed as the restructuration of the Montparnasse railway station took place. At the same time, on some fields remained unused by the new station, a complex was developed that would feature the highest building in Paris: the Montparnasse office tower. The project construction began in 1975, even though it was strongly opposed by a large number of people who argued that it would destroy a number of the main vistas of Paris namely the Trocadero, Tour Eiffel and Invalides perspective in which the tower would be highly visible. The last node to be planned within Paris was Les Halles. The old market was displaced to Rungis and the center of the new regional metro system (R.E.R.) that would link the projected new towns was placed there. The question of what to plan on the surface arose. The first plan presented by the by the Atelier Public d'URbanisme de la ville de Paris (Paris' planning agency) was to develop a 'World Trade Center' that would give to Paris a facility equivalent to what the other world metropolis had. However, this particular project encountered an enormous resistance which became, in a sense, the symbol of rejection of the urban planification of

In conclusion we can say that the forces that planned the Paris region are of a symbolic nature as much as they reflect objective needs. This realm can explain why the study of the Paris region was rushed and restricted to a limited group of officials instead of being studied by the regular competent agencies. This is what motivated declarations such as the emphatic "Paris is our Rhur" or De Gaulle "Go ahead" as a comment on Delouvriers' conclusions in the the preparatory report on the Paris region. However, another element, of a political order, also help explain the planning decisions of the S.D.A.U.. The Gaullists had always feared that France, as a nation, might get caught between economically expanding and increasingly independant regions and the supra-national ensemble of the Common
market, soon to be realized. It is quite significant that the authors of the S.D.A.U. felt the necessity to deny in advance such an implication of the plan. " It should be avoided to give a geopolitics dimension to choices that we, in fact, have situated at a more restricted level (...) [such as] to orient the extension of the Paris agglomeration (...) [in order] to 'meet' the Common Market." (6) In any case, the urbanization strategy of the S.D.A.U. created an "etat de fait" that decided for the future of France (without consulting its citizen) which would remain a nation unified under the leadership of Paris and the central government. It is such a system that the events of 1968 rejected. In fact De Gaulle himself had foreseen the growing discontentment and was tried to deal with the explosive situation a few months before he had to resign. A quote from a speech he gave in Lyon, in March 1968, shows it and "in fact, sums up very well the philosophy that had guided his urban policy. " The multisecular effort of centralization which was for a long time necessary for France to realize and maintain its unity (...) is not obligatory today. On the contrary, it is the regional activities that appear as the provider of the economic power of tomorrow." I would like in the next section to discuss what is in, my opinion, the most significant and important aspect of the plan; the paris region new towns.
CHAPTER V
THE PARIS REGION NEW TOWNS POLICY.

Introduction.

The central scheme of the S.D.A.U. was the proposal for the creation of eight new towns in the suburbs of Paris. Similarly to the rest of the plan, the new towns proposal differed totally from the P.A.D.O.G. proposal. Since the orientation of the plan was to accommodate the growth within the region it was necessary to implement the new towns as close to Paris as possible. The idea of constructing the new towns at the proximity of the secondary towns of the region was therefore not a valid one anymore. An additional argument, given against the P.A.D.O.G. proposal, was that the new towns (now projected to accommodate a population of 500,000 inhabitants each) would, in fact, compete rather than support the old towns. The circular pattern of implementation was also rejected. It was objected that this was an amorphous solution. The authors of the S.D.A.U. argued that, on the contrary, the new towns should be implemented according specific "lignes de force". It was then decided to implement the new towns according to
two west-east parallel axes extending on each side of Paris. They were to be structured by the new regional express metro system. The choice of the two axes was not random. The parallel axes were seen as the prolongation, in the Paris region, of the Seine development corridor. Each new town should be provided with an "urban center" that would create the sense of a "real town in opposition to the uniform succession of characterless dormitory suburbs or the desert of the "Grands ensembles"- the apartment block cities that had flourished in the suburbs since the Fifties. The creation, in each new town, of an urban center of regional importance was also seen as an opportunity to provide the social amenities and the jobs that were lacking in the suburbs - especially in the poor working class suburbs of the east. It is contradictory, however, that at the same time the construction of a huge office area in the "pole restructurateur" of La Defense, coupled with the new town of Cergy-Pontoise, continued to be carried out with great intensity. In effect, these two centers 25 Kilometers apart and connected by the R.E.R. and a new freeway (It was even programmed at one point to install a super rapid aerial train that would shuttle between the two) created a pole of attraction that precluded any chance of attraction of the entreprises to the east - a region where they are reluctant to settle at the first place.

![Diagram showing two parallel axes to break the radio concentric development of the Paris region.](image)

TWO PARALLEL AXIS TO BREAK THE RADIO CONCENTRIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARIS REGION.
THE FIVE NEWTOWNS OF THE PARIS REGION

A 'GRAND ENSEMBLE' IN THE 'DORMITORY SUBURBS' OF PARIS

CRETEIL STOSKOPF ARCHITECTE 3,800 logements.
The Social and Architectural Objectives of the New-Towns:
The First Phase.

The new-towns were designed to respond to the most urgent social problems of the suburbs. The increasing commuting time due to the separation of the residential and working area was probably the most general claim of the people of the suburbs. It reduced relaxing time, family time and increased the transportation budget and the workers' impatience. It is not surprising, then, that the main objective of the plan (and arguably its greater success) was the creation of a direct rapid transit metro system, comfortable and cheap.

The main architectural (and also social) objective was to create a suburban environment different of the "dormitory suburbs". As the construction minister put it later (in 1973), the objective is to fight against the "(...) social segregation that outcasted in suburbs without amenities, those who cannot 'pay' for an existence in the center of a real town." (1) The newtowns will be thus provided with the urban centers that the suburbs need. They will be centers of "regional importance" serving a large area of suburbs around them as well as the newtowns, of which they were expected to be the most 'urban' element. In fact, all the strategy of the plan revolved around these centers. In turn, all the problem of the newtowns turned around the question of "what constitute a true urban center?" and how should one plan and implement it.

This question was treated in a rather different manner by the authors of the S.D.A.U., in 1965, and by the Giscard administration from 1974 on. In between, the events of May 1968 had happen. Their real influence must be seen on the long run, where the ideas expressed violently during the summer penetrated gradually all parts of the society, changing radically the behavior of individuals
and institutions. The official planning institutions were not, by far, spared by these structural changes. The change of urban policy was discussed in a number of official brochures, announced personally by Giscard himself.

I shall discuss the way these changes have affected the way the question of the new urban centers was tackled. It is important to realize, at the outset, that the newtowns were constructed after 1968; so that, for the most part, they are a reflection of the second period and not of the ideology that prevailed at the moment of their inception. The change of approach of the administrators and the architects is, however, manifest.

The 1965 approach to the question of the urban centers is essentially pragmatic, quantitative and mechanistic - in short: Technocratic. The plan declares that the urban center should create the sense of a "real town" as opposed to the 'succession of characterless dormitory suburbs' or the desert of the 'Grands Ensembles'. The plan declares that if you can measure the size of a city by the number of its inhabitants you can measure its quality by the diversity and the quality of the services the town offers in its center. Indeed, a urban center is "(...) the part of a town where the greatest part of the (service) jobs, commercial space, administrations, schools, cultural and recreational facilities is concentrated." The plan observes that there is, in Paris, a hierarchy of centers: the 'heart' and the neighborhood centers (which correspond to the type of centers that Haussmann had planned in the annexed areas): "In Paris, one of the first agglomerations of the world, this phenomenon of specialization of the 'heart' in the 'rare' functions of high quality is particularly developed" and grouped in the 10 arrondissements of the center. Famous stores, specialized shops, financial institutions, large corporations, French and international administrations, universities, business, recreational facilities, which in principle serve a population
of 8 millions inhabitants and have often a larger influence of a national, european or international order.” (3) In the neighborhood center are located the type services that accomodate the daily needs of a population of “(...) 10,000 to 30,000 inhabitants: elementary schools, sometime junior high school, several types of retail, a post-office, a ‘neighborhood’ movie theater and the like.” (3)

The problem of the Paris agglomeration, the plan argues, is that it does not possess any intermediary type of center between the one accomodating 8 millions inhabitants and the one accomodating 30,000 users. The suburbs need to be provided with the type of center that serves a middle-sized town such as Toulouse or Strasbourg. The plan notices the fact that “the Paris agglomeration increases, every three years by the population of such a town.”.

What are the possible solutions? The solution of a ‘second Paris’ is dismissed on the grounds that ” Although the idea is seductive (....) it cannot solve the problems of Paris neither on the quantitative level (....) nor on the plan of the functions: Which town, even new, could reach rapidly the level of seduction that the heart of Paris offers? “.(4) This pragmatic analysis leads to a logic solution: Because such a parallel center could not reach rapidly enough the level of services of Paris; why not plan, at the outset, several centers of the intermediary level in the suburbs?

At this point the analysis of the plan remains fairly consistent, although it proceeds from a ‘centralist’ point of view. It never seeks to set up mechanisms of development that would allow the municipalities to plan their own development together within general guidelines and the possible arbitration of the state. It plans, at the outset, to implement new centers rather than to help develop
existing ones. It plans to concentrate services, facilities and infrastructures when there was probably a way to implement them in a more diffuse pattern without necessarily losing a structure. Perhaps, the mega structure of the two parallel axis of linear newtowns (a strategy to break the radio-concentric development of Paris) could have allowed a more decentralized articulation on the scale of the newtowns: with the installation on the existing fabric of a series of smaller centers specializing in each of the new functions needed. This would have allowed for an easier integration on the fabric of smaller size centers, created a defined area where the suburban region could get the services it needed, and, finally, would have revitalized the area itself.

However, it is in the programming of the new centers that the plan will really fall short of studies. One would think that these centers require extensive and comprehensive studies, on a case by case basis, determine their program in relation to numerous and complex elements (local populations needs, site conditions, etc.). To the technocrats, however, it was sufficient to apply a general law that generated centers with identical features. They must be identical because they are conceptualized by agencies located in central Paris as ideal programs.

The profile of the centers will be obtained by a simple calculation: to the functions of Paris will be subtracted the 'rare' and the neighborhood functions. "The new urban centers will serve a population of 300,000 to 1 million of inhabitants(...) The amenities to group will be: - For educationnal purposes: universities and specialised schools.

- For cultural purposes: The "Maisons de la Culture", a theatre, an auditorium, a preview movie theater.
- For sportive purposes: The olympic swimming pool, an important hotel, an high class restaurant.

- For administrative purposes: The prefecture or the sous-prefecture regrouping a number of public services incorporated in an administrative city. 11 (5)

An implicit hypothesis of the plan is that the objectives of the S.D.A.U. will be achieved thanks to the Administration that will transfer the functions where and when it is needed. However, the historic centers to which the plan refers are in many instances in a very distinct position from the future urban centers of the Paris region. Firstly, they are provincial capitals which serve a large rural region. They have a monthly market that attracts and exchanges all the goods of the region at least once a month. Most importantly, they are cities which had been formed overtime, which have gained the functions and the fabric they have through a very long historical process. Is it possible to obtain a center to merely parachute similar functions than the ones existing in a historic urban center?

Is it really possible to dissociate the central functions from their physical setting and the center from its hinterland at the first place? At all these questions the plan responds, by default, positively. In my opinion this proceeds from the same sort of confidence that the colonial architects and planners had demonstrated. It must be said, right now, that the administration has well played its role since almost all the amenities and facilities depending of the state have been put in place. But the newtowns, in general, did not succeed in attracting the lively activities depending on the private sector which are precisely what makes for the quality of the urban centers. No one would find a high class (nor a second class) restaurant in the new towns; one could desperately look for a hotel ( M.
Mead has justly said that the difference between the suburbs and the city is that the former does not welcomes the stranger. The newtowns are, under such criteria, still suburban.), or other urban activities such as a club, a bar, a theater, a movie theater and the like. There is the cultural center, the Agora which houses some of these activities and the shopping mall has small shops but they are not too convincing. The social activity there is identical to the one of any suburban shopping mall and is equally restricted to its own area. The social activity does not even reach the other parts of the urban center.

The higher scale public facilities were not implemented in the Paris new towns. There is no stadium, a facility which would surely have animated the centers, given the extreme popularity of soccer or rugby. This, in turn would have provided the regular clientele for more private shops and recreational activities. Similarly, the hospitals, which represents too large of an investissement for the newtowns were not built.

Finally, the 'exceptionnal equipements' that were supposed to be decentralized because of a lack of space in Paris are all housed in the capital. In fact, the S.D.A.U. was relatively realistic (but inconsistent) about the the possibility of decentralizing these exceptionnal facilities or even of creating autonomous urban centers. " The heart of Paris will remain the center of all the agglomeration, of all the urban region and several of the function that central Paris houses will remain unique. (...) The Comedie Francaise, the central administration will remain in Paris. For all these reasons, the urban centers will not be completely autonomous." (5) In fact, there are a number of contradictions in the S.D.A.U. which suggest that the plan is maybe trying to solve opposite objectives: 1- The plan seeks to 'decongest' Paris and to develop the lagging regions, but at the same time structures Paris and its region to become a region of high
competitiveness at the common market scale and Paris to be one of the leading metropolises of the world - perhaps the future capitale of the Common Market (although this last point is not mentionned in the plan).

2- The plan seeks to favor the economic development of the East suburbs but launches in the West two large interconnected projects, La Defense and Cergy-Pontoise which will take care of the future demand for office space in the Paris region.

3- The plan wants to develop a number of important facilities in the new urban centers such as hotels, conference centers, auditoriums, theaters and the like but keeps on developing such facilities in Paris Intra-Muros (Le Front de Seine, the ‘World Trade Center’ project in Les Halles, The Porte Maillot international conference center and auditorium, the Centre Beaubourg etc.

4- The plan seeks to elaborate lively environments in the new towns but is elaborated within a restricted group and in the deepest secret (to avoid the speculation), so that the municipalities, which are the existing life, are not consulted.

5- The plan hopes that an identity will develop in the new communities but designs them in relation to a development strategy designed for the agglomeration where Paris has the central role.

6- The plan speaks of functions, not to serve people, but to attract people.

7- The plan does not speak of new towns, it speaks of Paris.
The Events of May 1968 will seriously shake up the prevalent conceptions in France and with it the state, the technocracy, the policy of centralization, and of course the urban policy in France.

A very immediate impact is the reduction, in 1969, of the number of the Paris new-towns from 8 to 5 and the decision to create 4 new towns in the province. The D.A.T.A.R., (the official body in charge to administrate the decentralization to the provinces), has finally seen its claim heard that the policy of the District de la Region de Paris was developed in detriment of the Provinces.

Another immediate effect is that, with the resignation of De Gaulle the plan loses its most powerful supporter. Very quickly, a number of measures are taken. The first one is the 'nomination' of the principal instigator of the plan P. Delouvrier to another position. The second one consists of limiting the importance of the Parisian new towns. It was then difficult to stop the operations already in operation engaged on the field since 1966. However, the surface of the new towns is diminished as well as their number. The financial charge of the state is also diminished.

But the most important outcome for the newtowns themselves is that the development corporations are officially created (in 1969) and located on the site. This point will really begin a second phase for the newtowns; their development will become much more independent of the technocrats. Although someone could argue that this evolution was bound to happen anyway in a second phase of
implementation of the newtowns, I think that this movement had been amplified by the shifts in the national political situation.

So, the planning of the newtowns became a more open process in which a large number of different specialists such as architects, planners, economists but also sociologists, geographers, psychologists and also the local elected officials participate. This multi-disciplinary team opened the experience of the new towns to all research and the discourses of the post 68 era.

In the process, the regional scheme of the plan, (namely the strategy of the two parallel axes designed to 'break' the radio-concentric development of Paris) began to lose its consistency: The suppression of the new town of Mantes had suppressed a major link of the southern axis. The new town of Cergy Pontoise, adopted a circular urban pattern, fitting in the site but contradictory to the linear expansion originally planned with the two axes.

THE CIRCULAR PATTERN OF THE NEW TOWN OF CERGY PONTOISE
THE URBAN CENTER OF MARNE LA VALLEE.
II Shifts in the Conception of the New Towns Urban Centers.

2.1 The introduction of new conceptions.

The objective of the creation of urban centers fostering life in the suburbs remain unchanged. However, there is no doubt that the conception of the centers was enriched by the new multi disciplinary teams. One could argue that the shift from the technocratic global approach was bound to happen when the urban centers reached the level of the fine grain design. I would argue, however that the more comprehensive approach had been multiplied by the events of May.

An official brochure published in 1972 gives the tone of the studies: "The construction of urban centers can no longer be approached piecemeal by the adding up of sundry public or private programs. (...) The public authorities have already set about acquiring sites and giving them primary and even secondary development; they will have to go further in the matter of urban centres." (6)

What will really change in the conception of the centers is that the planner will not think in terms creating artificially the urban centers by the deconcentration of the central functions but from the point of view of the community that would live there. In other terms the Prefecture is not enough off the guarantee to promote the success of the urban centers, but the quality of the space experienced by the collectivity. It is not only a question of creating the centers out of a receipe that had made its proof in the past, the civic square model of the colonies but to achieve a mixture of spatial and programatic requirements needed for a population which will have the latitude to settle or not to settle in the newtowns. Without population, no urban centers and no newtowns. In short, before constructing the center one should construct the conditions of centrality.
Many tactics were undertaken to reach this goal. From the realization of the center as a copy of the spaces of the 18th century city to the evolutionary proposal of Le Vaudreuil to the envelopment strategy of the Etangs de Berre to the incremental strategy of Cergy to the programmatic and dense approach of Evry.

However a consensus resides on two major strategies: the interlocking of the functions and the flexibility of the center.

2.2 The interlocking of functions.

A major social goal of the newtowns is to avoid the social catastrophe of the Grands-Ensembles”. The housing superblocks projects were deficient in every aspect. They did not provide the necessary services of the daily life, for which the inhabitants had to depend on the closest community. The large open spaces did not specifically induce people to gather together. At night, they became too open to be safe. The grands ensembles were not furnished with community services or social amenities. They really were a desert, a pitiful copy of the Le Corbusier Unites d’Habitation. The technocrats, realizing these conditions and the related increase of teenage violence (for which the Grands Ensembles became, at night, the action field) decided to ‘animate’ these housing projects with the aid of professionals: social councellors, educators, etc. Each of the Grands Ensembles was then provided with a ‘Maison de la Culture’ that was supposed to provide the recreationnal and educationnal facilities for the community and specifically, for the younger population. Thus, the technocrats were, unconsciously, following the functionnal decoupage of the Charte d’Athenes. This dichotomy was rather ridiculously translated in the physical form; the small Maisons de la Culture juxtaposing the huge housing bocks. The Maisons de la
Culture located in the Grands Ensembles were a total failure. In the best case they became the refuge of gangs.

This experience was very fresh in the planners memory as they began to design the urban centers. It was necessary to avoid another error. The experience of the Agora of Dronten, in the Netherlands furnished a tempting model. This experience of 'integrated collective amenities' located within the fabric and providing to the community a central meeting place was a model that could be replicated and even refined in the urban centers. The idea was essentially to realize a fine tuning between the social amenities and the other activities of the center. The planners were hoping to bring 'naturally' the collectivity to use the cultural and recreationnal services around which it was hoped that that a local identity and a real community would built themselves.

The decision was then to tie the shopping center with the Agora, which would be then provided with a large number of customers:

"It is true that the shopping function is a driving force in the urban centers since it encourages a considerable inflow of customers whose presence ensures animation and provides a continuous pretext for events marginal or external to shopping (exhibitions, displays, fashion shows). The shopping center can be regarded as an anchorage point from which various development programs can be envisaged. It can be affirmed that in deciding to integrate the shopping centre in the urban centre, (...) (the planners) have a good chance of achieving living unit units and not caricatures of urban centers."(7)
Thus, in the three newtowns of Cergy, Evry and Marne la Vallee, the poles of facilities were placed at the crossroads of circuits originating in the major functions existing in the center. In Evry, the urban center features a very similar experimentation to the one of Dronten which is also named the Agora. The Evry Agora which has a surface of 30,000 square meters lies at the meeting point of three ‘functionnal circuits’, civic, cultural and recreationnal and commercial. In the Agora a large place has been left for community information and communication and its design (particularly its size) attempts to create the conditions of communal life, that is, of exchange and social interaction.

In fact, the same approach was to be extended at the center at large. A true urban center, the planners argued is characterized by the mixing and the concentration of functions within a limited area. More precisely, the planners refer to the Latin town, a town with a strong tradition of communal space and municipal identity. Thus, “The segregative urban layout of the Chartre d’Athenes has been rejected in favor of an interlocking of all urban functions present in the center.” (Le Vaudreuil, “Principles of organization and town planning directives”) (8). The principle adopted is that of interlocking the urban functions as opposed to their juxtaposition. The characteristic of the centre is not its vertical, like with the american business district, but that it is complex.

The complexity of the centre is guarantee for its animation. The shopping centers draws a clientele to the recreational facilities, which should then develop. As they develop they provide an extra‘animation’ of the center and a supplementary reason for the people use it. The tactic is to make the functions interact between themselves so that they create a movment which will make the people interact among themselves: in a sense to create a chain reaction. The
planners then only need to provide the "critical mass" of equipments. Thus, housing will be above social facilities, offices and nurseries above the shopping center, on the bus stations will be superposed the new Regional Express Railway stations and a new type of urban transport limited to the urban center reducing the time distances between these points.

A priori the rational of the planners is consistent. It is sure that the interlocking and the concentration of functions should create a more lively environment than their dispersion throughout a large space. For the French planners the experience of the mixed use centers, the malls and the wharfs that begin to multiply at that time in the United States are a good indication of the potential of such a strategy. However, there is a difference. All the urban centers, in order to cope with the technical complexity of accommodating many movement systems in a limited space, will be integrated vertically in a solution that divides with a pedestrian slab the office buildings and the housing above it and all the infrastructure (roads, trains, buses, shopping center, parking lot and the like) underneath it. However this solution is not an unforeseen consequence of the interlocking of the urban functions. It is a reflected choice. The planners believe that the separation of the flux (pedestrian and vehicular) is a good thing.

However, from this decision will result a series of consequences. Firstly, although this was contrary to planners goal, they, in fact, recreate a spatial dichotomy - a separation in the functions of the center.

Second, all the shopping activity will be underground (in Evry and Marne). Although there is a zenithal lighting, the feeling will not be the same as shopping and strolling outside at the same time. People usually would rather be outside to stroll.
But most importantly, this division will dedensify the level of activity at the level of the pedestrian slab. It will dedensify it in two ways. Firstly it will dedensify the built environment, most of the structure and services of the centre being underneath. It will restrict its level of use because a user that does not need to specifically go on the slab can very well switch of transportation means (metro to bus, metro to car) and stay underneath. It will restrict the level of use of the center, because one has to go through all the business of parking and walking to a certain point of the slab. Someone cannot drive through and stop. Someone will not naturally walk in the center, one has to really badly want to walk there and use a complex system of vertical and horizontal circulation. But why should one go there at the first place? Because there is very little commerce on the slab and the commercial center is underneath. (Even in Cergy where the commercial center is not separated underneath, the slab level is commercially deserted.) Another problem is that commerce in general does not appreciate the division of traffic. Traditionally they settle at a traffic intersection where they know that they will have a certain amount of clientele through traffic. In any case the people themselves do not like to be separated from their individual means of transportation, especially at night. Far all these reasons one will not find the rich variety of private commerce that one would find in a traditional center.

For an urban design point of view the problems of the separation of the traffic deprives the environment of a number of urban features.

One is density. Because a part of the functions of the centers are located underneath the pedestrian slab, and because very few, if any, private commerce will settle at the slab level; the slab level is an environment of low density.
The second is orientation. Because the architects do not have to respect a street alignment the environment is very often informal. With a low density it often becomes loose.

The third one is scale and hierarchy. Because there is no street pattern there is no scale of the open space which gives the impression of a residual void separating discrete pieces of (good or bad) architecture. Coupled with the notion of scale is the notion of hierarchy. Because it is not surrounded by a dense network of streets that give access to it the center on the slab does not allow for the preparation, the sense of entering a space of a different hierarchy. This is a crucial experience that one has in any Latin center (any Italian hilltown for instance). In fact one switches from the mechanical environment of underground to the large space of the slab. There is also no hierarchy of buildings, evident in the Latin center where the Town Hall is juxtaposed with the residential fabric. In the newtown centers these buildings are so far apart that one cannot make these kind of associations (as he would instantly do in a Latin center) that provide for the lisibility and the identity /imagibility of the environment. There are no architectural elements to give some sense of scale and bind an environment together.

However some such late attempts were done. The connection of the cultural center of Cergy with a little square defined by a continuous facade in a form of a crescent is a limited but convincing urban sequence. Unfortunately it is borded one side by the void leading to the street level.
It must be mentioned that this particular study had been commended to an English consultant group. Marne-la-Vallee urban center offers some extensive efforts in this sense (in the second part of the urban center) but they are quite a failure: the problem is that the squares are empty, they are too large, there are too many of them, they are not surrounded by a street network which would put them in value. In addition, they house several extremely manierist and egocentric buildings which are rather ridiculous. One can only deplore that such an interesting experience at the origin (the architects of the center had attempted to design the ‘architecture of the city’ at first around which the buildings to be constructed had to articulate themselves) produces such unconvincing results.

2.3 Flexibility.

"Flexibility is the most clear-cut choice that has been made for the new urban centers. (...) We must certainly not crystallize the future, but at the same time we cannot leave it to itself. To ‘design’ the centre of a Comprehensive Development Area of a few thousands dwellings was still within the limits of possibility; on the other hand to organize down to the slightest detail the complex combinations which will develop in ten or fifteen years is purely illusory. (9)"

Although they did not have a satisfactory definition of an urban centre, apart from knowing that "Centers are zones characterized by a very high arithmetical
density and marked by a 'visual density' ",(10) there was a consensus on two points.  

The first was the 'interlocking' quality of the centers, and the second was the necessity to allow for its transformation by the living socio-economic forces that were supposed to exist at some point in the urban center.

However, between the necessity to give a structure to the future and the opposite necessity to give to this structure enough flexibility to allow for future transformation fell a number of solutions and existed a number of theoretical positions : " It is therefore quite clear that the problems which arise relate to the strategy of centrality and not of the existence or non existence of the urban centre." (11). Another difference ( other than theoretical ) among the planners of the new towns was that each newtown ( in Paris and in the Regions ) corresponded to a different economic, sociological and geographical environment that called for particular approaches and strategies. These parameters should be taken in consideration when one looks at the different strategies adopted.

Nevertheless there was (and there still is) clearly different theoretical positions. Some planners questioned the validity of two assumptions adopted elsewhere; that is one the geographical regrouping of all the functions as the starting point to create a center, and second, the possibility of establishing all the spatial and programatic frameworks of the center and still allowing for the inhabitants to interact with them.

The most radical criticism of this kind came from the planners of Le Vaudreuil, the province newtown located next to Rouen in the Seine corridor development.

" Is it deemed sufficient to reassemble geographically the elements of a traditionnal center (...) for the
inhabitants to recognize the new center as such and to adopt it?" (le Vaudreuil) (12)

The second question of the planners of Le Vaudreuil was on the notion of flexibility. They favored the most open (to interaction) type of urban structure possible which yet was a 'Germ' of urban center.

The strategy adopted was to design this 'Germ', a twin pole axis of 400 meters long. One pole housed the shopping center, the second a cultural recreationnal center. A third pole along the same axis was the railway station and corresponded to a next step of the towns development. The 'Germ' was surrounded by a neutral grid of roads (Each grid unit corresponded at a square of 400 meters by side) and was suppose to allow for the maximum flexibility in the future development of the town.

The planners of Le Vaudreuil devoted a number of articles in professionnal periodicals explaining their strategy of centrality. They mainly declared that "The problem of the center cannot be dissociated from the overall problem of the coming into being and evolution of the new town as a whole."

The organization of the facilities was thought in relation to the germ. It was composed of two levels - The level of multiple facilities which are the complementary elements of the urban fabric (schools, sports, daily shopping). This first level does not modify the neutrality of the fabric,

- The level of unique facilities within the 'germ' (social centre, shopping centre, grammar school) which could 'polarize' the network, which should have a centralizing effect.
If the strategy adopted in the newtown of Le Vaudreuil represents an extreme position there was a variety of alternatives proposed. The strategy adopted for the newtown of Les Etangs de Berre is a solution halfway between the adaptability of Le Vaudreuil (there was even some technical previsions to transform easily what had been built) and a 'central' strategy like the ones of Evry, Cergy and Marne-la-Vallee.

The planners of the Etang de Berre adopted a strategy of envelopment. The idea was to install a series of specific poles (shops, offices, higher education, housing) in the circumference of a zone of 200 hectares which will regroup themselves by a centripetal development in the centre of the zone to form a complex unit resulting from the interpenetration of these specific poles.

The planners of the Etangs de Berre were also critical of the 'central' approach of the majority of the Parisian newtowns. "The regrouping in one center of all the principal elements of the town and all the higher order facilities and functions assumes that this concentration will give rise to animation and a sense of centrality. This seems to us to be open to criticism from both the economic and the technical point of view." (13)

III The new urban policy of Giscard

It is very clear that the second phase of the newtowns' development, by introducing the sociological and collective dimensions of space as an explicit objective of the urban center provoked the experimentation of very different solutions. It would be very interesting to compare the respective merits of these
solutions. Although the planners argue that the formation of an urban center takes at least thirty years before some meaningful results can be registered, the first ten years should provide the observer with some interesting indications. Because such a study should involve an extensive collection of data on site it had not been possible to undertake it in the framework of this thesis. If such a study should be done, however, the researchers should really take into account the fact that these newtowns are all in different stages of development because they were not launched at the same time for one thing and because they were not granted with the same financial means.

To conclude this chapter I will describe how the second phase of the newtowns was inscribed in a new discourse on the environment by which the Giscardians seeked to demarcate themselves from the Gaullists development strategies.

The philosoph Henri Lefebvre and the Situationnists (a political movement that provided all the theoretical reflexion for the critics expressed during the events of May 1968) had been talking at length since the mid sixties of the collective quality of the urban space. Their central critic was geared against the "Societe du Spectacle", a society of consumption in which it seemed that all the human interaction had to be mediated by the merchandise, where the exchange between individuals were limited to the commercial exchange.

Lefebvre was observing in his book "Le droit a la Ville" that:

"The street does not permit the constitution of a group, of a 'subject' but his populated with people in search
... of what? - the merchandise. (...) the merchandise
transform the people themselves into a spectacle to other
people. (...) The eminent use of the town - that is of the streets, the squares, the buildings, the monuments- it is the Fair.” (14)

Ten years after, in 1975, the political class was also interested in the collective dimensions of the urban space. Giscard, as soon as he was elected, took a stand in favor of a dramatic revision of the urban development policies as they had been conducted until then. This was traducted by a serie of very symbolic gestures. One is the change of the name of the Ministry of Construction ( which connoted centralization and technocracy ) to Ministry of the Environment and the ‘Cadre de Vie’ which suggested quality as opposed to quantity, ecology as opposed to industrialisation, etc. A second measure was the abandon of the left bank expressway, a very unpopular project among the Parisians, seen as the expression of technocratic urbanism. A third measure was the revision of the ‘world trade center’ project designed for the site of ‘Les Halles’ by the A.P.U.R., the Paris city official planning agency to favor a more ‘ ecological’ project. Finally, Giscard officially ‘recognised’ the neighborhoods, the uses and the ecologists associations.

In short the Giscardiens rejected all the principles of the V republic: Economism, productivism, functionalism and the technocracy. On the contrary, they developed a new urban policy based on new principles:

- Rehabilitation of the meeting place (plaza, forums, ora, malls, pedestrian street, etc ) and enhance such espaces by visible devices.

- Struggle against the segregation and the and the monofunctionnality as factors of isolation d
and uniformity of the districts.

- Priority to the common means of transportation so that the urban space could be appropriated by the population.

- Reactivation of 'urban images' that had disappeared such as folklore, fair, local color, etc.

- Revitalization of the local democracy.

Clearly, these objectives did not come from a genuine enthusiasm of the authorities for popular fairs, decentralization or local democracy. This overall revision of the urban policy was geared to keep the central system in place even at the cost of some concessions. But the strategy aimed at keeping the essential prerogatives of the administration while giving the appearance of dramatic changes. Giscard had shown before his election a populist image of himself playing the accordion to offset that he was the pure type of the technocrat which was not, at that time, in favor of the public.

His city planning policy was based on the same tactics. He worked at giving some motives of satisfaction to some associations, promoted a number of events, of fairs in Paris but did not attempt to undertake a structural reform. This policy of more or less symbolic concessions was necessary because many problems were posed with insistence by increasingly vindictive and demanding groups at different levels of the society, from the neighborhood to the region up to nationally organised constituencies such as the 'ecologists' which began to stand as a third force between the left and the right. The problem posed by these new
groups to the central government was that they escaped the traditional political structures. They did not go through the trade unions to expose their claims, some of them, like the 'ecologists' refused to embrace any political ideology some of them, more radicalized, were addressing a multiplicity of grounds that interested their specific neighborhoods refusing the traditional sectorial negotiations. In short, these groups which had qualitative rather than quantitative claims did not play the game according to the rules used until then. Giscard had very well understood that and it is no coincidence that he had created a ministry of the quality of life.

Since these groups had been more and more active and organized since 1968 and had, in fact, succeeded to constantly enlarge their constituency the central government could not anymore believe in the possible fading away of these movements. It was urgent to deal with them, to respond to these new requirements to avoid the risk of another upheaval.

In the same time, the state by being active in their direction could possibly weaken the most radical groups that advocated theories opposed to the central administration. The revision of the project of Les Halles is very symptomatic of the 'Environmentalist' policy of Giscard. The new image of les Halles was the one of a classical garden offered to the populations of Paris. However, the new project added, in reality, a very small quantity of 'green space' to the A.P.U.R. project. If the project was apparently satisfying some of the claims of the neighborhood's associations, the resident's associations had not been invited to participate to the design of the new project.
The official credo of the 'qualitative' did not imply, by any means the revision of the ideology of economic productivism (as some environmentalists advocated it) but rather to adapt it to the new social circumstances.

"It would be better to introduce in the decision mechanism the explicit objectives of 'quality of life' and appreciate what should be sacrificed to the economic growth to reach them, rather than to disrupt the economic expansion." (15)

This quote is excerpted from the report issued by a 'brainstorm team' organized at the demand of the minister of economic planning, on the theme; "The Economic Growth and the Finality of Development" sums up fairly well the objectives of the 'environmentalist' policy of Giscard.
Introduction.

In this conclusion chapter I will try to synthetize the data and the concepts discussed along this thesis around four main themes that, I think, should sum up the structure of my research. These themes are:

Centrality and the tradition of governance. Technocratic planning and the modern movement. Centrality and Urbanity in the suburbs? Decentralization and users participation.

Finally, in a last section I will make some general comments, not necessarily related to French urban planning, but which are inspired by this research.
CENTRALITY AND THE TRADITION OF GOVERNMENT.

The tradition of centralization is such in Paris, that, for a Parisian, to live among the monumental perspectives, among the multiple urban manifestations of power is natural. But it is not so evident.

The urbanization of Paris is born from extremely precise historic conditions. One is the tradition of municipal government in Europe. The second is the unique relationship established over time between Paris and the central governments of France.

At first, France is integrated in the European phenomenon of the 'Communal Revolution' which, in the Middle Ages liberates the cities from the oppression of the feudal lords and creates a sharp distinction between the bourgeois of the Cite, a freeman, and the peasant - serf, almost a slave of the feudal noble.

This dichotomy creates a specific identity of the town which is not merely 'urban' but becomes a municipality administrated by its bourgeois patrons. This
specific identity and administrative unity of the town is not replicated throughout the world. It remains essentially a European phenomenon.

In Islam, for instance, there is not such a municipal conception of the city because every man under Islamic law is equal, whether he is a peasant or an urbanite. Thus, the Islamic city is, in fact, an agglomeration of institutions (religious, military, university) of merchants guilds and of ethnic groups that are structured in self-contained unities, maintaining their own territory, premises and, perhaps, are coordinating their efforts when a specific large infrastructure or event must be accommodated. But, in Islam, there is traditionnally no authority to supervise the city globally. It is significant that one cannot walk through the city using the smaller street system. These streets are limited for the exclusive use of the neighborhood residents. The open space of the Islamic city is not considered public, it is largely a semi private space controlled by a specific population.

This explains why no project interesting the entire city (except for the colonial one) ever cut open the continuum of the Islamic city which remained medieval until the 20 century.

If we look at another pattern of urbanization, in the United States for instance, we would remark that the cities are not as unified, as central, as with the European city. American cities consist of the juxtaposition of groups with established traditions which do not seek to melt in the communal identity but, on the contrary, express (sometimes spatially) their differences.

Although this analysis should be nuanced by the most recent developments (like the explosion of the downtown business districts, the reappropriation of central districts like SoHo in Manhattan, the commercial redevelopment of urban infrastructures) it is, in essence, valid. The impact of ‘central’ redevelopment strategies like the ones of Moses or Rockefeller never was as important as their
authors originally planned. The latter, for instance, never succeeded to interconnect the Rockefeller Center by an underground system to all the projects he had launched or initiated. Moses realized a series of large facilities in New-York but did not succeeded to implement an overall policy except for the highways.

But the highways launched in reality an acentral urbanization by disseminating the city neighborhoods in the large suburban territory with their ethnic solidarity as a form of centrality.

It is not a coincidence that the questionning over the validity of the urban center as a (still) relevant form of urban organization comes from Melvin Webber, himself from such an environment in California.

Paris: A double organization.

These two types of urban organization are obviously foreign to urban France and Paris. Not only medieval Paris is, in the wake of the 'Communal Revolution' being centrally reorganized under the authority of the Merchant’s Provost but it will be doubly reorganized by the presence of the king and the administrative centralization of France. As we had seen it in chapter three this movement begins with Saint Louis, the first absolute monarch, who splits in 1261 the administration of Paris between the merchants Provost for the local affairs and the king’s Provost for the state affairs. This trend is continued by Philippe le Bel who centralised the national Administration over Paris, is reiterated by the works of Francois I during the Renaissance to finally culminate with the Louis kings during the 17 and 18 century.

An interest of the larger order than the city itself is being concentrated and expressed in Paris. The forces that are shaping Paris are not the expression of a
local community of inhabitants but also of an exterior realm, that does not essentially relates the city but uses it to to correspond with similar exterior entities. To the expression of communal power and identity will be added the rhetoric of central governments and administration. The administration specifically will insure the continuity, in time and space, of the public works that could have otherwise remained piecemeal interventions.

In order to measure the impact of these dual forces, I shall examine the case of the structuration of the city image with the example of a large town where the municipal power is the sole responsible.

I will take the case of the transformation of the piazza San Marco in Venice at the time of the Renaissance.

The approach to city design of the Renaissance is in Venice, as everywhere in Italy, strongly influenced by the discovery of the central perspective and is tied up with the emergence of Humanism. It is guided by such technical and moral principles that Serlio has proposed the model of the tragic scene a short while before Jacopo Sansovino begins his work on the Piazza San Marco. Indeed, the work of Sansovino will consist in transforming the medieval space of the piazza into a rationalized space with scenographic qualities. The most striking aspect of this project lies in my opinion in the power of the process. At the difference of the urbanism of the middle ages that operated punctually on a number of discrete buildings, the rational of the Renaissance will automatically induce, not one project but a process of transformation, through a series of projects, of the entire fabric. In the Renaissance, the object of urbanism is not to transform some structures but to transform entirely a urban sequence.
In Venice, the transformation of the piazza San Marco begins with a rather usual command: Sansovino is asked to design a new building in place of the Procurators appartment building - a decrepit structure, that costs important sums to maintain, which is located in the south aisle of the piazza. However, this simple study was to trigger the entire restructuration of the piazza and the piazzetta. All the buildings surrounding the two squares have been redesigned with a similar architectural vocabulary,

the ex building of the procurators have been pushed in order to create a symmetry of the square and liberate the vista to the Basilica. The Campanile has been isolated from the adjoining buildings. In addition, a very sophisticated shaft of space links the piazza to the governors palace.

It is interesting to note that with the rationalization of the fabric comes the need to rationalize the type of functions to be performed in the new square. Only 'rare' functions should be programmed in the new piazza, thus the creation of the library of ancient Greek and Roman manuscripts and the removing of all the shacks and stalls as well as the dubious hotels that do not anymore 'fit' in what should be now called a 'center'.

But why did all these transformations happened in the first place? What are the forces that made the society undertake such radical changes? As I indicated before it seems that the answer lies in the new Humanistic vision of the world. Panofsky draws the parallel between Science that transforms the chaotic variety of natural phenomena to a cosmos of nature and the humanism that transforms the chaotic variety of human records to a cosmos of culture. In a similar way, I would argue that the Renaissance architects and their patrons (all of them being presumably humanists. ) are transforming the chaotic variety of social and physical spaces of the middle ages into a rationalized space suitable to the codified social interaction of the humanist personne. It is not coincidence that it
is since the Renaissance that the lunatics are separated from the society. Foucault has developed this point in Madness and Civilisation where he describes how the lunatics were sent away in boats (the ships of fools) before the society could provide separated institutions to accommodate them.

If the centrality of an environment is, as Lefebvre defines it, its capability to foster the social interaction of the people using it; the humanist proposing a new model of human personnality interacting in a 'rationnal' way is bound to define an environment with a different kind of centrality. This particular environment is the center.

This particular interaction of the municipal structure, the humanist ideal, and the science of perspective will act on the very same way on the fabric of Paris. In fact these effects will be multiplied by the double structure of the Parisian gouvernemment altogether municipal and national. The difference will be in the scale of the transformations. If the municipalities of the Renaissance seek to transform their most meaningful urban sequences in 'centers' the Administration will seek to transform the city at large into a 'center'. This is only made possible by the permanence of the administration that insure the continuity of the projects over time. The administration (eg the catholic church in Rome) of the Kings will transform the continuum of Medieval Paris into a continuum of rationnalized and scenographic space.

This is particularly clear when someone looks at the evolution of urban spaces from the first royal squares designed under Henri IV which were discrete pieces related to their surroundings and the system of public spaces designed to organize the entire city that was relized under Louis XV and further emphasized by Haussmann.
This is this kind of centralized design and planning that makes Zevi assert that:

"Instead of inventing spaces for human life, one began to design containers to wrap it up. With the perspective it is not architecture that dominates, but the containers."(1)
TECHNOCRATIC PLANNING AND THE MODERN URBANISM.

The French technocratic administration is always looking for 'containers', for a rational, for a model to normalize its antithesis; the uncontrolled urban expansion.

For the administration the suburban model, par excellence, is the orderly layout of the western suburbs of Paris designed by the kings. The anti-model is the red-belt suburbs.

In order to tackle this growth the technocratic power, as we have seen it in chapter 3, is looking at the propositions of the modern urbanism would it be Hebrard and Prost or, later, Le Corbusier or Lods.

The technocratic power is looking for a kind of 'program' such as Foucault has defined it:

"A calculated and reflected prescription according to which the institutions should be organized, the space designed"
and the behaviors regulated.” (1) For Foucault there is a concept of ‘bio-power’ or ‘bio-technico-power’ that consist to know how to master, know, feed and control life itself. The specific technologies of the ‘bio-power’ having gained their modern form in the classical age.

We have seen in chapter three how the technocratico-administrative realm was looking for the appropriate ‘program’ to wrap up the suburbs or, to reuse the terminology of Zevi the appropriate ‘container’. We recall the propositions of Guerard for a ‘French Washington’. Ultimately, the French technocracy achieved to design a program for the suburbs with the S.D.A.U.

The S.D.A.U. is not a clearly political program in the sense that it does not propose a clear solution for future social life like Brasilia or like Howard with its newtowns, Fourier with its Phalanstere or De Guise with its Familistere had proposed before.

I would argue, however, that the S.D.A.U. is definitely inscribed in traditions of political ‘programs’. It has a very precise idea of its objectives and implications for social life but due to its scale of study it does not show it too clearly, defining only general directions.

But the S.D.A.U. follows a methodology and an analysis strikingly similar to the ones advocated by Le Corbusier which is himself known to hold very specific ideas on the type of life the modern man should live.

"The town must be studied in the ensemble of its region of influence. A plan of the region will replace the simple municipal plan. The limit of the agglomeration will be function of its radius of economic action.” (2)
It is striking to see the similarity of nature as the plan as described by Le Corbusier and the actual S.D.A.U. The authors of the S.D.A.U. seem to confirm this similitude:

"There was never a 'project newtowns': there was a Schema Directeur (...) {the newtowns} came out as a global reflexion on the Paris region ensemble." (3)

The hypothesis of the plan is that it can master the destiny of the entire region beyond the particularism of the municipalities. In fact, the technocracy had already adopted the principle of such a 'Grande Vision' with the plan designed by Prost in 1934 which consisted of constructing a system of large landscaped motorways that linked Paris with the Atlantic coast but were cutting open the suburbs in the process. The kind of program that the technocracy is looking for is something which sounds modern, rational and global.

"The program must be set up on rigorous analysis made by specialists. It must have a number of stages in time and space. It must reassemble in a fecund harmony, the natural resources of the site, the topography of the ensemble, the economic data, the sociological necessities and the spiritual values." (4)

One could read this citation of Le Corbusier as a fairly good description of what the S.D.A.U. is.

The topography of the ensemble and the natural resources of the site will be 'adequately' utilized in placing the two parallel axis of urbanization in continuity to the Seine river basin. The economic values are consecrated in the S.D.A.U.
aims to transform the region as an ‘economic tool’ and the sociological necessities taken care of by the provision of urban centers. Moreover the plan consecrate an important place to the circulation function which, according to Le Corbusier must tie together the three other functions (working, housing, recreationnal), it provides the region with extremely important transportation infrastructures such as expressways, a new regional metro system, etc.

In fact, it seems like the planners are trying to define the new scale and the new image of the region by its circulation network which are structuring the mega structure of the two parallel axis.

This type of image, of concept is very close to the theories of the american urbanist Edward Bacon who develops the concept of ‘movements systems’ in his book the ‘Design of Cities’.  

"Yet the image of the region is derived from the series of impressions produced by all these systems interacting with one another (...) A great difference between the cities we have studied so far and the city of today is the application of mechanical power. “ (5)

The ‘movement systems’ presented as ‘generators of architectural form’ are for Bacon (as well as for the authors of the S.D.A.U.) the key element of a strategy to revitalize the suburbs.

"The proposal is to create strong articulated nuclei and institutions carefully distributed (...) throughout the residential fabric to establish powerful architectural imagery and rythm which extends their influence into
less articulate areas around them. This would generate neighborhood identification, loyalty and pride, and serve as links for identification with the city and the region." (6)

This quote of Bacon could very well describe the strategy of the ‘urban centers’ that the S.D.A.U. planned to implement in the suburbs of Paris.

There is, however, a major difference. The S.D.A.U. does not create such centers ‘around beloved landmarks’ as Bacon suggest it but creates its new urban centers ex-nihilo around some public administration in the continuity of the model established by Prost in Morocco.

In a colonial situation or in the suburbs of Paris, the administration is equally uninterested in relating to the local environment. The administration has a program and this program should work independently of the context in which this program is inserted.

The administration reappropriates the ideas developed by the architects but only the central idea transposable in a program.

This makes all the difference between a valid strategy of revitalization as developed by Bacon and a plan worked out by the administration. One might work while the other is ruined at the outset.

The major shortcoming of the S.D.A.U. is that it attempts to revitalize the suburbs but it ignores them.
CENTRALITY AND URBANITY IN THE SUBURBS?

The suburbs do not need the planners’ intervention to be provided with centrality. They already have their own kind of centrality; that is the suburbs have their own traditions, mutual aid, its collective ‘animation’ (to reuse a technocratic terminology). Only when the technocrats are imposing their image of modernity do the suburbs stop being living environments.

Perhaps, the suburbs are not ‘beautiful’ environments because they lack the classical image of urbanity, but its arguable whether they need such an image nor whether, in fact they need to be redesigned in the image of modernity. They have their own image which is a sort of continuum (as the medieval city) - a continuum that needs to be preserved.

However, the suburbs needed to be helped. They needed more jobs, more economic activities (but less polluting ones) and more ‘exceptionnal’ facilities. The suburbs continue to have these needs.

One possible strategy could have been to continue with the ‘restructuration noads’ (advocated as early as the P.A.D.O.G.) of which nine had been planned by
the S.D.A.U., multiply them in existing centers of the suburbs (possibly at a smaller scale to allow for a better integration in the fabric) and forget about the urban centers of 'regional importance' of the new towns.

Would this general 'sprinkling' had been inefficient? I don't believe that a successful economic revitalization of the suburbs should necessarily go through a strategy of centralization. In the case of multiple centers there is more flexibility to adapt to the location choices of the market. The problem of the industrial park of Marne la Vallee for instance is that it is ready to serve an industrial clientele that does not want to settle there. One could argue that, in this way, no corrective effort is made by the public authority to even the development of enterprises between the East and the West. I believe that it is very hard to totally reverse a multi secular development tendency by a great planning decision, even if this development itself was originally due to such a decision (the Tuileries castle and the Garden). In any circumstances if this re-equilibrium between the West and the East was judged necessary it was incoherent to plan the Defense and Cergy in the West. Those developments had not had been constructed at the first place it would have been easier to redirect the economic expansion by planning more centers in the East than in the West.

In terms of the transportation system (and assuming that the majority of the inhabitants of the suburbs will have to go working in Paris for a long time) there is no problem in keeping such a system which is very well realized.

Socially, it seems evident that the quality of the centers realized within the suburbs would have been more successful if they had been of a smaller size and their integration to the fabric studied.
Finally, what about the necessity to break the radio-concentric development of the region?

For one thing, the region has remained stable in size since 1965. That is it did not expand out of the 1965 boundaries, which are defined by a circle of twenty five kilometers radius.

In terms of the mega structure of the parallel axis, it seems no longer appropriate to think in terms of those kinds of images but to recognize the polynuclearity of the region as I suggested before and to work in this sense: That is to build the jobs and amenities in the existing centers of the suburbs. Such a strategy should seek to create specialized centers that could interact economically with each other and then expand from this interaction.

In the case that those centers were to expand economically, it would, at term, reduce the problem of commutation to work by installing transversal patterns of commuting between suburban centers (as well as on site jobs) instead of most trips going to Paris.
Decentralization has been officially adopted in France as the law proposed by the socialist government has been voted in 1983. The socialist government itself, has been elected on a political platform favoring the decentralization, the 'auto-gestion', the regional auto-determination, etc.

In fact, these themes had been central to the socialist party campaign for several years already. One of the main electoral arguments of the Socialistes was that, in fact, the right would never embark into such reforms because their power was built on the centralist structure of the state administration.

Although the Socialistes have kept their electoral commitments, that is that they have effectively decentralized the planning competences at the level of the mayors, there is still a major problem: the competences are decentralized but not the budget which remains under the authority of the Departemental planning agencies, that is under the control of the central administration. The department planning agencies only have an 'advisory' role in the elaboration of local planning
documents but since they control the funds they obviously are exerting a major influence on the municipalities decision.

This situation clearly express the difficulty to achieve the decentralization in France, even if the elected government is truly commited to this objective.

In fact, the partial tentatives of the previous governements had all been unsuccessful. The nomination of the region prefects that were suppose to realize the administrative unity of the regions (as opposed to the departements ) had been totally ruined by the resistance of the departemental prefects.

The tentatives to liberate the state from the totality of the burden of the urban development by installing patnerships together with the private sector, the local municipalities ( The Societe d'Economie Mixte ) is a form of decentralization. However, the state remained over represented in these patnerships by the department planning responsibles, the technocrat representing the central administrations (Ministry of Equipement, of Education ,etc...) and finally the repesentants of the para public financing institutions themselves largerly controlled by the state. A second problem that came up with some of the S.E.M. was some unethical practices tying some officials with the private interests.

The users' associations had been 'recognised' by the Giscard government which largely advertised through the media his orientation towards an 'associative' policy. This 'new policy' consisted in fact of a symbolical political manoeuvre rather than of an actual decentralization.

Larry Susskind, observing the European user's movement situation, defines three patterns of action of these groups: Paternalism, Conflict and Coproduction. In France the situation is characterized by the Conflictual pattern ( the Giscardian
policy being a tentative to shift to the Paternalist pattern) that is conflicts between the users and the state (the important user movement that lead to a subsidization through payroll taxes of the transportation coasts for the Paris region is a good exemple of that kind of conflict) but also conflicts between elected officials and the central administration as well as all the conflicts of a clearer political order.

Such a domination of the state over all aspects of public life, all over the country is now clearly unaccepted by increasing segments of the population. The events of May 1968, but perhaps more significantly, the constant development of associations, since then, clearly shows that such a situation cannot possibly last too long. Due to the fact that these associations are generally rather politicised, the shift to a paternalist pattern appears improbable. What is clearly wanted is a 'real' decentralization.

The decentralization would be successful only if the different forces in presence agreed to enter a mode of Coproduction. However the manifest reluctance of the Administration to give up any part of its prerogatives in one hand and the somewhat theoretical radicalism of certain users groups in the other hand could very well perpetuate a conflictual situation.

It is really difficult to change the centralized structure of France which is so much a part of the country that no one can really imagine what would happen to the country if it suddenly shifted to a decentralized pattern. I believe that the apprenticeship of the French society to a mode of Coproduction will be a long and delicate process. It is probably necessary that this process should be mediated by the central government as it does it now by splitting the powers between the departmental and local s authorities. The question is to know wether the
government will be likely to gradually withdraw itself from all its command positions.
This study leaves many unanswered questions. This seems inevitable due to the nature of the topic which has so many ramifications, connections and by definition is difficult to fit completely in a rational model.

Moreover it seems contradictory to me to argue against the shortcomings of the Cartesian rationality in urban planning and, at the same time, to pretend to construct a rational model of explanation.

Finally, it is always difficult to objectively analyze a situation in which you are yourself included.

However, I hope that this thesis has underlined some useful connections that will help the reader to understand the central nature of French planning and will suggest some further path of research.
In the more limited scope of planning and architecture, I have tried to look (through the example of Paris) at the issues of center and centrality, urbanity and appropriation.

These questions are important for the planning and architectural professions. I would argue that these professionals, before they embark on designing and planning projects, should reflect on the 'structure' of the environment on which they are going to operate. It seems to me far more important that form be seen in these terms than the terms of much of the professional debate today.

How should these professionals undertake this necessary reflection? A very interesting proposal has been developed by Donald Schon in his book "The Reflective Practitioner" where he demonstrates that the good professional is someone that lets his client (the project, the situation) he or she is working for talk back to him. For Schon the most creative part of the professional happens at this moment when the professional 'interacts' with the situation. It is during this period that the professional adjust his specific skills to the given assignment. This kind of reflective practice, Schons argues, goes beyond the postivist ideology of 'Technical Rationality' where the professional assume that its specific skills will be able to solve any situation, to, in fact, recognize that the complexity of every situation cannot be tackled through the set of professional skills. The reflective practitioner bridges the gap between its skills and the situation by putting himself in a 'conversationnal mood' with the situation.

This type of reflection is, by essence, difficult to teach because it is a very unique and individual experience floating between intuition, observation and pragmatism.
Coming back to the architectural and planning fields I would say that the quality of an urban sequence such as the place Dauphine should be understood by its morphological qualities (a V shaped space) its spatial relation with the Pont Neuf and the kind of centrality that the ensemble produces rather than in terms of detailed stylistic expression of the buildings that surrounds the space.

Wether it is a royal square or the suburbs of Paris it is necessary first of all to understand the structure of the environment so that an architect or a planner can appropriately intervene in the environment. Thinking in terms of structure rather than reference, centrality at large rather than centers, would be a reflecting method that would avoid the kind of errors produced under the realm of technical rationality that one can sense in places such as the governement center in Boston.

Reflection on that level would allow the professional to deal successfully with a multiplicity of uniquely complex situations. Each environment has a particular structure which produces a specific centrality, that is the specific centrality of the environment, this 'deep structure' of the environment which gives it its genuine quality and identity, should be discovered and enhanced by the professional working on his or her project.

Thus, a western consultant working in the 'urban villages' that are developing around the third world capitals would discover that the centrality of these environments is related to the rural social structure of their inhabitants and would try to rethink his standards of urban centers in terms of density, plot structure, etc, and revise its quality standards in terms of housing and infrastructure, in relation to the population income.
If the same consultant had to work on a project of revitalization of the Medieval city of Cairo he would have to recognize the labyrinthical quality of this environment, its multipolarisation and avoid to break it by introducing the modern traffic in the fabric. On the contrary, the consultant should seek to preserve and integrate these multiple centers in its revitalization strategy.

If someone had to redesign the river front of Baghdad or the waterfront of Chicago, he should be equally cautious to avoid a development along the waterfront that would cut open the tangential flux which are connecting the fabric to the waterfront.

Such a method would be helpful to set up a number of priorities of what should be achieved in a situation where the credits are limited. The approach of revitalization on a plot by plot basis which was taken in Angouleme cannot be afforded in many cases. In addition it restricts the changes that can happen in the town by 'freezing' it in a image. A reflection on the centrality of the environment would allow to selectively intervene on what should be changed to revitalize without destroying the fabric. A reflection of this sort would allow the professional to escape from the false debate between modernity and historicity by trying to come to grips with the essential qualities of the urban fabric.
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