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Building a Grand Paris: French Neoliberalism and the Politics of Urban Spatial Production

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BUILDING A GRAND PARIS: FRENCH NEOLIBERALISM AND THE
POLITICS OF URBAN SPATIAL PRODUCTION

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of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

POLITICS
with an emphasis in HISTORY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

by

Theresa Enright

June 2012

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Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures iv
List of Acronyms v
Abstract vii
Acknowledgements viii
Introduction: What Makes a City Great? 1
Chapter One: The Shared Dream of Grand Paris 63
Chapter Two: Moving through Grand Paris: Mobility, Connectivity and Transit-Oriented Redevelopment 140
Chapter Three: A Thousand Layers of Governance 215
Conclusion: Making Space for Whom? 287
Bibliography 310
List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: Regional economic and demographic indicators by Department 6
Table 2: Ten representations of metropolitan Paris 77
Table 3: Comparing Arc Express and RTPGP 165

Figure 1: Concentric model of core/periphery 81
Figure 2: Paris as egg yolk and egg white 82
Figure 3: Polycentric city 86
Figure 4: The Global Cities network 90
Figure 5: The urban rhizome 94
Figure 6: Christian de Portzamparc’s rhizome 96
Figure 7: The Paris Métropolitan 148
Figure 8: The RER and Translien Rail Network 149
Figure 9: Proposed maps of Arc Express and RTPGP 160
Figure 10: The future tracks of Grand Paris 169
Figure 11: Priority territories of Grand Paris 192
List of Acronyms

AIGP: International Studio of Grand Paris (Atelier international du Grand Paris)

CDT: Territorial Development Contract (Contrat de développement territorial)

CIADT: Interministerial Committee for the Development of Territory (Comité interministériel d'aménagement et de développement du territoire)

CNDP: National Committee for Public Debate (Commission nationale du débat public)

DSU: Urban Solidarity Funds (Dotation de solidarité urbaine)

DSP: Public Development Contracts (Délégation de service public)

DSQ: Neighborhood Social Development (Développement social de quartier)

EPCI: Public Establishments for Intercommunal Cooperation (Établissement public de coopération intercommunale)

EU: European Union

FSRIDS: Île-de-France Solidarity Funds (Fonds au solidarité de la région Île-de-France)

GCSMP: Global City State Mode of Production

GPE: Grand Paris Express

HLM: Low-Rent Housing (Habitation à loyer modéré)

IAURIF: Île-de-France Institute of Planning and Development (Institut d'aménagement et d'urbanisme de la région Île-de-France)

INSEE: National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques)

MIR: Movement of the Indigenous of the Republic (Mouvement des indigènes de la République)

NUP: New Urban Policy

ORBITALE: Regional Organization of Congestion-Free Transport of the Inner Basin Ring (Organisation régionale du bassin intérieur par transports annulaires libérés des encombrements)

PADOG: Plan for the Development and General Organization of the Paris Region (Plan d'aménagement et d'organisation générale de la région parisienne)
PCF: French Communist Party (*Parti communiste français*)

PIB: Gross Domestic Product (*Produit intérieur brut*)

PPP: Public Private Partnerships

PS: Socialist Party (*Parti socialiste*)

RATP: Autonomous Operator of Parisian Transports (*Région autonome des transports parisiens*)

RCSC: Rescaled Competition State Regimes

RER: Regional Express Network (*Réseau express régional*)

RTPGP: Public Transit Network of Grand Paris (*Réseau de transport public du Grand Paris*)

SDRIF: Île-de-France Masterplan (*Schéma directeur de la région Île-de-France*)

SGP: Society of Grand Paris (*Société du Grand Paris*)

SI: Situationist International

SIIC: Real Estate Investment Trust (*Société d'investissements immobiliers cotée*)

SMP: State Mode of Production

SNCF: National Corporation of French Railways (*Société nationale des chemins de fer français*)

STIF: Île-de-France Transit Authority (*Syndicat des transports d'Île-de-France*)

UDP: Urban Development Projects

UMP: Union for a Popular Movement (*Union pour un mouvement populaire*)

VT: Business Transport Tax (*Taux versement transport*)

ZUP: Priority Urban Zone (*Zone à urbaniser par priorité*)

ZUS: Sensitive Urban Zone (*Zone urbaine sensible*)
Abstract

Theresa Enright

Building a Grand Paris: French Neoliberalism and the Politics of Urban Spatial Production

This dissertation is an in-depth analysis of the Grand Paris regional agglomeration and redevelopment initiative launched in 2007 by French President, Nicolas Sarkozy. At the base of this multifaceted project is a political and economic mandate to address unrest caused by racialized segregations and vast inequalities in wealth and social service provision between the historic core and the peripheral suburbs, and to recast metropolitan Paris as a socially cohesive and globally competitive region. Through an examination of three important Grand Paris policy sites—artistic re-imaginings of the region, improved transportation infrastructure and government rescaling—the dissertation argues that the attempt to create a unified and poly-centric Greater Paris region is, paradoxically, poised to further entrench existing social and spatial inequalities by orienting the city around the values of economic growth and territorial competition. It argues that the emerging urbanization regime of Paris has serious detrimental consequences for sociospatial justice and for possibilities of grassroots control over spatial production. Furthermore, the dissertation identifies a new mode of neoliberalism in France that combines the republican values of social cohesion and vast public spending, particularly in infrastructures of mass transit, with speculative development, global finance and private enterprise.
Acknowledgements

Learning, writing, and producing knowledge are all collective processes. This dissertation is a shared endeavor and I thank all who have contributed along the way.

In particular, I am grateful to Dean Mathiowetz who has shown exceptional care and attention in reading my work, who has offered sage advice on navigating the labyrinthine corridors of academia, and who once hand-delivered an article draft to my doorstep early in the morning so that I could make a deadline. I thank Miriam Greenberg, an insightful commentator and a gracious interlocutor on all things related to urban studies. Her expertise on urban branding specifically has been very influential in my formulation of spatial transformation. And I thank my advisor, Robert Meister, who has expanded the scope of my knowledge immeasurably over the past six years and who has repeatedly pushed my ideas beyond the tired and untenable toward the exciting and exacting. He has let me get away with little and his casual yet abiding belief in my abilities as a scholar has been absolutely crucial to my success. His guidance is much appreciated.

Many other friends and colleagues have been indispensable to this research. I acknowledge especially David Hoy and Vanita Seth for focusing my ideas in the early stages of writing; Carla Freccero for her patience with my haltingly-spoken French; Alexander Hirsch who has thoughtfully responded to my project at various stages; and Timothy Kaposy, one of the most considerate and intellectually generous people I’ve had the pleasure of knowing. My cohort—Jan Kotowski, Sarah Mak, Sarah Romano, and Jasmine Syedullah—has been a constant source of inspiration, empathy and friendship. We have climbed mountains, shared meals, ventured down unknown roads, and conversed at great length together. I owe a great debt to each of you. Thanks also to the
Politics Department for believing that interdisciplinary social science work is possible, to the Urban Studies Research Cluster for the vibrant scholarly community, and to the Center for Cultural Studies whose weekly talks have provided countless distractions and provocations.

I am sincerely grateful to Donald Kingsbury for love, dialogue and companionship. I look forward to sharing what lies ahead. My family, and especially my parents, Wayne and Rosemary Enright, have provided unwavering encouragement throughout my time in graduate school. They have taught me through their example the import of education, the value of hard work, and the joy that comes from an active interest in the world. I dedicate this work to them.
Introduction

What Makes a City Great?

What will be the face of the future Île-de-France metropolis?\(^3\)

In April 2009, in the wake of the global economic crisis, and with metropolitan Paris still reeling from the aftermath of the 2005 suburban *banlieue* uprisings, French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, stood at a dais at the majestic *Cité de l’Architecture et Patrimoine* (Museum of Architecture and Patrimony) in central Paris and addressed a large crowd of eager officials, media and urban specialists in order to share his vision for urban revitalization.

How is a city to be remade? The civic link? The social link? Solidarity and citizenship? How are these achieved for great metropolises such that they become once again sites of progress, prosperity and equality?...This is perhaps the greatest challenge to politics of the 21\(^{st}\) century. France has decided to take up this challenge. France has decided to give an example. This is the ambition of Grand Paris.\(^2\)

With this proclamation, Sarkozy inaugurated a high profile architectural exhibition featuring ten scenarios for Paris thirty years into the future and summed up the

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1 In many ways, this is the question at the heart of the *Grand Paris* redevelopment. It is also the question posed by Prime Minister François Fillon in his public website dedicated to *Grand Paris*. “Grand Paris: Quel sera le visage de la future métropole francilienne?,” http://www.gouvernement.fr/gouvernement/grand-paris-quel-sera-le-visage-de-la-future-metropole-francilienne. Maurice Leroy, Minister of Cities, frames this idea in slightly different terms stating that “quite simply, Grand Paris is the face of tomorrow’s France.” In “Les Grand Paris, c’est le visage de la France de demain,” December 13, 2010, http://www.gouvernement.fr/gouvernement/maurice-leroy-le-grand-paris-c-est-le-visage-de-la-france-de-demain.
3 All translations mine unless otherwise noted.
corresponding policy venture of bringing about a new Paris, a Paris for the new century, a larger, better *Grand Paris*.

The *Grand Paris* project, introduced by Sarkozy in 2007, aims to radically revision and redefine the meaning Paris and how it functions. Undertaken through the coordination of the French State, the City of Paris, the Regional Authority of the Île-de-France and the Île-de-France Mayoral Association, but including many other municipal leaders, civil society groups, think tanks, bureaucracies and the inhabitants of Paris more generally, the project is a concerted effort to create a new city. While invoking specific policy initiatives and institutions—a high profile architectural exhibit in 2009 on the future of the region (*“Le Grand Pari(s) de l'agglomération parisienne,”* the inauguration of which was the reason for Sarkozy’s address), a new mass transportation network (the Grand Paris Express) to be completed 2025, a proposed regional administrative body, new targets for housing and plans for city greening, as well as thousands of site-specific works—more than a single redevelopment plan, *Grand Paris* is a new political vision for Paris and a new paradigm for urbanism.

*Grand Paris* is a comprehensive effort to build a livable and progressive city and it is being heralded both with France and internationally as a model for future urban developments. Chief among its virtues is the creation of a world-class environment for business paired with social responsibility, civic engagement and environmental sustainability. The imagined city of *Grand Paris* for example, is dense, mixed-use, open and “intelligent.” It responds to the needs of city-dwellers and global networks and incorporates the latest technological and informational innovations into its infrastructures, particularly through zones of excellence and innovation. *Grand Paris* also
claims to be aesthetically pleasing and historically aware, attuned to the “beauty” and “poetry” of modern collective life, while fostering cultural services and sites, as well as public spaces that optimize urban living. Furthermore, it is lauded for its collective ethos utilizing participatory planning, workshops and review at each stage of the design process and ensuring accountability and partnership between various levels of government. It aims to bring unity to a fragmented society and instill new life into a troubled economic climate.

The backdrop of challenges that face Paris in the 21st century—economic instability, political strife, social inequality, territorial fragmentation, environmental degradation, decline in the quality of life, loss of hope for the future—are not unique or self-contained, but are, rather, collectively formed, at scales ranging from the household to the planetary. Similar problems are facing cities worldwide. Addressing nothing less than “the greatest challenge to politics of the 21st century,” Grand Paris takes up the task of rethinking the meaning of contemporary urban life per se, as well as how to “invent” the desired metropolis.

This dissertation situates the Grand Paris initiative within a recent history of French urban planning schemes (1970-2012) and within global processes of 21st century urbanization in order to understand the meaning of such a formidable and daunting program. It analyzes the terms in which the initiative is framed and described, the conditions underpinning its conception, the means of inventing this future, and the potential implications of its implementation. In so doing, it finds that there are contradictions between the project goals—of economic growth and equality; state productivism and democracy; and competition and social cohesion—that cannot be
reconciled. In prioritizing the former terms in each respective pair, Grand Paris is poised to perpetuate the very problems it sets out to address. To suggest that this project is delusional and self-defeating is thus to be at odds with the prevailing views of what makes a livable city, and with the best-practices of urban design in the 21st century.

I contend that while Grand Paris purports to create equality and balance across a region plagued by inequality and social division, in orienting the city around economic growth, competition and private investment, it cannot but reproduce the social and spatial hierarchies it sets out to address. I demonstrate how large public expenditures, particularly in the new Grand Paris Express mass transit system, are not undertaken for the purpose of social service, but in order to increase the economic attractiveness of the region and to promote speculation in real estate markets. Furthermore, I claim that the changes of Grand Paris are ideologically legitimated through an artful combination of the neoliberal political rationalities of competition and economic growth with the Republican cant of state providence and social cohesion. This is bolstered through a new global urban consensus on the values of sustainability, mixity, and flexibility. Based on a property regime and institutional framework that support rent-production over inhabitation, this logic of urbanization implies the necessary peripheralization of regions and populations. The political consequences of this are dire. In Grand Paris only an elite class will have access to wealth and decision making powers, thereby dominating processes of urban spatial production and depoliticizing the invention of common worlds.

In order to understand how the Grand city collapses under the weight of its own internal contradictions, we begin with the name itself.
“Grand Paris” is a rather nebulous term employed to invoke the many and diverse imaginaries relative to the métropole francilienne (the metropole of the Île-de-France region). Depending on its iteration, Grand Paris suggests a bounded territorial unit, a metropolitan ideal, a cartographic representation, a mode of thought, an ideology, a manifesto, a vision for the future, a utopia, a nightmare or an imperial feat of social engineering. In particular, the “Grand” (“great,” “greater”) city that Sarkozy promised to France and to the world in his 2009 speech has at least three main valences that demand critical attention. Together, these frame the project and create an accessible narrative of how the challenge of new city will be achieved.

Firstly, Grand Paris aims to transform the meaning of metropolitan Paris as well as the physiognomy of the region by restructuring relations between the city of Paris and its surroundings. Currently, the city of Paris has a population of just over 2 million inhabitants and covers an area of 105 km² but the surrounding agglomerated region of Île-de-France balloons to almost 12 million inhabitants (governed by 8 departments and 1281 local communes) and covers an area of 2500 km². The area surrounding Paris is extremely varied, but in general, between Paris and its banlieues, there are great

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4 For simplicity, throughout the dissertation the broad urban renewal scheme of Sarkozy’s government will be referred to as “Grand Paris,” while the non-italicized “Grand Paris” will refer to a particular concept of the region, related to, but not equivalent to the development plan. The architectural exhibit that launches Grand Paris will be referred to in the abbreviated form Grand Pari in order to highlight the pun of the word “pari” (“wager” or “bet”) involved in its name. Of course, as the dissertation makes clear throughout, definitively separating these terms is impossible. These distinctions are meant as a heuristic device, not as a clear definition of boundaries.
asymmetries in power, wealth, income, unemployment and demographic make-up (see Table 1).\(^5\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Mean Income 2009 (€)</th>
<th>GDP per Inhabitant 2005 (€)</th>
<th>Rate of Unemployment (%)</th>
<th>Population 2009</th>
<th>Immigrant Population (%)</th>
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<td>75 439</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>2 220 114</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>11.6</td>
<td>1 519 071</td>
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<tr>
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<td>29 250</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>1 319 227</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>23 480</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>1 316 761</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yvelines</td>
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<tr>
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<td>42526</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>11 729 613</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Regional economic and demographic indicators by Department.\(^6\)

*Grand Paris* thus aims to break down the urban apartheid that, as a result of the uneven process of 20\(^{th}\) century modernization, segregates poor and racialized populations from the center of Paris. Not only are suburban residents denied physical access to the “center” of the city and its productive capacities, but residents of Paris have better access to social services such as healthcare, transportation and education. The commune and department of Paris are also overrepresented in regional governance,

\(^5\) Typically in French the singular “*banlieue*” is used to refer to the “the suburb.” However, the term is used most often to connote the stigmatized peripheral areas, mainly in the northeast of Paris and carries with it connotations of poverty, delinquency and of marginality. The plural “*banlieues*” will also be used throughout the dissertation, however, to refer to the heterogeneity of the neighborhoods and territories that compose the suburban landscape. For a good history of this term see Mustafa Dikeç, *Badlands of the Republic: Space, Politics and Urban Policy* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007); Azouz Begag, *Ethnicity & Equality: France in the Balance* (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 2007).

\(^6\) Data compiled by author from “Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques (INSEE),” http://www.insee.fr/fr/default.asp.
leading Parisian issues to dominate the agenda at the expense of suburban concerns. Together, these pose acute problems of citizenship, with suburban residents, or *banlieusards*, less able to benefit from the wealth of the city and having a diminished influence in urban affairs than those residing in the central city.

The term “Grand Paris” also reinforces this inequality and is a highly value-laden way to describe the regional agglomeration of Paris. This appellation is used, for instance, to secure the symbolic dominance of Paris over its suburbs and to refuse the governing authority of the Île-de-France region (“Paris” here is the essential nomenclature). Grand Paris can be counterposed with to the alternative, “*Région Capitale,*” which is explicitly not about Paris per se but is about the capital, in other words, the idiosyncratic position and power of the region as epicenter of the nation. Grand Paris is also contrasted with the designation “Paris Metropole” preferred by the socialist mayor of Paris, Bertrand Delanoë. Opposing the hegemony of Paris suggested by Grand Paris *Paris Métropole* evokes the composite nature of the region, suggesting not just an expanded Paris, but the cooperation and interdependence of a complex unit. The stakes of these definitions are great, for in naming the metropolis, one summons it into being, setting conditions both for how it is known and for how it is to be changed.

Not only is the region materially dominated by the center, but Paris thus has a symbolic force that its surroundings do not. Imbued with a richly mythologized past, Paris is seen as a vital center of modern urban life, while the *banlieues* are seen as empty or dangerous, stigmatized as places of disorder, lawlessness, poverty and racialized others or treated as *terra nullis* to be entered into the service of the metropolitan core. This asymmetry results in a fragmented imaginary and a lack of an urban community on the
scale of the metropolis. In the concept of a “Grand” Paris, the identity of Paris itself is in question.

One important consequence of this for the purposes of Grand Paris is the fact that there is not a unified expression of Paris readable from an external vantage point, especially from that of the foreign investor. Investors are wary of borders and of social unrest and, in practical terms, they do not want to identify their headquarters with the first-ring suburb of Aubervilles, for example, when they profit from the symbolic capital of “Paris.” 7

In addition to enabling peripheral suburbs to cash in on the Paris brand, however, the Grand Paris has a political and economic mandate to address inequality to recast metropolitan Paris as a socially cohesive and globally competitive region. Essential to this task is a rearticulation of urban centrality and the creation of a multipolar urban region that incorporates the banlieue as a constitutive part of Paris. One of the meanings of “Grand” in Grand Paris is to expand the meaning of Paris to include its historical others, the various suburbs surrounding the core, and to integrate the metropolis representationally and economically.

Secondly, the “grand” nature of Grand Paris is not merely an attempt to expand territorially, but for Sarkozy, grandness is also “a matter of perspective.” For Sarkozy, Grand Paris is a matter of envisioning Paris within a grand “civilizational” scale through

7 The western neighborhood of La Défense, the largest business and financial district in Paris (comparable to Canary Warf in London), is not located within the bounds of the city itself. It has, however, been extended a Parisian postal code such that the address of firms located there are, for all intents and purposes, within Paris.
an exemplary grand projet, here a wholesale redesign of the city. This pharaonic project cannot be considered divorced from the massive overhauls in space that preceded it—in particular, those brought about by Haussmann’s notorious Second Empire reforms, and the massive modernization and reconstruction efforts post WWII. Like the grand projets that preceded it, Grand Paris involves struggles over the meaning and management of the polis, and an attempt to refashion the economic and social relations of the city in order to meet the capitalist imperatives of the time. And like these earlier civilizational projects, Grand Paris also relies upon the mastery and control of the flux of urban life, and the subordination of diverse populations and territories to a common order.

The proposed Grand Paris Express mass transit network is perhaps the most telling demonstration of the monumental scope and vast ambition of the project, as it...

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8 Sarkozy, “Inauguration de l’exposition ‘Grand Pari(s)’.”
9 It too relies upon slum clearance projects of the banlieue, “fantastical” speculative accounting schemes (similar to those Jules Ferry famously criticized) and the establishment of a new accumulation regime predicated upon the triple sign of truth, beauty and grandeur. The Second Empire reforms in particular have been studied in great detail. For a good account of these transformations, see especially David Harvey, Paris, Capital of Modernity (New York: Psychology Press, 2003) and David P. Jordan, Transforming Paris: The Life and Labors of Baron Haussmann (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995). On the modernization efforts of the 1950s and 1960s, see Kirsten Ross, Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996).

will drastically alter the physical and symbolic landscape of Paris and is set to require unprecedented levels of both public and private investment through state-sponsored speculative development around proposed stations. Consisting of a new 24-hour automatic metro line connecting the regional airports with hubs of enterprise, the Grand Paris Express is France’s largest investment in public infrastructure in recent history. Its erection demonstrates the power of the state in general, and Sarkozy in particular, to create worlds and to exert control over space.

The grand scale of the project it is also meant to recapitulate Paris as the seat of global modernity and the essential form of modern urban life. For Sarkozy and the advocates of Grand Paris, to rethink Paris is to rethink the meaning of cities more generally. Grand Paris is meant to be inclusive and universal, not bound to those who live within the Île-de-France, but a deterritorialized territory belonging to all those who have links to the metropolis or who are more generally concerned with the fate of global cities. In this imperial perspective “the name of Paris has a significance for all the people of the earth” and the modernizing of Paris is seen to stand in for modernization writ large.  

As a forum for intellectual production, the project of Grand Paris demands rethinking the ontology and epistemology of the urban from a Parisian perspective. “This is the first time in the world” says Sarkozy, “that a reflection of this gravity is undertaken on the question of the great modern metropolis.” While the dissertation will argue that this universalizing and essentializing gesture is dangerous and deceptive, the effect of rethinking Paris is nevertheless important in material and symbolic terms.

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11 Sarkozy, “Inauguration de l’exposition ‘Grand Pari(s)’.”
12 Ibid.
Indeed, Paris still exert influence over such against such up and coming megalopolises as Hong Kong, Dubai and Sao Paolo when it comes to urban sciences, architectural design and the best practices of planning.13

Sarkozy’s program of Grand Paris is framed as a singular and universal “shared dream” for all inhabitants of the metropolis and even for “all men of the world,” dismissing competing metropolitan futures as irrelevant, anachronistic or unviable. One of the guiding threads of this dissertation is in fact, concerned with tracing how one consensual face of Grand Paris comes to stand in for all other possibilities for spatial organization and for the miasma of desires and dreams for urban life in the 21st century.

The third meaning of “grand” in Grand Paris is evaluative and invokes the modernizing tropes of progress, development, and improvement. Building a new Paris is ultimately about making things better. This revival of Paris is set against an atmosphere of stagnation and degradation. Many in recent years have spoken of “le grand corps malade” (“the sick body”) of the Île-de-France and events such as the 2005 banlieue uprising, the 2007 economic crisis, and the 2009 transit strike each signal the need to rethink the ways of life and infrastructures that define the once-luminous city.14 Compounding this,

13 While focused on the already richly-mined archive of Paris, the dissertation is highly skeptical of the study of urbanization that restricts itself to only one valorized urban form. Especially in analyses of cities of the global north (e.g. New York, Paris, London, Chicago and Tokyo) individual spatial transformations are falsely conferred with an autonomy that, in effect, misunderstands and reifies the process of urbanization as such. Excavating the specific and multi-scalar inventions of Grand Paris can expose this myth of uniformity while still doing much to exhibit the workings of urbanization and the uneven knowledges of urbanism today. This dissertation treads the fine line of both decentering Paris from its privileged position in urban thought, while still recognizing how space-making and knowledge-producing powers have concentrated in this imperial metropolis.

14 Marion Bertone and Michèle Leloup, Le Grand Paris: Les Coulisses de la consultation (Paris:
controversies over the “museumification” of the historic city, the banalization of
gentrification, and the threat of moral decline from the non-French immigrant
populations add to an atmosphere of melancholy and middle-class fear. This sense of
moral and aesthetic decline is filtered through Grand Paris in primarily economic terms.
According to Sarkozy, Paris is stagnant in the cushion of a socialist state, and is losing its
global status of beauty and innovation that ushered it to the fore of the modern 20th
century. Christian Blanc, a key proponent of Grand Paris, echoes this sentiment, blaming
post-war redistribution efforts for creating a “deficit in dynamism” in the capital region.
He warns that “reduction is omnipresent, it threatens to otherwise reduce the last
aspirations for global competitiveness.” Grand Paris architect Christian de Portzamparc
in a similar fashion refers to an “ocean of mediocrity” arising from urban planning itself,
where more or less independent local developments, disconnected have balkanized the
region, preventing its economic potential from being fully realized. Becoming grand in
Grand Paris involves innovation, growth and prestige. In other words, it primarily reduces
to adjusting to the needs of contemporary capitalism and increasing the rank of Paris in
the competition of global cities. Economic growth, increases in productivity, and a
strengthening of the command power in global markets are combined with the parallel

Archibooks, 2009), 13.
2009.
17 Le Moniteur Architecture, Le Grand Pari(s): Consultation internationale sur l’avenir de la
pursuits of improvements in technology, communications and especially environmental sustainability, to ensure that territories are in phase with their new vocation.\textsuperscript{18}

In order to solve the problems of “decline” and “obsolescence” and to ensure that the region of Paris is as economically viable as possible, the focus of \textit{Grand Paris} is on new developments in areas that are not yet meeting their full productive potential, and a directed shift in industry toward private sectors of “advanced production” such as information technologies, biotechnology, finance, advertizing and other high-level business services.\textsuperscript{19} In particular, the creation of “strategic sites” of enterprise in the peripheries will alter real-estate markets, an increasingly important site of surplus accumulation in contemporary cities. Closing the gap between current and potential land values, improvement here relies upon the valorization of the city by capital and the appropriation of territory by the dominant social classes. “Renewal” and “redevelopment” are not neutral processes of change but are always in pursuit of particular ideals and ideologies, here the global city and its neoliberal rationale.

This trifurcation of the “\textit{Grand}” promise into the interrelated aims of unity, globality and progress indicate the main dimensions of the project, but these aims also raise important questions: How do we define and delimit the metropolis? For whom and by whom is the city built? What is the relationship of urban spatial organization to social

\textsuperscript{18} The \textit{Grand Paris} architectural team of MVRDV describes this logic most explicitly: “‘Paris Plus’ stands for more: more ambition, more optimism, more density, more efficiency, more ecology and more compactness.” Critical of the deteriorating ‘ghetto’ conditions of many European cities, and Parisian delinquency in particular, they write “Mustn’t we always embrace more of the world and that which is more possible? To be more attractive, more diverse, more open, more free, more collaborative, more unique, more synergetic, more green, more dense, more spacious, more equal.” Ibid., 238.

and political life? How are global forces, especially those of the global capitalist economy, articulated locally in Paris? Conversely, how are local dynamics felt at non-local scales? Who decides the values toward which the city is to be oriented? How are these values achieved? And finally, How does a single vision of Grand Paris and how is this reproduced without the prospect of alternative social-spatial arrangements to modify its future?

Using the texts and resources associated with the Grand Paris initiative, this dissertation begins to address these questions. This critical appraisal of Grand Paris is not limited to thinking about the case of Paris alone, however, but it provides an analytics that may be applicable to diverse processes of metropolitanization occurring worldwide. The dissertation charts new territory in the study of neoliberal urbanization by introducing a framework that focuses on the meaning of redevelopment in a broad social political and economic context, and it indicates a potential new wave of neoliberal reforms in Europe based not in austerity and the withdrawal of the state, as might be expected, but through direct state involvement in massive and far-reaching projects. Moreover, the dissertation contributes to ongoing debates about “actually existing” neoliberalization processes, the rescaling of the state in Western Europe, the vicissitudes of Republican thought, banlieue geographies of poverty and exclusion, and the imaginative and material force of urban planning and urban policy.

By way of introduction, in what follows I first outline the theoretical approach of the dissertation. Grand Paris is then contextualized within a history of regional developments and within the dual trends of treating the urban-region as the scale of state intervention and site of governance today, and claims that neoliberalization is the
primary means of recalibrating economic and political relations in Western Europe, especially in a time of crisis. Finally, with an aim to discover the potential implications of the plan, the megaproject of *Grand Paris* will be used to explore the meaning of urban planning in the 21st century.

**The Invention of Grand Paris**

In his influential work, *Paris Capital of Modernity*, David Harvey sets out by posing a question to himself and to the reader. “How,” he asks, “is the story of this massive transformation of Second Empire Paris to be told?”

The same question must be posed today with respect to Grand Paris, for there are infinite ways of telling the story of this open-ended transformation, each with its own set of assumptions, priorities, goals and effects. Indeed, this question is perhaps even more pertinent to *Grand Paris* as these narratives are in their infancy, unfolding alongside transformations in space. Here, histories of the past, present and future intertwine; these representations of Grand Paris giving rise to new material conditions through their telling and retelling.

Various think tanks, politicians, commentators, architects and urban theorists have put Grand Paris on the agenda for debate, each depicting a different regional narrative. The dominant option, as we have seen, told explicitly by Sarkozy and Blanc is a neoliberal economic narrative that focuses on the extent to which *Grand Paris* must be brought about as a new scale of production and reproduction in order to raise Paris’s capacity for global competition. This is the story that *Grand Paris* tells about itself. Blanc, the former head of the provisional body Society of Grand Paris (SGP) uses a cast of

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heroic elected officials and international financiers in his book of propaganda, the 2009 opus *Le Grand Paris*, to explain the necessity of creating new hubs of enterprise on the outskirts on the city in order to capitalize upon the underutilized *banlieue* and return Paris to its rightful place at the heart of human civilization. This representation becomes the main guideline for and justification for policy.

But there are other stories to be told as well. The think-tank *Paris Métropole*, influenced by its founder, Pierre Mansat, understands *Grand Paris* through the administrative relationships between regional bodies, and the micro-workings of local government actors. Here the processes in pursuit of *Grand Paris* are told through the themes of “intercommunality” and cooperation among different levels of government and different sectoral interests in pursuit of a more “balanced” urban fabric that could challenge the dominance of Île-de-France by the Parisian core. A rather prolific organization, *Paris Métropole* has produced many reports chronicling the state of the region and proposing projects for the future. Through this local self-scrutiny, *Paris Métropole* coordinates and models the regional administrative body of Grand Paris to which it aims.

More colloquial stories also abound. A popular blog associated with the French daily, *Le Monde* written by “desperate *banlieusard,*” Jean-Paul Chapon, also challenges the hegemony of Paris in new spatial transformations, but from an eccentric perspective. *Paris est sa banlieue* reports on territorial restructurings, local events, planning initiatives and news from around the Paris region told through quotidian suburban life.²¹ Punning the common phrase “*Paris et sa banlieue*” (Paris and its suburb) into “*Paris est sa banlieue*”

(Paris is its suburb), Chapon displays the life of the banlieue in rich detail, demonstrating the multitude of encounters, events and conflicts that make the space of metropolitan Paris on an ongoing basis. Similarly, the recently minted quarterly magazine *Megalopolis* also performs this decentering function with commentary on regional policy initiatives as well as a burgeoning particularly suburban lifestyle.

Still other urbanists and commentators focus on the way in which the river Seine defines the contours of Grand Paris and on the ecological and metabolic conditions of the metropolis. Others prefer to read Grand Paris reforms through the lenses of housing, labor, arts and tourism. Together these stories of Grand Paris clamor for the nation’s attention and the attention of the global communities.

A number of recent publications have also offered more specific analyses of Grand Paris along economic, social, administrative and scientific lines. Philippe Subra’s *Le Grand Paris* (2009), for example, is a comprehensive and accessible volume that outlines the main elements of Grand Paris policy through a series of twenty-five questions dealing mainly with how the program will respond to pressing urban social questions. Philippe Panerai, while not dealing directly with policies, engages in *Paris métropole: Formes et échelles du Grand Paris* (2008) the question of the malleable form of the new Parisian metropolis both in terms of its varied representation and in terms of its legal and

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22 One of his most popular entries, the “carte-postale,” features a photo and description of a site off the tourist map; an everyday snapshot of a city in transition and a story of people and places that make Paris what it is. This alternative imaginary—opposed to the fantasy of Paris envisioned by the tourist—shows a decidedly not-grand but ordinary Paris. *Megalopolis* features regional living guides that perform the same function, such as an alternative maps for suburban residents and public leisure destinations outside the Périphérique.

23 See especially the work of Grand Pari architect Antoine Grumbach.
regulatory limits. Frederic Gilli and Jean-Mark Offner’s *Paris métropole hors les murs* (2010) also examines the form of the 21st century metropolis and provides a detailed and thoughtful account of possible scenarios of agglomeration in order to answer the normative question of how to best govern the metropolis. Marc Wiel’s *Le Grand Paris: Premier Conflit né de la decentralization* (2009), aims at a similar goal, while linking the problems of governance in particular to recent histories of decentralization and the ensuing conflicts between the central state and local authorities over the direction, shape and management of the region. In addition, a special issue of the journal *Urbanisme* (2009) features many of these author-urbanists alongside policy-makers on the economic and administrative implications of recasting the city, while numerous other French magazines and newspapers have also journalistically assessed the policy.  

Each of these stories is germane to understanding the transformations associated with *Grand Paris*, and each of these will be elaborated upon in more detail throughout the dissertation. Yet none of these existing accounts engages comprehensively with the meaning of Grand Paris in broad economic, social and political perspective. This dissertation, in contrast, looks at the texts of *Grand Paris*, but it traces how the very scale of the Grand Paris metropolis is created through multiple articulations of space and policy. In other words, though this dissertation is concerned with the workings and implications of public policies, this study cannot be reduced to the laws alone or to the decisions of individuals who have been elected as representatives of Paris.

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24 While the rest of the world has been closely watching *Grand Paris* there are to date, no comprehensive foreign language publications on the initiative and few English publications have emerged on *Grand Paris*, save brief news pieces and special interest (architectural and transit) reports. This dissertation introduces the debates of *Grand Paris* into an English-language context.
Indeed, it is clear that more than a single policy enshrined in legislative text, Grand Paris is a signifier of a projected social order and a particular mode of approaching the question of 21st century urbanism—a highly contested and variable vision that incorporates ideologies, institutions, practices and representations into its manifold constitution. As such, the emerging conurbation of Grand Paris is an expression of a broad public discourse. The politics of Grand Paris cannot be understood divorced from its discursive context and the ways in which Grand Paris policies operate within a wider play of significations, meanings, elisions and absences. I intend to use the following pages to exhibit these dynamics of Grand Paris rather than reduce the program to an isolated epochal decree or to render down the concept to one convenient ideological topos. While this analysis takes a rather broad perspective, it often deals often with the minutiae of empirical details upon which the transformations of Parisian metropolitanization are based.

I understand “discourse” here as not only the language of text, but the activities, practices, beliefs and behaviors through which power relations materialize themselves in the built environment and in speaking subjects. Discourse thus looks at language itself and the material consequences to which this language gives rise. This dissertation turns to the tension between public policy and public discourse as constitutive of Grand Paris in order to reveal the multiform strategies for transforming space.

Starting from this assumption, the dissertation aims to reveal the main dimensions of the “Building” of Grand Paris. The textual archive—specialist, scholarly, popular, artistic, local and international—provides the basis upon which the scalar and social limits of urban reproduction are articulated. The dissertation uses Grand Paris to
explore how imagined city-futures become materialized in the built environment, how distributions of people, places and functions are tied to policy initiatives, and the implications of these dynamics for social equality and democracy. In particular, in order to contextualize the theoretical and empirical data, in each chapter, I will situate the Grand Paris project within a history of urban planning schemes, particularly from 1970 onward, and within debates in political theory over the spatial distributions of politics. The primary analytical strategy is to construct qualitative, discursive accounts of the Grand Paris project, focusing on articulations of what counts as the city, who counts as an inhabitant and who qualifies as a participant in the production, reproduction and habitation of the urban space.

There are two modes of explanation that are especially useful for this task: a historical geographical materialist account of the relations of capital that create the conditions for private accumulation and class-struggle in cities and a critical policy analysis that looks at the discursive construction of Grand Paris.25

Drawing on Marxist political economy and the historical materialist methodology, historical geographical materialism accounts for the way in which capitalist relations are spread through space, and in dialectical fashion, the way in which those produced spaces provide the objective conditions for social relations of production and reproduction. Henri Lefebvre sums up the fundamental geography of social and

economic interactions under capitalism saying, “[t]he social relations of production have a social existence insofar as they exist spatially: they project themselves in a space while producing it.” Each era of production entails a particular material geography of social relations. An historical spatial configuration is further, the result of capital investment and disinvestment in territory. Historical change occurs dialectically with incipient forms arising from contradictions within seemingly fixed conditions. As economic relations require constant motion, under this process, configurations of space are continually being redrawn.

Urbanization is perhaps the foremost social and spatial process in modern capitalist relations. Harvey describes urbanization as “the mobilization, production, appropriation and absorption of economic surplus.” He explains how the built environment ensures the reproduction of values and surplus-value on the side of production and the reproduction of consumers and commodities on the side of consumption. While the spatial fix for overaccumulation is geographic, the surplus does not necessarily reinvest equally across a particular territory, leading to what Neil Smith describes as “uneven development.” Not only does the unevenness of urbanization refer to the differential pace of investment and disinvestment patterns and the rhythms of urban eventfulness from place to place, but it also understands the marginal relations of power and exploitation and the divisions of labor that spread themselves out according to this differentiated landscape. Determining and deciding what land is

attractive for investment (under differentiated regimes of value) and the rhythm of investment are highly political endeavors. As a result, the city is also the site where social inequalities and relations of domination and exploitation, the materiality of which have spatial dimensions, are most acute. The urban territory here is not the backdrop, but the means and end of accumulation and exploitation. The relations of center and periphery, for example, so pronounced in Paris result from sedimented histories of such accumulations.

The *Grand Paris* process of metropolitanization can be seen as a particular variant of urbanization tied to the unique features of the contemporary metropolitan conurbation—large population, high density, global command power, political and cultural influence, international connections—as a scale of social organization, coordinated production and shared governance. Determining how production and social life are organized in the global city metropolis and the continually changing and emerging meanings of center and periphery within this context is one of the core inquiries of this dissertation.

Of particular interest in *Grand Paris* is the role of the state as facilitator and institutor of metropolitanization. Here I draw mainly on the work of Henri Lefebvre, who in *De L'État* argues that modern economic planning is primarily spatial planning, and that state has the unparalleled ability to channel investment into the built environment for production, consumption, circulation, transportation and social ends.29

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States, that is, have the idiosyncratic ability to manage territory on a large-scale, and to mobilize space as a productive force. In the 21st century—an era of a consolidated service economy, generalized gentrification, real estate proliferation, and the financialization of space—Lefebvre’s specific conclusions do not apply, but his perspective on the state involvement in capital’s achievement of growth through the creation and occupation of space is crucial.30

Henri Lefebvre, State, Space, World: Selected Essays, ed. trans. Neil Brenner, and Stuart Elden (Minneapolis: University Of Minnesota Press, 2009), 223. What Lefebvre refers to as the “State Mode of Production” (SMP) is the institutional and territorial basis for managing capital accumulation in its contradictions and tendencies through taking account of space, territory and production. In other terms, the SMP invokes all of the diverse spatial strategies (e.g. new forms of knowledge, material shifts, institutional innovations) through which the state manages the social relations of capitalism. This “state productivism” sees the state take charge of economic growth in an active manner as the state has the unparalleled ability to channel investment into the built environment for production, consumption, circulation, transportation and social ends. It is “only the state” according to Lefebvre, which can take on the task of managing space on a grand scale. This statist space (espace étatique) represents a fundamental change in how space is managed through various apparatuses of governance and the interplay between economic growth, political development and social forces. See also Stuart Elden’s commentary in Lefebvre, State, Space, World, 20; Neil Brenner, “The Urban Question: Reflections on Henri Lefebvre, Urban Theory and the Politics of Scale,” International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 24, no. 2 (2000): 361–378.

30 Though Lefebvre’s state is tied to the conditions of late Fordism, in describing the various strategies through which states mobilize space as a productive force, his theory is especially useful in accounting for the uneven development and scalar flux (of supra and sub national elements) of the urban today. In a somewhat offhanded note on Lefebvre’s SMP, Andy Merrifield even goes so far as to compare the SMP to Hardt and Negri’s notion of “Empire” and its slippery configurations of “decentred sovereignty.” In Andy Merrifield, Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 126-131. He writes that Empire is the “most developed form yet of Lefebvrian “abstract space,” and it incarnates the passage from ‘the capitalist state’ to the SMP, replete with its own biopower.” Neil Brenner has also noted the contemporary relevance of the SMP, calling the contemporary form of the state “hyperproductivist” and suggesting that we may currently be witnessing the emergence of an historically new form of the SMP, in which “the state’s function as an agent for the commodification of its territory—at once national, regional, and urban scales—has acquired an unprecedented supremacy over other regulatory operations within the state’s institutional architecture.” Neil Brenner,
Importantly, as a theory of historical change, a historical geographical materialism also reveals that the urban is wrought by forces that have no intelligible institutional form—by forces that cannot be captured within a finite set of discrete human actions. In *The Urbanization of Capital*, for example, Harvey eschews the humanist norm of spatial imaginaries to show that what gets built in a city—and why, how, when, by whom and at what cost—is a direct consequence not of individual decisions, but of the “general law of capitalist accumulation.” From this general law, one can infer more geographically specific tendencies of the urbanization (and the metropolitanization) of capital and their imbrications with political system and cultures. Indeed, it is my contention that the general tendencies of accumulation are always expressed in contingent circumstances and actions.

Some may find frustrating the lack of rational actors, decisions and political machines that usually account for urban change in political science, yet a focus on these elements misses the extent to which urbanization is driven by communal processes and intersubjective actions at multiple scales. A focus on the micro-actions of local officials, as in urban regime theories, for example, suggests that in the urban context the relevant

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31 Karl Marx critiques the personification of sociality because he believes it obfuscates the objective conditions of historical events. He writes: “In investigating a situation concerning the state one is all too easily tempted to overlook the objective nature of the circumstances and to explain everything by the will of the persons concerned. However, there are circumstances which determine the actions of private persons and individual authorities, and which are independent of them as the method of breathing.” In Karl Marx, “Justification of the Correspondent from the Mosel,” www.marxists.org.  
“decision makers” are located with the city itself, and most likely serve on its municipal council or lobby for changes through that council. This approach also assumes that individual agents act in meaningful ways based on rational or other decision-making techniques, whereas I see a given situation as constituting the framework of decision in the first place. Moreover, political science discourse usually treats policy as arising from a set of mythical decision makers who address already existing problems in the world (traffic, unemployment, delinquency, inefficient bureaucracy). Accounts of how problems are produced as such are elided, and those processes that defy a simple unidirectional framework of urban growth are dismissed as external variables.\(^3\)

Michael Shapiro illustrates the difference between these forms of policy analysis using the example of “traffic congestion.” As a “middle class problem,” congestion “accepts the already-produced segregation, housing, and shaping of the labor force that has arisen from the structure of real estate speculation, work force creation, city planning and so on.” An alternative approach to this problem (one which I pursue in Chapter Three) would instead focus on dynamics of “problematization” and would recognize that external factors must also be incorporated into this viewpoint. This includes attention to the forces of global capitalism, including finance capital, demographic trends, colonial histories, and daily struggles and interactions of inhabitants. Much of what produces modern traffic congestion (mass consumption, automobile cultures of manufacturing, cultures of suburban domesticity, exploited labor workforces) is indeed that which produces the modern city.

\(^3\) Michael Shapiro, *Reading the Postmodern Polity: Political Theory as Textual Practice* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992).
This dissertation does not elide the questions of why particular actors do certain things or why the state makes certain policies, but it deemphasizes these questions in an effort to turn away from theories of the state and of urban politics that focus to heavily on pregiven notions of personal or professional interest, expressed through preferences or through legal institutional bodies. The actions of individuals can certainly make a difference in urbanization processes, but my interest here is not with the individuals themselves or their decision making abilities (though this question is by no means immaterial to urbanization), but rather the way in which elected officials especially, are constrained from the outside by dominant modes of knowledge, by habits, by institutional norms and by elements excessive to local or individual frames.

Thus, in addition to critical geography, the dissertation also turns to the historical and geographical and materialist work of Michel Foucault on governmentality and discourse. The dissertation follows the advice of Nikolas Rose when he usefully suggests that in order to understand changing practices of governance, we must look deeper than the surfaces of policy prescriptions.

Why not focus on the encounters, the plays of force, the obstructions, the ambitions and strategies, the devices, and the multiple surfaces on which they emerge? Why not, as Foucault put it, focus on events, on the conditions that constitute an event…To show that things weren’t as ‘necessary as all that’…For in this way one can begin to discern the web of relations and practices that result in particular ways of governing,

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34 I read Foucault and the critical geographers as having much in common. Both focus on how large social and political upheavals take place through micro interactions, and both stress how the material configuration of particular spaces (e.g. the classroom, the factory) is deeply imbued with power, processes of subject formation, and the conditions of social interactions. See Bob Jessop, “From Micro-powers to Governmentality: Foucault’s Work on Statehood, State Formation, Statecraft and State Power,” Political Geography 26, no. 1 (January 2007): 34-40, for a useful account of Foucault and historical geographical materialism.
particular ways of seeking to shape the conduct of individuals and groups.\textsuperscript{35}

This dissertation is an analysis of policy, but it is not so much concerned with evaluation—uncovering success or failure—or prescribing remedies and alternatives, for this form of thinking only serves to support the status quo. Rather, the work offers a critical analysis of the “web or relations and practices” that define this moment in political thought; how \textit{Grand Paris} is framed, according to what assumptions and to what ends. It thus focuses primarily on the discursive character of policy, and more generally, the discursive character of modern governance in which the programme is not simply a statement of intentions, but a means of creating the object of intervention itself.\textsuperscript{36} In particular, the dissertation demonstrates how \textit{Grand Paris} is a program of government that seeks to configure the metropolis in a way thought desirable according to the logics of the market and specifically, the market of global cities.

The “buildings” of \textit{Grand Paris} are thus both the outcomes and processes of metropolitan policies. Crucial for practices of governance, “the city” according to


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Michael Shapiro has long “been the domain reflecting spatial strategies.” Because of the way that the city functions, he continues, it is “less appropriate to ask about policymaking in the city than to think of the city itself as policy.” Shapiro also stresses the necessity of a political view of spatial practices, “that spaces are produced by various forms of power and authority.” In reading policy as discourse and the city as policy, I suggest that not only are changes to the city complex, but the meaning making operations at the level of policy and statements constrain change in important ways, by framing only particular options and decisions. In particular, this mystifies power relations that go into the production of space and treat the proposed course of action as inevitable, desirous and beneficial to the good of the polity. Not only is reform denied by the interest of those in positions of power, but by shaping the very knowledges through which we understand the city and its workings, the powerful control the viable alternatives to urban planning, urban inhabitation and urbanization.

In many ways, we are witnessing in *Grand Paris*, the emergence point of a new epistemological and ontological understanding of Paris and of 21st century metropolis. But what gets left out of these policies is as important to this analysis as what is said. As the terms of policy narrow alternatives are lost and futures are foreclosed, discourses that claim to represent all become the new commonsense, and one clear interpretation of urbanism emerges as dominant. It is not an exaggeration to claim, as does Jacques Rancière, that consensual discourse, what he calls a particular spatial “regime of the

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37 Shapiro, *Reading the Postmodern Polity*, 86, the latter italics mine.
38 Ibid., 95.
sensible,” restricts the thinkable, sayable, and actionable, and therefore limits who is able to participate in politics.³⁹

In the chapters that make up the dissertation, I aim to demonstrate how policy problems—of metropolitan identity, of immobility, and of autonomy and legitimacy—are created in ways that imply the solution of a global city. Instead of justifying intervention in the banlieue according to a 19th or 20th century script of welfare provision, hygiene or moral codes (though these are by all means present), the rationale is transparently one of profit, competition and growth. To see Grand Paris as the entrenchment of the global city, this approach follows Foucault’s account of discourse practices “that systematically form the objects of which they speak; they do not identify objects, they constitute them and in the practice of doing so conceal their own invention.”⁴⁰ Discourse then, encompasses the bodies of knowledge, ways of knowing, organization frameworks, communicative schema and institutional norms that must be continually reworked and redrawn to produce and reproduce a hegemonic order, and as a result, make radical change difficult.

With these approaches in play, the dissertation is also a work of political theory. When Aristotle set out to construct the ideal polity, he argued that all political reflection must begin in knowing the city.⁴¹ While the concept of the “city” as such has no doubt changed dramatically since Aristotle’s day, the task of recognizing the form of life at the

⁴⁰ Foucault, Discipline & Punish.
base of any political community remains of crucial importance. This dissertation follows in this tradition and directly evaluates the archive of Grand Paris in order to illuminate the problematics of justice, change, belonging and equality that bind and organize the metropolitan collectivity. It remains firmly rooted in critical theory insofar as it stresses the constitution and mechanics of governance and the complex interactions of community, power and justice. It further thus suggests theorizing with a policy archive as a crucial interdisciplinary approach that can escape the divorce of conceptual and empirical sites that often exists in the social sciences. As political theory, the dissertation is an attempt to explain the contemporary conjunction through immanent critique. It takes the given terms of a debate (over Grand Paris) and demonstrates their limits, their untenable assumptions, and inherent contradictions.

The intervention the dissertation makes is timely and necessary. In an era of widespread urban upheaval and exploitation the exigencies of theorizing the urban are pressing. The architect Richard Rogers optimistically remarks in an interview with the New York Times with respect to Grand Paris, “I think we’ve all begun to realize the importance of cities again…that the physical environment can be used to change behavior.”42 In a public and spectacular fashion, Grand Paris demands a rethinking of how and to what end the city is made. The debates surrounding the Grand Paris project involve deep examinations of the political, perhaps the essentially political questions: What is the City? How are cities made? and Who benefits from transformations?43 This

43 It should be noted, however, that is not my intention to present a whole picture of Paris or capture in their entirety its complex workings of polity, society and culture. Nor does the dissertation necessarily cover all of the important aspects of Grand Paris itself.
dissertation is a practical, critical and historical endeavor that aims to uncover the myriad
dynamics of Grand Paris in order to disclose more just and democratic ways of building
communities and environments.

The Time and Space of Grand Paris

Grand Paris is not a new idea, but there have been efforts for at least a century to
recognize the importance of the city and its suburbs as an indispensible unit and to blur
the distinctions between these in terms of powers, services and economy. For a long
time Paris saw its banlieue as an exterior vacant territory and projected there technical
infrastructures, logistical platforms, industrial zones and social housing that were deemed
undesirable in the central city. Efforts to create a “Grand Paris” typically involve
breaking down the real and figural barriers of the walled city, unifying the region intra-
muros (between the walls) with the peripheral rural, suburban and exurban territories of
the outré-muros (outside the walls). Indeed, the three valences of Grand Paris identified in
the previous section—of expanding in size, of situating Paris in a global perspective and
aggrandizing economically have a long and complex history of constructing the meaning
of the city and the periphery. Points of discontinuity in these relations are important to
consider.

The idea of a durable or sustainable city, for example, as well as the environmental
legislation of Grand Paris are not examined in detail, nor are the questions of housing.
The work Grand Paris performs in the creation of new global-city suburban subjectivities
also demands serious attention. These are absences that need to be addressed and my
hope is that this dissertation will open up to a series of provocations and inspire further
work on this subject.

The nature of the banlieue has changed from its medieval foundings, as peripherality is
an indistinct and as Mike Davis describes, a “highly relative, time-specific term.” Mike
Davis, Planet of Slums (London: Verso, 2007), 38.
Eric Hazan suggests that the most effective way to tell the story of Paris is not through successive reigns or republics, but through “the time of city walls.” In his history of Paris he writes that “[w]henever Paris advanced from one boundary to the next, this signaled a time of changes in technology, society and politics. It was as if the emergence of a new epoch led both to the obsolescence of the old walls and to transformations in the city’s life.” As a change in the boundaries of the city and attempt to encapsulate the periphery Grand Paris is a noteworthy new episode in this “time of city walls.” While it is impossible to fully give an account of the long history in which the borders of Paris and the meaning of the city are decided upon, a brief sketch will indicate some features pertinent to today’s transformations.

Today’s Grand Paris is most often compared to the reforms of then Seine prefect, Baron Haussmann, conducted over a period from 1853 to 1870. The Haussmann reforms commissioned under Napoleon III were based on a model of “opening” the city with wide avenues that extended form the core of the city through its limits and unifying the city through strict regulations with respect to road width and building height and appearance. The immense overhauls in space also involved expanding the city outside its limits and, in 1860, adding eight new arrondissements to bring the total to the present day twenty.

In a time of crisis, the massive infrastructures provided a venue to channel surplus capital, thus keeping the economy fluid. The debt-backed projects solved

46 Ibid., 13.
47 This is what Harvey will describe later as the "spatial fix."
problems both of surplus employment by opening new channels for labor, and surplus
production, by channeling capital into the built environment.

As part of the initiative to redefine the city, a new Thiers wall was built to
enclose the city and to ensure that the wealthy inhabitants, ‘gens aises’ were well-lodged
and were contained within the city boundaries, while less-reputable elements were
pushed outside. Haussmann’s slum clearances, created a situation where working class
was largely relegated to the outskirts of town and the center of Paris reserved for the
bourgeoisie, a pattern that was of course contested in the Commune of 1871. Political
trials between the working classes and bourgeoisie over space such as the Commune,
were largely about who has the power to occupy the city and which community can
rightfully declare itself “Paris.” Violent reaction to the Commune on behalf of the
French army and the execution of thousands of communards provided a temporary
answer, yet the question of how to exert democratic control over the city remains to this
day.

It was in 1909 that the first official work using the appellation “Grand Paris” was
commissioned by the prefect, Justin de Selves. At the time, Paris had just laid the first
Métro tracks through Paris and class divisions continued to markedly define the social
and spatial organization of the city. Selves’ Grand Paris defined two main priorities for
the region: improved circulation throughout Paris and improved leisure space of parks
and public facilities in the near periphery.48 However, the project was largely ignored,
overshadowed by the exigencies of World War I. In the 1920s socialist municipal
officials revived this effort and pushed for a regional unit akin to Grand Paris claiming

an “effective solidarity” between the capital and the banlieue. Without legal definition, it was thought, there would be no way to formalize the equal footing of Paris and its environs from the viewpoint of the State, and Paris would continue to be a privileged site of policy and reform. Rescaling the territory of state intervention was thought to be necessary for economic and political democracy. This initial proposal, though unsuccessful, was followed by a series of similar plans to combat the centralization of the region in 1921 and again in 1928 when a superior committee for development of the region was created with the purpose to deal with regional affairs from a uniquely metropolitan perspective.

Grand Paris in the early part of the twentieth century was understood to mean not only the territory of greater Paris, but the collective life of the city bound by a common fate. Geographer Albert Demangeon in 1932 captures this by defining Grand Paris as the “geographical unit defined by the solidarity of problems which it poses.” Efforts to address common problems and direct this common fate require a regional unity and planning on a scale outside of the individual communes. This idea of regional planning resulted in the Prost development plan of 1934 (named after architect and planner Henri Prost). The Prost plan was organized around projects that could meet the needs of all of those concerned by Paris and introduced a scheme of functional planning at a regional scale that would coordinate 656 communes. Like the Grand Paris of today, it proposed better transportation between Paris and the banlieue, more free public space,

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49 Ibid., 15–17.
and the protection of notable cultural and heritage sites. It was not approved until 1939, however, and then went unachieved due to World War II.\textsuperscript{51}

The plans for \textit{Grand Paris} changed dramatically in the post World War II era of reconstruction. The \textit{banlieue} was no longer seen as hinterland, but became an important landscape for growth. The practice of urbanism grew rapidly in parallel to the urban expansion and processes of change were controlled by a series of new urban and regional policy instruments, most notably through the PADOG (Plan for the Development and General Organization of the Paris Region) in 1960. Much of this plan dealt with the need for adequate housing and the renovation of the shantytowns \textit{(bidonvilles)} that still circled the city, lacking fresh water, sanitation and heating. The goal of integrating the suburbs was then taken up into the more modernist and technocratic zoning regimes of Fordist industrial and social policy.

The suburbanization of France driven by manufacturing in the reconstruction period was very much concerned with how to invest state funds into new territorial arrangements and how to use territory to create surplus value. Paul Delouvrier, who came into power in 1958 was chosen to be “DeGaulle’s Haussmann” and to elaborate a masterplan for urbanism and management of the capital. In 1961 he proclaimed his intention in a plan to bring order to an anarchic Parisian region by the creation of highly functional “new towns” on the perimeter of the city.\textsuperscript{52} These were to be largely self-sufficient communities created with the priorities of meeting housing needs and building

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neighborhoods with the amenities of modern French life. The new towns were articulated more fully in his *Schema directeur d'aménagement et d'urbanisme* (Masterplan of Urban Development) of 1968 which envisioned the newly created region of Île-de-France connected both by a network of highways, and by the RER regional rail extensions.

Prefiguring the leadership of *Grand Paris*, Delouvrier was chosen not for his knowledge of urbanisms necessarily, but as previous minister of Finance, he also knew a great deal about financial speculation. His development plan aimed not only to provide housing outside the current perimeter of the city to solve a social problem, but more importantly, he aimed to permit mobility throughout the region and to promote and unification of a market across the city and retain the supremacy of Paris. The new urban culture he brought about, of the automobile, single family dwelling and domesticity emerged that once again redefined the space of regional Paris and the life of its inhabitants.

The *banlieue* today is largely a product of this earlier era of urban and regional planning (planning that, according to many, has consistently failed for the past forty years). The *banlieue*, and especially the HLM (low income housing) projects that circle the city, were once paragons of egalitarian virtue and triumphal signs of the strong state.

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53 This resulted in the creation of social housing projects around the outskirt of the city, but most notably in the industrial arcs of the northeast. These new low-lease residences (HLMs) became hotbeds of the labor and communist movements. Later, Delouvrier moved to support the single-family dwellings of the middle class in wealthier suburbs, the “faubourgs pavillionaires.” The drive to this mass form of residency drove many of the more affluent out of the new towns, which were then populated by successive waves of immigrants.

Sites for the promotion of national and class solidarity the suburbs in the 1950s and 1960s were inhabited by working class and immigrant families who were given new sanitary lodgings as part of slum clearance efforts to beautify the city and to redistribute wealth. This equality was to be monumentalized through standardized architecture and modular public housing initiatives. Yet new attention to the periphery did not fundamentally alter the relationships of power that structured social life of the city. In his study of the global convergence of “advanced marginality,” Loïc Wacquant demonstrates that the contemporary “modernized misery” associated with the banlieues arises out of this earlier context of overall advancement and prosperity, in France the post-war boom known as les trente glorieuses. Both a process of equalization and of segregation, the economic growth of Paris and the accompanying gentrification of the historic core is accompanied by the spatial concentration of poverty and sociospatial stigmatization, not as mere accident, but according to the logic of prosperity itself and through the contradictory goals of economic growth and social reproduction. Paris became grand at the expense of its banlieue.

Increasingly, and especially after the collapse of the industrial economy, the banlieue has come to symbolize the failure of universality and the gross inequality at the heart of the French Republic. Mass poverty, the physical deterioration of buildings, global migrations and revanchism are reflected in the banlieue which display, according to Étienne Balibar, “the contradictions of globalization and their local projections.”55 While there have been piecemeal efforts under the rubric of politique de la ville to address the

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concerns of banlieue residents since the suburban revolts of the 1970s and 1980s, these have been largely ineffective. According to most accounts, they have even backfired.

Today there are many ways of thinking Paris inside and outside of its walls: as a civic municipality with borders just inside the Périphérique, as the capital region of Île-de-France, as a tourist core of preserved buildings and streets, or as internationally networked global financial center consisting of a hub of business and capital interests. What counts as Grand Paris today is a profound question and defining the shared fate of the region entails a difficult calculus of responsibility and participation. Not only have exclusions taken on new dynamics, but the postmodern conditions of urban life have led to a degree of complexification and interactivity in urban life that is hard to comprehend. The failure of previous planning epochs suggests the resurgence of a holistic regional vision might indeed be necessary to address the shared concerns of the metropolis and the matrix of interrelationships that condition life. A Grand Paris without a regional perspective risks leaving existing hierarchies unchallenged.

Up until its enshrinement in the 2007 policy, the notion of Grand Paris typically invoked leftist critique of centralized planning and centralizing policy. Even the most recent iteration prior to Sarkozy’s appropriation of the term, for example, was a multifaceted public statement written by urbanists and architects in 2005 that called for a “Grand Paris” to address the problems of regional policy through social concerns of inhabitation such as housing, transportation, employment, and poverty. With Sarkozy’s Grand Paris, however, these existing concerns of regional inequality become articulated through a very different framework of economic viability in the global market.

Sarkozy, “president urbaniste,” first announced his plan for Grand Paris in September 2007. To launch the program of change, he commissioned ten teams of architects to prepare a “research and development” plan for regional agglomeration, the result of which was a year-long public exhibition in 2009 consisting of a series of architectural visions for Paris thirty years in the future, *Le Grand Pari(s) de l’agglomération parisienne.* This initial phase was followed by laws in 2010 and 2011 outlining the creation of the Society of Grand Paris (SGP), the new transportation network and the possibilities for government restructurings. Hundreds of small scale projects at the level of local communes were also proposed under the general rubric of *Grand Paris,* often in collaboration with the intercommunal organization, *Paris Métropole.* A series of development projects are underway across the region, while the Grand Paris Express is projected in optimistic timelines to be complete in 2025.

Christine Albanel refers to the Ministry of Culture and Communication’s role in the project stressing that the ministry is no longer acting according to the same philosophy as during Delouvrier’s day. “One wants a reinvented Delouvrier epoch, with a new architectural breath.” Whereas Delouvrier envisioned stable self-contained industrial neighborhoods in the peripheries, now, in the twenty-first century we are witnessing the shift towards integration as financialization, the need to invest to make the city competitive, especially through research and development and encouragement of entrepreneurial pursuits. The flexible, open, networked city promises to dramatically alter

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the environment of the suburbs, recasting a modernist functionalist utopia with a new
more heterogeneous overlay.

While framed as a national social project of solidarity and democracy, the plans
of Grand Paris also clearly indicate that the revitalization effort is also about subsidizing
private development during a recession and debt financed state projects. Grand Pari
architectural firm MVRDV identifies the economic stakes of the juncture saying:

the consultation exactly coincides with the profound moment of
reconsideration of the global financial crisis. If in the immediate future, it
reduces the number of investments, in one way or another, it will
redefine the direction of the world economy, from which will follow
immense spatial consequences. What society will we have after a crisis? What collective responsibilities must be assumed?  

The importance of the economic crisis, hot on the heels of, but by no means
independent of the 2005 “urban crisis,” should not be understated and intensified the
political stakes of revision.  
Sarkozy states explicitly in fact, that “a crisis is an
opportunity for a grand projet.”  
While other countries in Europe have been implementing
austerity programs in the face of financial hardship, France continues to officially eschew
programs of rigueur, opting instead to foreground large-scale infrastructural programs,
while simultaneously cutting social spending. While framed in Republican doctrine, this

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60  While the initial announcement of Grand Paris in 2007 occurred before the onset of the financial crisis, this became the backdrop for the research phased of the architectural project, and was very much taken up into the language of the project throughout 2008-2012. Interestingly, the idea that Grand Paris will save France from the crises that continue to reverberate through the Eurozone has largely been downplayed in the Presidential 2012 election.
61  Sarkozy, “Inauguration de l’exposition ‘Grand Pari(s)’.”
dual action serves Sarkozy’s agenda of dismantling the welfare state and bringing France into a new era of neoliberal reforms.

Combining discourses of state providence and centralized order with new needs of the global economy, Grand Paris represents a significant shift in regional policy. The renewal initiative has been used to push through reforms such as tax breaks and private sector subsidies, and to spur on speculative development and investment. The social aspects of the plan are ill-articulated (and underachieved) while new regulations enable drastic changes in the regional economy and in real estate markets. In this way, Grand Paris seeks to reinvent and to further crystallize in space the dynamics of neoliberalism and the global city that conditioned the problems it purports to address.

**Neoliberalism and the Global City**

Neoliberalism has become somewhat of an empty signifier in urban studies today, referring not to a critical analysis of emerging accumulation and institutional trends, but to the generalized status quo of life in the 21st century. The entrenchment of neoliberal ideologies (of deregulation, privatization and competition), what Roger Keil calls, “roll-with-it” neoliberalism, demonstrates the extent to which these ideas have become naturalized and accepted as policy goals. Yet it is important to note that within the uneven spread of neoliberalization processes and ideas, many of the more socially-democratic minded countries in Europe have, until fairly recently, managed to avoid some of the harshest effects of neoliberal reforms, preferring instead to “shock” the

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developing world with austerity measures, while maintaining fairly robust social welfare measures at home. With its strong central state and large public expenditures, France in particular is often cited as a holdout against the rising tide of neoliberalism.\textsuperscript{63}

If neoliberalism has been the backdrop to political and economic life in France for the past thirty years, then \textit{Grand Paris} is a very directed and self-conscious attempt to bring it to the fore. Like much of the liberal democratic world, since the 1970s France has experienced a shift in economic production away from industry and to financial and informational sectors accompanied by deregulation and, to a lesser extent, privatization. While for much of this time, France has maintained a social democratic ethos, a number of events in the past decade also indicate a movement further in the direction of neoliberal superintendence. The adoption of the shared Euro currency in 1999 lessened the grip of the state over macroeconomic policies, and the election of Sarkozy, member of the rightwing Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) in 2007 instituted massive pension reform, cuts to social services, increased surveillance and policing measures (especially in low income and/or immigrant neighborhoods) and business friendly policies and corporate tax breaks. In addition to increasing foreign investment and enabling the growth of the financial sector, these reforms combined to make life for a new generation of middle class inhabitants insecure in a way that had not been seen before.\textsuperscript{64} \textit{Grand Paris} builds upon these earlier reforms, but it also aims to further

\textsuperscript{63} See, for example, Dikeç, \textit{Badlands of the Republic}.

\textsuperscript{64} Month long protests in the fall of 2010 over proposed pension reforms were attended by millions of people across the country, many of them youth concerned with the withdrawal of the promise of life-long social security. It should be noted, that even with the reforms which would, in part, raise the retirement age from 60 to 62, France would be an anomaly amongst countries in the Western world, where the retirement age is
concretize neoliberal ideals in the spatial arrangements of a global city. The script for reform is given at the outset in limited economic terms. In particular Grand Paris provides the groundwork for orienting urbanization toward a market logic and toward debt leveraging and speculation in finance and land. As Blanc states, “One can try to become a world-city without being based on economic growth. One can also swim with weights on one’s feet.”\(^65\) In order to stay competitive, the rationale holds that Paris must move from governing “from the social point of view” to governing according to economic risk and insecurity.\(^66\)

Following David Harvey, this dissertation proceeds with the assumption that more than a shift in production, neoliberalism can be considered a regime of accumulation designed to cement elite power.\(^67\) Grand Paris is thus a highly political project to alter the appropriation of surplus production such that the value added remains in the hands of a capitalist class. In order to overcome the limits to economic growth and accumulation posed by the fragmented urban fabric and the maximum density of the city of Paris, a new scale of the city is necessary. The ordering of the peripheries into a functional network of high-value industries and the promotion of real estate development in underutilized suburban areas enables new venues for accumulation, such that the capitalist class, those who own the means of rent production can appropriate and invest surplus. The particular neoliberalism of Grand Paris thus relies

\(^66\) See Rose and Miller, *Governing the Present*, for this distinction.
upon the political rationality of the market and the presumed spatial ideal of the global city. However, the neoliberal global city needs tools by which it can operationalize itself. This is what \textit{Grand Paris} endeavors to perform by creating a new knowledge of and new arrangement for the city and its social and economic arrangements.

Bruno Jobert and Bruno Théret have described a unique variant of neoliberalism in France that paradoxically relies upon the Republican ideals of a paternal social state, masking reforms to privatize, deregulate and discipline labor as large-scale initiatives to improve the health and well-being of the citizenry.\footnote{Bruno Jobert and Bruno Théret, “France: La Consécration républicaine du néo-libéralisme,” in \textit{Le Tournant néo-libéral en Europe}, edited by Bruno Jobert (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1994).} Under this regime of Republican intervention, “\textit{neoliberalism à la française},” the state maintains a high level of involvement in leading capital accumulation, but does so not to correct the failures of the naturally functioning market, but to intervene and marketize those social and political forms that would not otherwise conform to a market logic. Transportation, for example, receives funding to encourage private production and real estate development around new stations, at the same time that other social services like public housing and public pensions are ruthlessly dismantled.\footnote{Blanc, \textit{Le Grand Paris du XXIe siècle}, 125. Blanc, for example, writes that “The strength of great metropolises is to situate themselves at a meeting point between international networks and local networks, to make coincide these two dimensions with exceptional transportation infrastructures.” Blanc states elsewhere that “Without growth, Grand Paris will remain dead letter. Without growth and without the opening of currently marginalized urban territories, we will have nothing but utopias. Without growth, there will not be expansion and social cohesion, but only a shared impotence. The economic dynamism of Grand Paris is a prior condition to the beneficial effects on the future lives of citizens.” Blanc, “L’Ambition nationale du Grand Paris.”} As I argue in Chapter Two, the Grand Paris Express must therefore be understood not as an aberration of social welfare spending in
an entrepreneurial economy, but as a new form of neoliberal restructuring involving massive investments in territory and infrastructure for the purpose of private growth and increased competition. In defiance of standard tropes of neoliberal governance, large-scale economic and spatial planning here is not antithetical to the neoliberal ethos, but actually enables the organization of production required of global cities in the 21st century. Massive investment in new networks may seem to be at odds with the current atmosphere of recession and austerity, but in effect, this investment actually works to cement the goal of urban rent production, to privatize developments and to strengthen and deepen state control.\footnote{On the notion of metropolitan rent as fundamentally “communal” see Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Commonwealth (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009).}

While certainly shaped by global economic forces and local municipal actions, a unique and noteworthy feature of the Grand Paris plan is the auspicious and centralized state power orienting the spatial transformations. One of the main themes of this dissertation in fact is to explore the relationship of the state and the global city and how each is mutually transformed in and through the other.\footnote{In many ways then, this dissertation takes up the research task that Sassen sets out in The Global City, 10—that of understanding changes in state sovereignty alongside shifts in city configuration.} A focused account of the Grand Paris project will thus strengthen the existing accounts of spatialized neoliberalism in France as well as the dynamics of global city formation.

The creation of the global city demonstrates quite forcefully that neoliberalism is not an abstract or immaterial process, but that it \textit{takes place} in very real ways. In terms of its global economic weight and the types of services it produces, Paris already exhibits
many of the features of a global city, and is most often ranked fourth in the world behind London, New York and Tokyo in this respect. Yet in order to maintain this ranking and to continue to be competitive in the global market, constant innovation and adjustment is necessary. Scalar reorganization is a crucial mode of adjustment to the conditions of capital.

The continued neoliberalization of Paris is largely taking place through the reorganization of space toward the metropolitan scale and an examination of the spatial dynamics within the city itself is crucial to understanding this process. As Nicholas Phelps and Nick Parsons point out, the existing literature on urban transformation is itself largely functional and not spatialized in terms of the physical arrangements of actual cities. Edge cities and peripheries are rarely invoked in the literature on state spatiality and the emerging importance of global cities despite the fact that the edge is

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an important scale through which these transformations occur. This dissertation makes a similar claim about “the centrality of urban peripheries to contemporary rescalings of socioeconomic processes.” Attention to the banlieue-global city dynamic requires not simply a global local dialectic, or a “glocal” understanding of strategies and processes, but an account of how the global city is differentiated spatially through existing territories and how it is created through the recomposition of existing city morphology.

It is my contention that the discourses of grandeur, unity and centrality that are found in the Grand Paris project reflect not only systemic trends in accumulation and control, but that they also reflect the geographic configuration of Paris, and in particular, a troubled relationship between the historic urban core and the peripheral banlieues. The current core-periphery configuration of Paris that emerged out of previous processes of urbanization is, somewhat paradoxically, now impeding the urbanization process. As I demonstrate in the chapters to come, the limits of the spatial arrangements of the mid-twentieth century are apparent and a new metropolitan order is necessary to enable the relations of production for a neoliberal order. As stated in the Grand Pari objectives, “In the competition of globally-ranked cities, Paris occupies a respectable place which suffers nevertheless from a chronic deficit linked to its perimeter and its governance.” Altering the spatial arrangements of Paris, the relationship of the core to the periphery and the way in which the region is governed are crucial tasks to maintaining and improving global city status.

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75 Ibid.
Insofar as one impetus for the project is to recognize the ways in which Paris is globally significant—and, as a key node in a complex network, world-encompassing (extending itself well beyond the *Périphérique*)—the rhetoric of the project privileges finance capital—the circulation of interest-bearing capital and the institutionalized class that directs this—as the primary means to rethink the city. Opening up peripheral territories for investment and development is undertaken for the purposes of centralizing further the surplus created in the hands of those who direct this spatial change.\(^{77}\)

But the centralization of wealth and power no longer coincide in a territorial center such as the traditional central business district and this is made even more prominent in the plans of *Grand Paris*. What we witness in *Grand Paris*, and in neoliberal cities more generally, then, is not merely what Edward Soja describes as the centripetal and centrifugal forces of urbanization and agglomeration.\(^{78}\) Rather, the very idea of core and periphery and a circular model of growth become irreconcilable to the metropolis under contemporary conditions. Antonio Negri notes a change in this distribution, writing that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the centrality of the urban form in imperial and utopian logics was obvious, but now that centralization has taken on a new character.\(^{79}\) Under the model of the global city, the urban becomes less territorially

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\(^{77}\) This is also the more general logic of urbanization, driven not by the need for spaces of inhabitation and encounter, but by the continual need for capitalist expansion. The flow of investment into the built environment depends upon the existence of surpluses of capital and labor and upon mechanisms for pooling the former and putting it to use...[i]nvestment in the built environment [takes] place primarily for financial rather than use-value reasons—investors [are] looking for a steady and secure rate of return on their capital. Harvey, *The Urbanization of Capital*.


concentrated, but disparities in wealth remain. As Saskia Sassen describes “The spatial dispersion of economic activities and the reorganization of the financial industry are two processes that have contributed to new forms of centralization insofar as they have occurred under conditions of concentration of ownership and control.”

Here connection is favored over contiguity, and new relationships between places and links emerge, and while borders are in flux, challenging the physically compact core, the elite control over the production of space remains. This is not a shapeless sprawl, but one with particular configurations that need to be taken into consideration.

*Grand Paris* presents three primary dynamics of this *diffused centrality* that are being transformed through redevelopment policies: alterations of the physical morphology of the city and the transfer of infrastructure, populations and enterprise from the historic core to the suburbs’ the centralization and decentralization of power and of governance through altering territorial administrative units and their responsibilities and capacities; and the relations of domination and exploitation that enable some to have access to centers of power, wealth and decision making and others to be rendered to peripheral positions, unable to invent the conditions of their individual and collective lives.

Together these form an overlapping political topography of the metropolis and the

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80 Sassen, *The Global City*, 35.

81 Tracing the transformations in space alongside the transformations in governance and economic production is difficult, for as Jason Hackworth notes “the geography of neoliberalism is much more complicated than the idea of neoliberalism.” *The Neoliberal City: Governance, Ideology, and Development in American Urbanism*, (Cornell University Press, 2006), 11. Because the global city does not emerge from processes of neoliberalism alone, but in conjunction and alongside other trends in urbanization—the political ecology of the natural world, demographic pressures of forced and voluntary mobilities (immigration, tourism etc.), cultural flows, resistance movements—its dimensions are difficult to predict.
forces that build urban spaces. The operation of planning under these conditions must also take on new forms.

**Planning the Post-Political City**

If the global city entails a particular form of centrality where an elite class has disproportionate access to capital, knowledge and decision making ability, then related to the processes of neoliberal urbanization and the pursuit of global city status is a systematic loss of popular control over the meaning and direction of the city and a loss of democratic control over urban production. Politics is less important than corporate necessity. While has been somewhat of a modern truism, the realm of spatial production further narrows when the building of the city is orchestrated by an elite cadre of global investors, financiers and politicians supported by the corporate model of urbanism as city management.82 This hegemonic means of organizing social and spatial worlds is coded as a mere expression of the general will of the population through the aggregating force of the market.

Through a series of overlapping global trends—privatization, urban entrepreneurialism, revanchism, gentrification, austerity, consensus-based politics and the general surrender of state-planning schemes—the metropolis is undergoing a process of depoliticization.83 As the urban environment becomes increasingly oriented toward

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83 While the post-politics thesis of neoliberal capitalism derives from Francis Fukuyama’s famous treatise of Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 2006), and the universal dominance of market democracies after the fall of the Soviet Union, the idea has also been taken up by philosophers such as Jacques
the pursuit of capital gains, it is becoming less democratic and less open to substantive public questioning and debate. The long-sought Aristotelian “good” of communal life is reduced to the competition of individual interests. Citizens become consumers of branded spaces and the urban comes to be understood not as polis, a poetic space of agonism, deliberation, creativity and common life, but as a bounded material site to be entered in the service of capital accumulation.\textsuperscript{84} As some commentators have argued, this has led to “a true eclipse of urban politics.”\textsuperscript{85,86} This depoliticization of the city would also suggest that large scale planning on behalf of the state is no longer tenable. Indeed, in the global city network, “planning” as such is understood to be moot, a mere relic of twentieth century states, while market forces are said to now autonomously shape the direction of cities and the values around which cities are organized.


\textsuperscript{85} BAVO, Urban Politics Now.

\textsuperscript{86} The recent resurgence in “Right to the City”-based movements recognizes this condition of inequality in city-making, but also contests the inevitability of the conjuncture. Similarly, the “post-political” thesis is called into question by recent events such as the Arab Spring and the various “Occupy” movements. Yet despite these efforts to repoliticate city-building, without large scale changes in the global economic and political order, the claim that the control of the city is increasingly situated in the hands of a few remains salient.
“Planning” is a watchword across the political spectrum. If the right-wing critique says that planning impedes the market and that post-1989 there is no alternative to liberal capitalism, then the leftist accounts are equally wary of planning regimes today. In *Seeing like a State*, his trenchant critique of the imperialistic urban planning of high modernism, James Scott warns that

> designed or planned social order is necessarily schematic; it always ignores essential features of any real, functioning social order…Certain kinds of states, driven by utopian plans and an authoritarian disregard for the values, desires, and objects of their subjects, are indeed a mortal threat to human well being. Short of that Draconian but all too common situation, we are left to weigh judiciously the benefits of certain state interventions against their costs. 87

While his words are primarily aimed at twentieth century centralized planning technocracies, his insight into the “mortal” dangers of planning equally apt today—an era in which such abstract utopian and universal planning cannot exist. The skepticism of planning of any kind is closely tied to the question of whether or not the city is makeable. 88 Caught between *laissez-faire* approaches and centrality planned modernist schemes, urban planning is seen as impotent at best and dangerous at worst. The

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87 James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 4-6. Scott lists four elements common to all of the misguided schemes he looks at: the “administrative ordering of nature and society”, a “high modernist ideology,” an “authoritarian state” and “prostrate civil society.” Planning in Western developed countries rarely takes this form any longer, yet it is still arguable that certain lines of sight and “ways of seeing” are dangerous and incommensurable with flourishing and rich social life.

88 The Dutch urbanist collective, BAVO, describes the paradox of this “post-political” and “post-planning” ethos: “The urban realm is seen as an ‘unplannable’ magma of mutations upon which every attempt at mastery stumbles and cannot be maintained without ending up in a totalitarian nightmare. It is no coincidence that within this post-planning movement, the role of the urban theorist or planner is reduced to that of a seismographer, carefully registering the vibrations of the urban field, at best producing explosions, but ultimately impotent in the face of the socio-spatial mutations s/he encounters” *Urban Politics Now*, 8.
delegitimation of planning from these perspectives in fact helps to reproduce the
conditions of post-politics and supports the thesis that no other worlds are possible,
there is no viable alter-mondialization.

Grand Paris appears somewhat anachronistic when set against this backdrop.
Haussmannesque in its scope and ambition, what the Grand Paris project suggests, most
provocatively, is that the large-scale reorganization of space and the built environment is
crucial to social and political life and change.89 Paris is one of the few places in fact,
where the national government demonstrates a place-focused vision to consolidate and
guide actors to pursue similar ambitions through a coherent regional development plan.90
Yet the form and shape of this reorganization are constrained by forces that effectively
defuse its revolutionary potential, and instead further the entrenchment of the post-
political consensus of neoliberal urban governance. Indeed Grand Paris is notable for
reinvigorating urban planning as a means of actively building the city, but rather than a

89. “It is time to launch a new span of reflection, it is time to renew the thought on cities,
such that our modern landscapes will not simply be residues of human activities, but the
result of a reflection on a politics desired by all, in the service of all” Sarkozy in Le
Moniteur Architecture, Le Grand Pari(s): Consultation internationale sur l’avenir de la métropole
parisienne, 5.
90. Laurent Devisme notes that criticism of state apparatuses, and particularly of territorial
development have fallen under the spotlight in recent years as a managerial conception
of public action on a grand scale seems dubious at best. Yet despite what many have
identified as a general trend from “planning” to “projects” Devisme insists on the need
to maintain an analysis of the state in processes of development. Managerial planning has
not been replaced, but reoriented toward what he calls a “new spirit of developmentalist
action” at the level of the state. See, for example, the state-run website
www.competitivit.gouv.fr which articulates a composite and targeted program dedicated
to the development and promotion of competitive poles. In Laurent Devisme, “Les
Territoires pourraient-ils avoir un projet pour l’état?,” Pouvoirs Locaux 72, no.1, (2007):
98-102.
democratic and collective engagement with this capacity, it is better described as a project of what Ananya Roy calls “Empire.”\textsuperscript{91} 

One of the main ways in which Grand Paris achieves its imperial civilizing mission is by recoding the terms of earlier modes of state planning to abide by a neoliberal paradigm. This involves two simultaneous processes: recasting high modernist notions of planning into a more flexible, late capitalist guise, and veiling gentrification and dispossession under the incontestable language of revitalization and renewal.

Remarkably, despite the framing of the grand projet, one problem repeatedly noted by the ten teams of Grand Paris and by the policy-makers of Grand Paris more generally, is the violence of large-scale, centralized schematic planning practices. Across all of the projects there is a disavowal of the purely technocratic planning regime of the modernist era and an embrace of a more critical and tempered “postmodern planning.” The project rather, is a tenuous blend of modernist grand visions and postmodern collages, of institutional centralizations and decentralizations, and of Republican ideologies and

\textsuperscript{91} Ananya Roy, “Praxis in the Time of Empire,” \textit{Planning Theory} 5, no. 1 (2006): 7-8. For Roy, the current Empire is marked by the concentration of wealth and privilege by the United States, but more generally, is the unequal economic and political condition at the base of the neoliberal world order. Roy emphasizes that urban planning is caught in a conjuncture of contemporary geopolitical arrangements of power and wealth that is similar to its position in the heyday of nineteenth century high imperialism. A pervasive system of access and ability, “empire is not simply and unfortunate backdrop to planning, one that can be simply denied allegiance. Rather, empire is planning’s present history.” Under conditions of Empire, contradictions are rampant and seemingly benevolent civilizing practices can have dire effects. Roy suggests that under these conditions, the assumptions of planning become more prominent and demand reflection. She writes “[t]he time of empire also presents the profound mandate to revisit some fundamental questions of praxis: first, the ways in which planning is embedded in a project of liberal democracy and how it operates through a frontier of renewal, improvement, and rebuilding; and second, how planning articulates a sense of responsibility and accountability in the ethical calculus of practice.”
neoliberal privatizations that indicate the constellation of urban thought and practice in France today. I argue throughout, and especially in Chapter Three, that this regime amounts to a new regime of global city state productivism.

The policies of Grand Paris are supported by an institutionalized intellectual standard that gives them legitimacy and force, often in the guise of a “left-wing” and reformed version of urbanism, architecture and urban planning. Indeed, since the 1970s, the same people who knowingly criticized the French post-war urban order have by and large established, and have come to be scientific apologists for, the neoliberal order of things. State urbanists have lost confidence in the functionalist, technocratic and economistic approaches which longed defined the treatment of urban spaces, but in their place is a new complicit strategy of flexibility, mixity, efficacity, and attractiveness that are borrowed from capitalist production. The knowledge forged by the academy, think tanks, bureaucracy and importantly, from architects, creates what Jean-Pierre Garnier calls the “pseudo-scientific rationality” of the “new urban intellectuals.”

To achieve a neoliberal cure for neoliberal woes, the state has new allies in the faction of the intellectual petit bourgeoisie who express a reformist critique through the idea of “urban requalification” and “urban renewal.” Members of this new “bohemian bourgeois” class of intellectuals are colloquially referred to as “bobos” and Grand Paris is filled with the superlative examples of this class, the “super-bobos” like Jean Nouvel and Christian de Portzamparc who use their international architectural clout to support and lead state regeneration efforts as part of a feeble anticapitalism that never questions.

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fundamentally the requirements of the appropriative system. As Chapter One argues, these urban professionals and artists obfuscate the power of their disciplines in perpetuating a neoliberal discourse. Lending support to Sarkozy and to imperial projects of planning is, in the eyes of Garnier, “architecture in the service of the prince.”

Frontal assaults between the possessed and dispossessed may be rare in a post-political climate, if only because the bourgeoisie are always on the offensive creating new modes of exploitation and institutional and ideological justifications for their legitimacy. The rent-extraction goals at the basis of Grand Paris, for example, do this by equating revitalization with gentrification, the means of which are often the violent dispossession of inhabitants of their homes. This is also achieved at a global level through the economization of all of the problems of the city. Roy describes the ambivalence of this process noting how “renewal” in so-called critical urban planning “is simultaneously a measure of economic productivity and a judgment about social injustice; that it is simultaneously an expression of expanded (gentrified) reproduction and of primitive accumulation through dispossession and displacement.” In fact, even the various global “Right to the City” movements that underscore the discourses of Grand Paris have been evacuated of most of their revolutionary content, often framing themselves in terms that support revitalization and redevelopment.

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93 Ibid., 20–22.
94 Ibid., 22.
96 Matthew Van Criekingen, quoted in Garnier, Une Violence éminemment contemporaine, states that “all the terms which begin with “re” [revitalization, regeneration, renewal, redevelopment, renaissance] are a priori goods for the city, but they cut out completely the social question.” 18.
Assaults on the urban territory through the recoding of democratic language are not limited to the architects of Grand Paris, but are a far more widespread phenomenon. Through obsessive security, risk society, urban apartheid and social segregation Garnier argues that France is witnessing a disappearance of places of encounter, of meeting and of publicity and a corresponding degradation of collective life.\(^7\) The symptoms of this “urban counter-revolution”—urban violence, the housing question, delinquency—are subjects of much public policy, policies which like Grand Paris, largely occlude the social problems at the root of their manifestations. Garnier writes that much policy discourse, by virtue of its situatedness and its foundings, comes to perpetuate the climate of depoliticization:

Thus in the medium of urban research, like elsewhere, the vast systems of interpretation embedded in the intention ‘to understand the world to change it,’ cedes place to local paradigms where the descriptive succeeds the prescriptive. In fact under cover of a task ‘more comprehensive than explicative,’ the critical spirit will be little by little evinced to the profit of an apology more or less subtle of the order of things.\(^8\)

Grand Paris is a prime example of how an urban paradigm reinvents and revitalizes existing conditions of social and spatial exclusions, while claiming to do otherwise.

The urban planning of Grand Paris analyzes society according to hegemonic economic categories and therefore serves as a class practice to reproduce the given. Yet the languages of Grand Paris policy dissimulate their origins.\(^9\) This dissertation attempts

\(^7\) Ibid., 7–8.
\(^8\) Ibid., 121.
\(^9\) In their response to the Grand Paris project, the communist daily, l’Humanite writes that “the Grand Paris of Nicolas Sarkozy will not be anything other than a Paris of Grands.” They argue that in both its method and its model of development, the plan serves only a small portion of elected representatives and business interest and does not adequately account for the needs and interests of those 18 million people who inhabit the region.
to track the logics and deployments of intellectual practice and urban governance that work to depoliticize the city. To track, in other words, the efforts to define the city as a unitary whole, devoid of history and structuring conditions, and to create a future as a pari, out of the hands of both elected officials and, more insidiously, residents, workers and those involved in the life and labor of and in the city.

There a number of important ways that Paris is depoliticized through the Grand Paris project. The project works according to populist reason, relying upon renderings of a city which ‘everyone would obviously want.’ Imagining a generalized city and a generalized subject, this “shared dream” stands in for the stated concerns of inhabitants and their diverse modes of being. Moreover, the project, with its open debates and public display provides a veneer of participation while in actuality, the means of directing the change of the city are increasingly taken out of the hands of those most involved and affected. Social concerns become marketized as being economic concerns and through the consolidation of Paris as a global city and the power to direct the future of the city becomes concentrated in the hands of a few. When a city is seen as epiphenomenal and the world-making capabilities of its inhabitants suppressed, democracy is sacrificed.

**Chapter Breakdown**

The dissertation is divided into three main chapters which accord with three main interconnected policy sites: symbolic remappings to present a coherent regional identity, improved transportation infrastructures to materially connect dispersed territories, and a streamlining of government in order to accord with the challenges of

policy provision across the metropolis. Corresponding to the imaginative, the political
economic and the juridico-political aspects of the urban, these are three primary
perspectives from which to theorize emerging spatial forms of citizenship, production
and statehood. Though not exhaustive of the urban fabric, this triangulation enables the
political stakes of the Grand Paris project to become most clear and focuses attention on
the dynamics of redevelopment in broad context that necessarily interweaves the
political, economic and the social lives of Paris. Each of these chapters provides a crucial
vantage for politics and if the viewpoints they give do not map neatly onto each other, it
demonstrates precisely the contested and complex nature of urban development and
urban planning today.

Chapter One, “The Shared Dream of Grand Pari(s),” examines the role of the
architectural exhibition, “Le Grand Pari(s) de l’agglomération parisienne” that launched
the broader Grand Paris urban renewal initiative. Through a close examination of the
content of the exhibition and the policy initiatives that followed it, I argue that the work
of architectural representation is crucial to urban transformation, though not always in a
straightforward manner. The exhibition features ten international teams of architects
tasked with imagining Paris of the 21st century. They presented bold imaginaries, and
though the content of their visions varied, overall they can be read as providing a critical
account of contemporary Paris and its social and political contours. However, the
architectural proposals are also used by the state to support the neoliberalization of
urban planning, surrendering the powers of spatial production to market interests. I
argue that the state-commissioned public exhibition works primarily as an apology to
garner civil society support for the subsequently announced material and institutional
changes to metropolitan Paris. Indeed the speculative architectural design mirrors venture capitals speculative futures. While this utilization of architectural design in urban development emerges from the unique circumstances of contemporary Paris, it also speaks to the broader promises and limits of large scale architectural and intellectual intervention today, and the ambivalent force of imaginative urbanism.

The most recognizable aspect of Grand Paris and the policy posed to have the most immediate impact on the urban environment concerns the Grand Paris Express mass transit scheme. Chapter Two, “Moving Through Grand Paris: Mobility, Connectivity and Transit-Oriented Redevelopment” examines the discourses of transportation and mobility surrounding the Grand Paris Express mass transit network announced in January 2011 as part of Grand Paris. It argues that though Grand Paris Express has the potential to symbolically unify the Île-de-France region, and may provide much needed infrastructure to the ill-serviced peripheral suburbs of Paris, because of the political rationality upon which it is based, it will likely entrench rather than relieve the problems of territorial inequality it sets out to solve. An important tool of gentrification, mass transit is being used to lead urban development and to catalyze the creation of a polycentric region with functionally differentiated clusters of industry, finance and technology around proposed transit stations. Following five main “mobilizing myths” that dominate public policy debates, the proposed Grand Paris Express system orients transit toward a marketized logic of real estate development, urban rent production and territorial competition, and thus fails to consider the broad social, economic, and political conditions upon which urban mobility is based.
Accompanying the imaginative and infrastructural plans, one of the guiding threads of the Grand Paris project is to agglomerate the city politically and to streamline governance of the over twelve hundred communes, as well as seven departments and dozens of intercommunal establishments that make up the institutional landscape of the Île-de-France region. Chapter Three: “A Thousand Layers of Governance” investigates the institutional landscape conditioning the constitution of metropolitan Paris. While some accuse Grand Paris of being a return to a Jacobin form of centralized order, the realities of the transformations in regional governance suggest more complicated, and often contradictory, patterns of territorial organization and management. This chapter argues that the institutional changes associated with Grand Paris are intimately tied to the changing economic contours of the region and are part of a spatial strategy, albeit an inchoate and sometimes unsuccessful one, to reform state-market relations and to enable capitalist redevelopment of regional sites.

Having identified the imaginative and intellectual conditions of Grand Paris in Chapter One, the emergence of a new mode of urban growth based on transit-led speculative development in Chapter Two, and the complex dynamics of the accompanying state regime in Chapter Three, the final chapter, Conclusion: Making Space for Whom? considers the political implications of these multidimensional spatial transformations. Tying together the ideological, material and institutional reforms, it considers how Grand Paris reconfigures the meaning of “centrality” in urban Paris today. Not merely a physical relation of distance, I argue, following Lefebvre, that centrality is also an expression of exploitative economic relations, exclusionary cultural forms and differentiated access to decision making. While Paris’ long-dominant unipolar layout may
be transforming into that of a polycentric urban region, this does not entail a radical break with economic, social and political relations of centrality and oppression. These findings indicate that *Grand Paris* is a project of hegemony that extends and revitalizes earlier modes of colonial spatial management. It thus reveals urban spatial production as an essential site of 21st century political struggle.
Chapter One
The Shared Dream of Grand Pari(s)

To touch Paris is to touch France, and to dream of Grand Paris is to draw plans on a comet named destiny…

This [Grand Paris] policy will not signal the passage from a dream to a reality of weakened ambition. Because if we all have the same grand desire, and the same grand ambition, we are also fully conscious of the necessary time and rhythms for transforming our dreams into reality.

A Dream Collectivized

The language of dreams and of the imagination abounds in the literature on metropolitan Paris. Long heralded as a city of opportunity, amusement and pleasure, Paris is the quintessential landscape of fantasy. A space woven of revolutionary prospects and promises of modernity, of utopian designs, technological innovations, sensual titillations and dazzling commodities, this network of dreams and desires is cemented in the built environment of the city and intimately tied to the abstract sociality of modern metropolitan life. Indeed, from the bourgeois dreamworld of the 19th century Arcades to the hypermediated 20th century mass consumer spectacle, the Parisian urban imaginary has been a crucial arena of social and political contestation. The city is defined as much by its imaginative prospects as its material constituents, the latter not only reproducing social reality, but actively involved in its creation. In casting a dream for the 21st century, the Grand Paris development plan relies upon these time-honoured oneiric

tropes to articulate a “shared dream” of the utopian future in which, purportedly, all inhabitants can actively partake.

It is not incidental that Nikolas Sarkozy launched his 2007 plan for the redevelopment of Paris, not with an official Master-plan, infrastructural scheme or legal decree, as one might expect, but with a speculative venture of creative design in the form of an architectural competition. Challenging ten international architectural teams to “dream together” a future metropolitan region “without restriction” and “without taboo,” he acknowledges the creative capacity of collective imagination and infuses the project with a sense of shared responsibility and possibility. According to this utopian perspective, to dream is to open up to new and alternative ways of being and living and suggests political hope for a different and better world. Situated between actually existing material conditions and an idealist response, dreams can identify specific venues for reflection, action and change. Mass dreams like those of Grand Paris also provide shared scenarios in which inhabitants can identify with the city writ large and vicariously fulfill their desires of a better life.

But the act of dreaming also works to fix and frame the city in particular ways. Grand Paris is not dreamt evenly by all inhabitants of Paris and is shared not in the sense of its collective production, but only to the extent that the effects are to be felt by all. Unitary qua universal dreams also foreclose potentials and can substitute real change with a deferred ideal. Even worse, these dreams, framed as everyone’s, often institute change at the behest of and for the benefit of only a select few. Dreams, no less than state policies, are means of social engineering. They can serve as the horizon of radical change.

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102 Sarkozy, “Inauguration de l’exposition ‘Grand Pari(s)’.”
democratic change, or can be powerful tools of domination in the service of a
hegemonic maintenance of the status quo. How the dream representations of Paris are
articulated, by whom and for what purpose are crucially important.

This chapter contends that rather than a common exercise of radical political
vision, the dream of Grand Paris amounts to a collectivized fantasy of marketization,
economic growth and gentrification. Emphasizing grandeur, centrality and unity, the
dream of Grand Paris is thus a project in the true sense of the word—a projection and
exhibition of a particular understanding of reality and a plan according to which that
reality can be made. This project thus dovetails with the structural conditions of
neoliberalism, which, as a particular regime of capital accumulation and political strategy
to cement elite power, relies upon imaginative speculation as part of its orientation
toward a future. Grand Paris is framed as a social project animated by a collective
imaginary, but it is also a mode of dispossessing the inhabitants of the city of alternative
imaginative worlds and therefore, of reducing democratic space-making powers in the
city. In substituting one dream for all others it creates a single vision for the future. What
is at stake in the redevelopment plan then, is not merely the institutional reforms and
territorial restructurings that will alter the formal functioning and built environment of

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103 See Maros Krivý, “Speculative Redevelopment and Conservation: The Signifying Role
25–46. A fuller account of the economic and ideological components of neoliberalism is
given in Chapter 3. I argue that the imaginative venture of Grand Paris mirrors the
speculative development of urban rent production insofar as it relies upon the projection
of an unknown future, and creates value by redefining a particular space. What Grand
Pari does on the scale of the city is reiterated in more local contexts through the real
estate market.
the city and its surroundings, but the very way that the city is represented and the implications of this representation for democratic politics.

Architecture serves to support this dream by imagining the future and building in that image. Indeed, architecture is increasingly being employed around the globe as a tool to provide the aesthetic normativity of rule required by global cities.\textsuperscript{104} The preponderance of design competitions and exhibitions in justifying state policies around the world suggests a new role for architecture within the institutional framework of state planning.\textsuperscript{105} Indeed architecture is poised as a crucial player in new urbanization paradigms and in creating new languages and representations for understanding the transformations of cities today.

The architectural competition associated with \textit{Grand Paris, “Grand Pari(s): Consultation international sur l’avenir de la metropole parisienne”} (Grand Pari(s): International Consultation on the Future of the Parisian Metropole\textsuperscript{)}, provides a forceful illustration of the workings of urban representations and their relationship to political projects.\textsuperscript{106}


\textsuperscript{106} The language of an architectural “concours” is used throughout the \textit{Grand Pari} literature, but \textit{Grand Pari} is not, it should be noted, a traditional architectural competition. Most importantly, there is no panel of judges and no mechanism in place to select a single winner whose blueprint designs will be implemented. Indeed, most of the visions will never be seen to fruition. Yet insofar as the exhibition performs the other tasks of an architectural competition—creating public awareness and support for changed
Framed as a pun on the words “Paris” and “pari” (bet or wager), the project suggests from the outset the high stakes of providing a new representation of Paris today, as well as a more general unknowability and indeterminability of the city. The anticipated gap between a given vision or plan and its outcome thus suggests an epistemological impasse in urban representation, the inability to grasp the object of study, or what Andrew Merrifield refers to as planning’s “impossibility.”

Moreover, the consultation-utopian representation-decision timeline of the project indicates a reflexivity between artistic renderings and policy that cannot be overlooked. In fact, the aesthetic function of the public architectural exhibition, as with many “political visions,” is necessary to enable the subsequently proposed policies, even when, and in some cases especially when, these may be in contradiction to one another. The translation between the architectural dream and reality, however, is not straightforward and involves a number of planes of interpretation, from public appreciation and media debates to intellectual consideration and commentary, to historical context and government discourses. The images of Grand Paris given in the exhibit thus do not stand alone, or speak univocally, but become meaningful within existing signifying systems and discourses. The dream of Grand Paris links the visual landscapes; generating design innovation, reflection and debate; and boosting the profile of individual architectural firms—the appellation nevertheless applies. Moreover, in the wake of the exhibition, several of the architects were awarded contracts for site-specific projects under the general rubric of Grand Paris based upon their participation. Merrifield, Henri Lefebvre, 66. The impossibility of planning results from a more fundamental impossibility of representation. As symbolic signification is incomplete, the subject is always denied direct and total access to the world and to objects. This timeline was never linear however, and in many ways, the policies existed in nascent stages prior to their implementation, with Grand Pari merely making them communicable to a wider public. See Marc Wiel, Le Grand Paris, Premier conflit né de la décentralisation (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2009).
images the architectural project with symbolic discourses on the contemporary metropolis, on Paris, and on the social and economic constitution of space.¹⁰⁹

While the *Grand Pari* creations provide new and innovative ways to see the city, the conditions of such creativity mean that the neoliberal restructurings of the city predominate. The project works according to populist reason, relying upon renderings of a city which ‘everyone would obviously want.’ Imagining a generalized city and a generalized subject, this “shared dream” stands in for the stated concerns of inhabitants and their diverse modes of being. Furthermore, the project uses open debates and public display to provide a veneer of participation while in actuality, the means of directing the change of the city are increasingly taken out of the hands of those most involved and affected and placed into the hands of an elite entrepreneurial capitalist class. The unification and consolidation of a single identity for the city is thus a depoliticizing move, one that restricts the capacities to change and denies any privileged agent of change other than capital itself.

In this chapter, I will map out this dream through its various articulations in the *Grand Pari* architectural exhibit. Highlighting several competing ways of representing the modern metropolis, the exhibit provides a valuable resource for urban theory today. Yet despite the radical orientation of many of its architectural works, in order to be manipulated into policy, the more contentious representations and conceptualizations

¹⁰⁹ For Sigmund Freud, dreams have precisely this function of linking imaginative and symbolic systems. The social dreams of the urban development can also be understood in this way. While the terms here are loosely borrowed from psychoanalysis, for a detailed account of the workings of the imaginary and symbolic in architecture, see John Hendrix, *Architecture and Psychoanalysis: Peter Eisenman and Jacques Lacan* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006).
undergo quite dramatic changes. This chapter traces the cooption of the *Grand Pari* ideas and imaginaries into policy initiatives according to a very particular logic of aggrandizement, investment and accumulation. It focuses in particular on how the architectural representations work, often unintentionally, as apologies for state productivism neoliberalism, and the global city.

**Imagining Grand Paris**

While the majority of the ten multidisciplinary international teams appointed by Sarkozy as part of the *Grand Pari* project are well established French architectural design firms, they vary in political allegiance and professional experience. For Parisians, the recognizable faces notably include Jean Nouvel of Nouvel, Duthilleul, Cantal-Dupart, probably the most well known (and possibly therefore the most reviled) architect in Paris whose local works include the *Institut du Monde Arabe* (Institute of the Arab World) and the *Musée du quai Branly à Paris* (Paris Museum of Branly) and Roland Castro of Atelier Castro Denissof Casi, a former Maoist public intellectual who once ran for office as a member of the party *Mouvement de l’utopie concrète* (Movement for a Practical Utopia). Also chosen to participate are the French studios of Atelier Christian de Portzamparc, L'AUC (of Djamel Klouch), Groupe Descartes (featuring Yves Lyon), and Agence Grumbach & Associés, the experimental Dutch collective MVRDV (under the supervision of Winy Maas), the German LIN (with Finn Geipel), Italian Studio 09 (of Bernardo Secchi), and British Rogers Stirk Harbour & Partners.

Though headed by well-established star architects, “among the most important of our time” each design team was also explicitly “interdisciplinary” and most included a
selection of sociologists, architects, philosophers, engineers, and environmental
scientists. In addition, prominent theorists of the late-capitalist city including Saskia
Sassen, Manuel Castells, and Phillipe Panerai were also engaged with the project in
consultative roles on the Conseil scientifique (Scientific Council) which ensured the
“complementarity” of the ten designs and “quality” of the final exhibition. The
administrative direction of the project, while headed by Sarkozy and the Office of the
President, was also shared with the Ministry of Culture and Communication, the City of
Paris, the Île-de-France Regional Authority and the Île-de-France Mayoral Association.
Because of the broad range of collaborators and the theoretical focus of the exhibition, it
was proclaimed that the “large scale perspective has nothing of a classical urban
concourse” and was instead to be a unique and genuinely collective venue for imagining
the future of the city.

The Grand Pari consultation was to be both a forum for thought and exchange
and a guide for future policy decisions. The lengthy research and consultation phase of
Grand Pari from October 2007 to March 2009 highlights the priority given to knowledge-
development in the project. This was then followed by the official exhibition from April
2009-November 2009. The project was organized around two guiding threads that were
understood to be the basis of each team’s final presentation: “The 21st Century post-
Kyoto Metropole” and “The Prospective Diagnostics of Parisian Agglomeration.”

110 Nikolas Sarkozy in Le Moniteur Architecture, Le Grand Pari(s): Consultation internationale
sur l’avenir de la métropole parisienne, 5.
111 Le Moniteur Architecture, Le Grand Pari(s): Consultation internationale sur l’avenir de la
métropole parisienne.
112 Christine Albenel, Minister of Culture and Communication in Ibid., 9.
113 République Française, “Le Grand Pari de l’agglomération parisienne.”
former thread arises from the renewed institutional and disciplinary attention to “green” cities. As popular concerns about global warming and resource consumption grow, environmental concerns become increasingly central to architectural and urban planning practices. Signaling a concerted international commitment to a reduction of greenhouse gases, as well as new paradigm of growth, ecology and a breakdown of the urban/rural divide, the post-Kyoto paradigm demands a rethinking of the role of urban centers in global development.\footnote{The post-Kyoto framework refers to the international regime that resulted from the 1997 Kyoto Protocol under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Kyoto convention was a watershed in environmental regulation and saw a renewed international effort to reduce greenhouse gases through institutional means, including the market-model of emissions trading.} Yoking a marketized logic to environmental sustainability, the post-Kyoto regime of ecological modernization stresses the coterminous goals of greening cities and profit accumulation. The rubric of “croissance durable,” or “sustainable growth,” underwrote many of the proposed projects. The post-Kyoto paradigm also stresses the interdependence of nations around the world and the mutual vulnerability of each to the actions of others. In this way, \emph{Grand Paris} is not an insular space, but one that is always integrated into global networks of production, resource management, and legality.\footnote{The discourse of “sustainability” as I point out throughout this dissertation undoubtedly supports the paradigm of speculative development, especially in the production of the Grand Paris Express. What is being sustained through this initiative is not quality of life, community or democracy, but increasingly, a resilient form of capitalism. A comprehensive analysis of the environmental aspects of \emph{Grand Paris} would be extremely useful, though is beyond the scope of this dissertation.}

Inquiry into the latter exhibition thread though, that of “Prospective Diagnostics of Parisian Agglomeration” is perhaps the central task of the \emph{Grand Paris} plan. From the Latin “\textit{ad}” (to gather together) and “\textit{glom}” (a ball or mass), agglomeration is a process
whereby separate parts are collected together to form a cluster or heap.\textsuperscript{116} Described by Edward Soja as a unique logic of urbanization, agglomeration is the combining of geographic parts into a mechanical union for the purposes of increasing economic, security, or political power.\textsuperscript{117} It is also the generative force of urban space. For Soja, agglomeration is not merely a force of attraction and seamless connection, but the coming together of units often works through an uneven dialectic of what he term centripetal and centrifugal forces.\textsuperscript{118} Nor is agglomeration merely a matter of growth, which would imply a self-expanding single unit. Rather, it is the treatment of the multiple in the one—the bringing together of diverse populations, cultures, territories and ways of life into a political unity and the attendant equalization of these through exchange, identity and legality.\textsuperscript{119} The “Prospective Diagnostics of Parisian Agglomeration” are meant to chronicle the ways in which this clustering together of different parts has happened already within the Paris region, and to provide a model for the best mode of agglomerative processes into the future. Involving putting various parts of the Paris

\textsuperscript{116} Oxford English Dictionary, 2010, s.v. “Agglomeration.”
\textsuperscript{117} Soja, Postmetropolis, 12–15. Soja also refers to agglomeration through his notion of “synekism,” Greek for “dwelling together,” as the unification or wedding of diverse communities and territories into a combined social and political unit.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., 17. In bringing together different communities and populations, there are also forces of repulsion. Whereas Soja uses centripetal and centrifugal forces as analogous to the movements of urban centralization and decentralization respectively (of for example, condensation and sprawl) this dissertation suggests that this very centrality is under question today at all scales of social organization today. See the Conclusion for this argument in more detail.
\textsuperscript{119} This framework is borrowed from Lefebvre, De L’État tome III: Le Mode de production étatique, 373. He argues that the consolidation of nation states requires “the equalization of the non-equal and the equivalence of the non-equivalent” and that states perform this homogenizing function as a core mechanism of rule, and as part of the process of generating abstract space. Here, I suggest that urban-regions are a new scale at which this homogenizing function is occurring.
region together in a purported whole, this process has particular relevance to the activity of representation as a material and cultural practice and the force of imaginative ventures in forging metropolitan solidarities.

Due to its particular histories of urbanization-suburbanization, colonialism and modernization, representing the Parisian metropole as a single unit is fraught with difficulties. Paris today is seen as both too large and too small, as a shifting, complex and overlapping collection of local communes and distant (ex)colonies of contiguous and non-contiguous connection. While the “island of Paris” consisting of its historic quarters is well imaged and known world-wide through literary, cinematic and other artistic representations, there is a notable gap in thought and a deficit of representations of Paris on an urban scale beyond its official city limits. Without a language or symbolic framework with which to signify Paris as a broad and diverse region, the politics of the space remain caught in an anachronistic trap whereby the “historic” center stands in for the metropolitan reality. Frédéric Gilli calls attention to the extraordinary stakes of our understandings and significations of space, saying that “[t]he real issues of Paris are not institutional but lie in our representation of Parisian space and in the place of democracy on the metropolitan scale.”

He continues, “[t]he reflection on the heart of agglomeration and on the frontiers between the heart and the peripheral zones cannot

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120 Consider for example, the image of Paris one confronts exiting a plane in Charles de Gaulle airport (which importantly is not located in Paris proper) or on a typical tourist map. This image presents the old city of Paris walled at its perimeter, floating in a sea of non-identified hinterland.


content themselves to be anchored in practical problems because the reflection is equally an affair of symbols and representations.” Because the urban is the name for a collectively produced and read space, and a collective subject, agglomeration is thus a matter of forming new representations of Grand Paris and the inhabitants thereof.123

In public debates however, the form of the city and the material dispositions of inhabited territory are often forgotten or dismissed as irrelevant. This has led at least one prominent commentator to ask: “How do we explain this absence of the urban form from the public debate?”124 This question is treated as a secondary concern to those of social and economic relations. According to Phillipe Panerai despite the necessity of representational spaces in everyday life, there is a real difficulty in reading the form of the city outside of its historic blueprint. According to Panerai, this is a major oversight because the form of the city testifies to the history of society, it conditions daily life of inhabitants and fashions their identity. To this analysis we could also add the manner in which representation can be a tool of domination and exercise of power. Without constantly engaging in questions of form, the commonsense understandings of the city or those forwarded most prominently in the media (of a war between the city and the banlieue) or those of political leaders become ideologically accepted. Without opposition, Grand Paris becomes a self-reinforcing and reified object.

The stakes of representation in the project are not unique to Paris alone, but the form, structure and workings of the contemporary metropolis more generally were hotly contested by the Grand Paris architectural teams. Indeed, representing and conceptualizing

123 See Lefebvre, The Production of Space, 7.
the modern metropolis is one of the hallmarks of urban studies and urban theorizing, tasks made difficult not only because of the ontology of the urban, but due to increasingly complex contemporary conditions.

Despite the productive role of representation in the creation of the modern cityscape, the city still resists imaginary capture. Indeed, negotiating the tension between the city proper as an administrative unit or geographic territory and its inherent others—the territorial outside of the exurban, the colony, the camp, and the interstices of everyday life—lies at the heart of urban planning and urban architecture, and has been the basis of the most profound critiques of the discipline in its 19th and 20th century, Euro-American guise. For while the ancient or medieval walled city might be heuristically treated as an autonomous closed unit, the modern globalized metropolis resists such containment and always has within it visible elsewheres and others. This irreducible reality has plagued planners, politicians and architects attempting to retain a god’s eye view of the territory. This ontological condition of the metropolis means that quantitative data, schematic plans and unitary visions inherently fall short of their

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125 George Simmel, one of the most insightful thinkers of Paris and the modern metropolis identifies the idiosyncratic, excessive nature of the urban form. In his 1903 “Metropolis and Mental Life,” he writes, “[t]he most significant aspect of the metropolis lies in this functional magnitude beyond its actual physical boundaries and this effectiveness reacts upon the latter and gives it life, weight, importance and responsibility… a city consists first in the totality of its effects that extend beyond its immediacy.” In Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” The Urban Sociology Reader, ed. Jan Lin and Christoper Mele (New York: Routledge, 2005). In both its lived informal dynamic and its constitutive elsewheres, the urban is, in the words of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guatarri, a “determinialized territory,” always both inside and outside of its walls. Quoted in Le Moniteur Architecture, Le Grand Paris(s): Consultation internationale sur l’avenir de la métropole parisienne.
objective and yet defining and delimiting the city remains a necessary, though problematic task for city and regional planners.\textsuperscript{126}

The difficulty of conceptualizing the urban form is further compounded under late capitalism. Since the 1970s, cities around the world have undergone massive restructurings that fundamentally challenge the traditional frameworks for urban analysis. Changes in capitalist production from industry to service as well as emerging networks of digital communications infrastructure have led to new forms of labor, distribution, consumption, habitation, governance and identity. In the city this is expressed in an unparalleled formal complexity and a reconstitution of scalar imaginaries. One outcome of these conditions is that in what Soja has termed the postmodern “postmetropolis,” it is no longer possible to separate out cities from suburbs, exurbs; sprawl and satellites from historic metropolitan cores.\textsuperscript{127} Marked by heterogeneity, flexibility and mixity, this new cityscape confuses the boundaries of the urban, and demands innovative ways of representing multiple and overlapping relationships, flows, interdependencies and conjuncture beyond the physical boundaries of contiguous territories.\textsuperscript{128}

\textsuperscript{126} Negri, “On Rem Koolhaas.”
\textsuperscript{127} Soja, Postmetropolis.
\textsuperscript{128} Ananya Roy, in her work on postmodern urban planning, describes the 21st century metropolis as “chameleonic” and extremely changeable. The contemporary metropolis “shifts shape and size; margins become centers; centers become frontiers; regions become cities…The 21st century metropolis makes a fool of census jurisdictions, of the mappings of city and suburbs, and confounds the easy narratives of regional change, including those that emphasize agglomeration and innovation.” In Ananya Roy, “The 21st-century Metropolis: New Geographies of Theory,” Regional Studies 43, no. 6 (2009): 827.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Name</th>
<th>Exhibition Title</th>
<th>Primary Representation of Metropolitan Paris</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Rogers Stirk Harbour + Parners London School of Economics ARUP</td>
<td>Dix principes pour Paris métropole (Ten principles for the Paris metropole)</td>
<td>borderless polycentric metropole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groupe Descartes</td>
<td>Paris, capital, region, ville, villes (Paris, capital, region, city, cities)</td>
<td>cluster of twenty sustainable cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L’AUC</td>
<td>Grand Paris stimulé (Grand Paris Stimulated)</td>
<td>polymorphic matrix/timeline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atelier Christian de Portzamparc</td>
<td>Du cyberspace vers l'espace physique—Un Défi pour la metropole</td>
<td>three overlapping rhizomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agence Grumbach et Associés</td>
<td>Seine Métropole—Paris Rouen Le Havre (Metropole-Seine—Paris Rouen Le Havre)</td>
<td>Seine-centered global port</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AJN—Jean Nouvel AREP—Jean-Marie Duthilleul Michel Cantal-Dupart</td>
<td>Naissances et renaissances de mille et un bonheurs parisiens (Birth and rebirth of a thousand and one Parisian joys)</td>
<td>unipolar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studio 09—Bernar Secci et Paola Vigano</td>
<td>La Métropole poreuse de l’après-Kyoto (The porous post-Kyoto metropole)</td>
<td>isotropic fractal 129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIN—Finn Geipel + Giulia Andi</td>
<td>Grand Paris métropole douce (Grand Paris soft metropole)</td>
<td>multipolar cluster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atelier Castro Denissof Casi</td>
<td>Capitale pour l'homme/capital pour le monde (Capital for man, capital for the world)</td>
<td>patchwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MVRDV</td>
<td>Le grand pari du Grand Paris (The grand wager of Grand Paris)</td>
<td>unipolar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Ten representations of metropolitan Paris.

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129 While the exact definition of the “isotropic” and “fractal” city remains vague in this design, the main idea is that at each scale of the urban, the social dynamics will mirror those of the overall system such that any part of the urban will necessarily reflect the whole.
Taking up the challenge of creating an image and language of unification, the ten Grand Pari design teams proposed many versions of Paris as an agglomerated global city. Many attempted to redraw the shape of the urban agglomeration in creative ways, but overall, defining the spatial specificity of the metropolis remained an open question (see Table 2). Antoine Grumbach, for example takes a cue from Napoleon and suggests that the Parisian metropolis follow the Seine and extend all the way to the port of Le Havre in order to capture the ecological and economic importance of the river. Richard Rogers, on the other hand, maintains the general shape of the Île-de-France region, but redraws Grand Paris as a collection of 30 small cities of 500 000 inhabitants. The complementarity of spaces, density of constructions and constituent communities were other strategies by which to express and reorder inter-urban constellations as well as intra-urban conjunctures. In addition, the metrics of demographics, residential density, economic growth, and functional zones separated and joined parts of the metropolis in new configurations. Virtual connections, flows of commodities and people, physical layerings of buildings, green spaces and histories were still more dynamics considered in displaying Grand Paris. In general however, five main agglomerated forms were invoked by the teams, each of which will be examined in more detail in the next section for their logic and political implications: core and periphery, polycentric cluster, network, rhizomatic assemblage, and “non-representational” matrix.
Visions of the Now and Future City

Center/Periphery or Radio-concentric City

Paris has traditionally maintained clear borders between the city proper and the excluded outside, or banlieue. From the first wall erected around the year 1200 CE to enclose the built area of the Gallic town, through successive ring fortifications around Paris in 1383, 1636 and the 1844, to the construction of the Périmérique ring road highway finished in 1978, there is a long history of attempting to enclose the municipality for purposes of security, governance and communication. While the walls themselves change location, the logic of enclosure remains the same, and like the rings of a sequoia, the concentric walls around Paris measure the growth of the city over time. These borders reinforce a notion of a core and periphery—a small and elite “Paris” defined according to these borders as the region intra-muros (between the walls), and the peripheral rural, suburban and exurban territories of the outré-muros (outside of the walls), relegated to regional status. Even today, one common way to limit the city and define its boundaries is by dilations of the core whereby radial distances are measured at 7, 10, 20 or 30 km. This model assumes a clear and compact unitary center of density, commerce, culture, power and wealth outside of which is blank empty space (see Figure 1).

130 The term “banlieue” arises out of this history of administrative exclusion. Referring to those areas of the city one league (lieue) from the city-center and therefore beyond the reach of the rule of law, the banlieue is an expression simultaneously of inclusion and dependency and exclusion.
This concentric historic ordering of space has been an engine of the particular patterns of uneven development in the region and has also resulted from more general trends in the dialectic of urbanization and suburbanization. Historically, as the early industrial city of Paris grew in population and size, the suburbs became ever more important places of industry, sources of labor and venues for burgeoning capitalist growth. The center has shown a great capacity to polarize the areas around it symbolically and economically, leading to today’s situation where there are great asymmetries between inside the Périphérique and outside it. Indeed, the differentiations of old Paris, what one commentator has called “the world’s most elegant gated community,” from the dilapidated banlieues are patent and can be seen in dramatic comparisons of wealth, income, unemployment, health, and criminality.

The corporeal variant of this unipolarity hierarchizes functions of the various city parts according to bodily operations. Drawing on architectural “master views” of the urban and functionalist social theory, these representations tend to take the body as the central metaphor for society and thus equate the constitution of the city to that of an ideal and healthy body, a body with differentiated functions arranged in clear ranks and ratios. The way in which this becomes expressed in Grand Paris typically has to do with circulation and the direction of “flows.” Sarkozy for example, refers to the banlieues as

133 See Smith, Uneven Development; Henri Lefebvre, Writings on Cities trans. Eleonore Kofman, and Elizabeth Lebas (Wiley-Blackwell, 1996). Both authors suggest that suburbanization signals the limits of capitalist urban growth and vitality. Suburbanization is not a separate phenomenon distinct from urbanization, but the two are dialectically related in a process that fixes capital across space. As the urban grows outward from an initial assemblage, it poses new problems for its continued existence.
134 Ouroussoff, “Remaking Paris.”
135 See Wacquant, Urban Outcasts.
places “where gangrene has set in,” while Richard Rogers (co designer of the Pompidou center) explains, “I know no other big city where the heart is so detached from its arms and legs.”

The unifying feature of this model is one of subordination to control centers in the heart and head and the fatal decomposition of space when deprived of these resources.

**Figure 1:** Concentric model of core/periphery. A series of expanding borders mark changes in the contours and limits of Paris over time. Depicted here are a Gauloise enclosure, a Gallo-Roman wall, the wall of Philippe Auguste, the wall of Charles V, the Louis XIII wall, the Wall of the Farmers-General and the Thiers wall.

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Figure 2: Paris as egg yolk and egg white. The icons of “historic Paris” threaten the consistency of the city.\(^{138}\)

Against this exclusionary structure that provides different service, opportunities and rights to those outside and inside the core, critics demand the removal of physical and symbolic walls separating Paris from its environs. In his vision for Grand Paris, Richard Rogers stresses that architects “cannot ignore the urban apartheid which structures today our metropole of which the grand ensembles [public housing complexes in the banlieue] are the figure.”\(^{139}\) Grumbach also notes the need to dispense with the core-periphery structure in an interview with the Christian Science Monitor, but he likens metropolitan Paris not to a human body but to a fried egg “with the suburbs sprawling in an unbounded mess from the compact yolk of the historic capital.”\(^{140}\) History seems

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\(^{138}\) Bertone and Leloup, *Le Grand Paris*.

\(^{139}\) In Le Moniteur Architecture, *Le Grand Pari(s): Consultation internationale sur l’avenir de la métropole parisienne*.

\(^{140}\) Susan Sachs, “Sarkozy’s Daring Design Dreams for a New ‘Grand Paris’,” *Christian*
to indicate that the French state, while great at breaking eggs, is incapable of fashioning an omelet (see Figure 2).

Not only do the core-periphery models establish imbalanced and non-reciprocal relations of central decision making, power and wealth, but the defensively-based radioconcentric apparatus (with main roads extending out from the center of the city toward the perimeter) reinforces the immutable separation of Paris from its surroundings and entrenches an antagonistic relation between city and banlieue. Internalizing the colonial model of imperial metropolis ("mother city") and colony, the core-periphery model of the urban is also inextricably linked to a logic of exploitation, and with a republican universalism that includes others (workers, immigrants, colonies, suburbs) only to the extent that these threats to order and decency are excluded from the essence of the polity.\footnote{\textit{Science Monitor}, March 19, 2009.}

From a history of centralization, Paris is today called upon to adapt to a new urban and exurban conditions. This is not only because of growth—of the suburbs expanding in number and size—but is due to a fundamental transformation in the organization of the city. The territorial, economic, governmental and social scales that once defined an “urban core” no longer align so neatly with the city of Paris against the

\footnote{Historically, in both urban policing as well as popular representations, the \textit{banlieue} has fulfilled this function as "outlaw territory." For a good account of how the \textit{banlieue} is constructed through media and through successive urban planning schemes as a territory outside of the law and outside of republican values, see Dikeç, \textit{Badlands of the Republic}. The core and periphery mode of urban growth in Paris and its colonial contours has been critiqued by a number of postcolonial theorists. See especially Alec Hargreaves and Mark McKinney, \textit{Post-colonial Cultures in France} (New York: Psychology Press, 1997); Rabinow, \textit{French Modern}; Margaret A. Majumdar, \textit{Postcoloniality: The French Dimension} (London: Berghahn Books, 2007); Kipfer, “Decolonization in the Heart of Empire.”}
subordinate remainder of the Île-de-France. The image of the socioeconomic structure of the metropolis, the geography of which has remained stable since the large-scale industrial mutations, makes it difficult to evaluate the intra-urban balance, the heterogeneity of the spaces across the metropolis and their unique patterns of interaction and relationality. Unipolarity misses the ways in which the banlieue is an important urban space in its own right as well as the processes that continually bring this configuration about even as they undo it.

While this unipolar form is mainly invoked by the Grand Pari architects in order to reject it, the overarching structure of core-periphery is not so simply discarded and gets reinscribed in less obvious articulations. Where the banlieues are mentioned in the designs, they are constructed as sites in need of intervention, or as the “urgent” problem that the core must address, especially in the context of transportation and housing.142 While the teams go to great lengths to articulate new conditions and rhythms of the metropolis that defy this reductionist rendering, they do so in a way that does not interrogate the material histories that have given rise to such a division. Thus, in doing away with the model of core-banlieue, the ability to articulate the extreme segregation of the region is actually weakened. And though denaturalizing the antagonism between Paris and the banlieue is necessary, the antagonism should be retained as a political issue. The marked differentiations as a result of urban policy, capital expansion, flights of labor and immigration, investment, housing and transportation are grounds upon which urban

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142 Jean Nouvel in particular stresses the urgent demand the banlieues make on the city. The sense of urgency however, is at odds with the overall arc of the project which is a projection 40 years into the future. How to balance immediate needs with grand vision of a totally reworked territory is never fully articulated the teams, and even less so by Sarkozy or other state representatives.
battles of equalization and democratization can be staged. The ambiguous articulations of this model illustrate the dangers of representing the city and in particular the way in which unification can be a depoliticizing move.

**Polycentric Cluster**

A second vision, and one taken up predominantly in policy initiatives succeeding the *Grand Pari* exhibit, is that of a polycentric cluster or grouping of territories. This conceptualization of the urban is most frequently used to account for the existence of “satellite cities” surrounding an older downtown, and can also be employed in order to recognize that different urban features—culture, economics, commerce, government, technology—may no longer have coterminous centers, but exist unevenly across an urban landscape (see Figure 3). Emblematic of the 1960 *schema directeur* (master plan) of Paul Delouvrier, as well as a generally accepted European Union planning “best practice,” the polycentric metropolis is decidedly anti-*banlieue*.

One of the main advantages of polycentric and multifunctional metropolis is that it avoids the overarching model of center and periphery that has long overdetermined regional relations. Under a polycentric model it is no longer a matter of counterposing the *banlieue* to the urban core, but to revision the myriad connections, flows and territories that condition life and the dynamics of interaction therein. This view resists the dominant and oppressive understandings of the core as where life is located and the periphery as blank. It thus also enables new forms of state involvement into the region beyond the creation of priority territories in need of extreme state control and
intervention (that is, against the model of Zones à urbaniser en priorité (ZUPs) and Zones Urbaines Sensibles (ZUSs)).

Figure 3: Polycentric city. The core of Paris is surrounded by a series of satellite cities.\textsuperscript{143}

The city is no longer defined by a single density of culture, transportation, recreation, research or commercial importance, but these are understood to be mixed across the territory or located in “hubs” in both Paris and its environs. For example, while the historical core retains much of the symbolic and cultural capital of the metropolis, new independently valorized sites of culture and finance (Aubervilles, la Défense) are emerging to challenge this (see Chapter Two for details on how this is

accomplished). Representations thus stress non-holistic mappings, local specializations, and non-contiguous “interterritorialities.” The polycentric model has the advantage of reducing the number of inhabitants controlled by a central metropole and seems to allow us to think the banlieue as a “central scale of the urban.”

And yet, this model retains many of the problematic features of the core-periphery city including the necessary inequalities of polarized regions. Moreover, because of their history in relation to central Paris, many of the banlieue communities are not self-sustaining satellites, and lack both infrastructure and recognizable central districts that would make them so. They are still very much bound in relations of dependence. Centrality becomes more diffuse, but the concentration of value and capital in a few select spaces remains.

What the multipolar model does provide above all is a map for what David Harvey terms “spatial fixes,” to ensure that the surplus capital of the urban is reinvested in areas that are ripe to produce profits. As capital must be invested somewhere, Grand Ivari provides an easily accessible schema for developers. Those areas of low value are thereby transformed into high-value land through the infusion of capital and the creation of new production sites (as discussed at length in Chapter Two). This is in fact the primary model of the Grand Paris plan and is seen most notably in the work of the Christian Blanc, Secretary of State for the Development of the Capital Region from

144 Gilli, “Les Nouveaux Contours de la métropole parisienne.” As I argue in Chapter Three, interterritoriality is also increasingly the model of governance through which the metropole is managed.
145 Ibid.
2008-2010. In taking up this model Blanc can validate new investments in business and finance, and new infrastructural schemes based upon public-private partnerships.

*Network*

Extending the polycentric model and combining it with what Manuel Castells calls “network society,” many have tried to define the contemporary metropolis in terms of informational networks. Rather than a social organization based on communities or masses of people, networked cities rely upon the myriad of interrelationships that exist through communicative channels. For Castells, the morphology of the metropolis is not to be found in terms of bounded contiguous territories or social groupings, but social structures and activities that hinge on digital information networks.\(^{147}\) This form of organization is closely linked to changes in the structure of the post-Fordist capitalist economy. If the core-\textit{banlieue} structure signals most forcefully the central state surrounded by industrial strongholds and the “red belt” of labor upon which the wealth of 20\(^{th}\) century Paris was built, then the network model is needed to describe the kinds of labor and production that emerge out of industrial collapse, decentralizations of power and the rise of “immaterial” or “affective labor” as well as the new spatial configurations of the global city.\(^{148}\)

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In the *Grand Pari* project, the language of networks is common, describing communities and interpersonal relationships, entities of commerce and webs of global finance as well as the workings of media and communication technology. Primarily, these are used to invoke an innovation-based economy which optimizes growth opportunities through ongoing research, creativity, and technical expertise. Many of the projects define the scale of these innovative centers not in terms of cities or regions, but as localized “clusters” within a wider global mesh.149

For Castells especially, the network morphology fundamentally changes modes of human social interaction and thus impacts policy application, identity formation, contentious politics, governance and even intimate interactions of subjects with their worlds. Due to the space and time compression brought about by communication technologies and modern transportation and the sprawling growth of cities outside of their identifiable centers, “the city” can no longer be perceived, lived or represented in the same manner as it once could. Most notably, these changes result in what Castells calls a “pre-eminence of social morphology over social action.”150 The informational topos of the city comes to define its contours, capacities and futures more than collective action or political contention.

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Figure 4: The Global-Cities network. Acknowledging the influence and power of the major centers of finance and economic production, the global metropolitan network links global-cities to each other in a single ensemble.\textsuperscript{151}

\textsuperscript{151} Christian de Portzamparc in Le Moniteur Architecture, \textit{Le Grand Pari(s): Consultation internationale sur l’avenir de la métropole parisienne}. 
The morphologically determined view of the city is exemplified in the view of the Dutch firm MVRDV headed by Winy Maas. MVRDV is by far the most statistically oriented team of Grand Pari, and are known for their positivist outlook, as evidenced in their famous model “Datatown,” that purportedly displays the essence of a city without context or ideology, described only by “neutral” codes and numbers.\(^\text{152}\) In Grand Paris MVRDV uses statistical remodeling through their copyrighted “City Calculator” tool to evaluate the landscape across a series of indicators and to then optimize data values according to precise algorithms. Economic, ecological, social, and mobility datasets of Paris are displayed in their “ideal” maximized form and compared to other global cities with whom Paris is competing. In essence, the team aims to maximize the “capacity” of the city through a precise datafication of the territory’s problems. Maas imagines growth and development through the language of statistics, but his model is one without any reference to actually existing places or their non-calculeable qualities, histories, affects and symbols. The information, treated as the DNA of the city, then becomes the basis upon which planning, growth and development is based. Quantitative networks of information define the urban form in an atopological and aterritorial manner.

Christian de Portzamparc also utilizes the notion of networks of finance and information to describe what he calls the “cybermetropolis.” Existing beyond physical territory, buildings or social milieu, he claims that this metropolis is necessarily global in nature (see Figure 4). His presentation, entitled “Cyberspace toward physical space, a challenge for the metropole,” points to the need to take into account networks of information and financial cybereconomy that are the dematerialized base underlying the

global city metropolis. He writes, “At this juncture, the virtual connection responds to the decline of our real space and our incapacity to master it…we must understand the new problem of the metropole and its global dimensions. The metropole is not merely a large city, but is a new anthropological phenomenon, not only quantitative growth, but a change in state.” To communicate and represent this new scalar “phenomenon” in the existing language and terms of cities and urbanity is one of the more difficult tasks facing the architects.

While the network model would seemingly enable an approach against centralized understandings of Paris and a more equal distribution of wealth, capacity and investment across a broad, more encompassing territory, this is not necessarily the case. As Sassen points out, it is the very dispersion in space of productive activities that enables concentration of wealth and ownership through urban growth today. In practice, networks of finance and information have actually enhanced technological and business centers like La Défense and Saclay while relegating neighborhoods like Quatre Milles and La Courneuve into conditions of extreme poverty and isolation, what Luïc Wacquant has called “advanced marginality.” Representationally, this morphology also reinforces the prioritization of capitalist imperatives over the needs and desires of people. While the network itself can encapsulate relations and interactions in the city that other forms cannot, its embeddedness in dominant modes of production and capital circulation limit its effectiveness for rethinking the city.

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154 Wacquant, *Urban Outcasts.*
155 See especially Jan Van Dijk, “The One-dimensional Network Society of Manuel
Rhizomatic Assemblage

The “rhizome,” or “rhizomatic assemblage” as it is variously termed, is a concept developed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* as a radical social ontology and critical epistemology. In contrast to similar concepts such as communities, territories, groups, or networks, rhizomes have a number of features that allow them to more critically account for social life. Rhizomes are units of relationality and interactivity that exist across scales and map out semiotic systems, affective flows, and material connections between organic and non-organic bodies. Rhizomatic assemblages are thus not defined according to any internal principle or unifying identity, but according to the connections that they make with external elements and environments. Against an aboreal figure which would organize life according to origin, telos and hierarchy, the rhizome exists in a nonlinear way such that each element can be connected to any other. Additionally, the rhizome is a dynamic figure, constantly in motion and changing in form and capacity as the relationships proceed, always open, or “becoming” with the potential to be otherwise. For Deleuze and Guattari, the rhizome has revolutionary potential as a social ontology, as it more accurately describes the workings of a body (a metropolis for example) and therefore enables changes, including radical changes of becoming—otherwise, to be thought (see Figure 5).156

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156 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2004). For Deleuze and Guattari, the rhizomatic body of the city is not organized hierarchically, but always by *what it can do* at any given moment, and the infinite potentials for connections that it can make. On the contribution of rhizomatic and “assemblage”...
Figure 5: The urban rhizome. In its Deleuzian iteration, the rhizome suggests the material and semiotic linkages between different elements of the city. The collective life of the city is created and perpetuated by these common assemblages as materially significant meaning making units.  

Given the transformations in the metropolis over the past thirty years, the rhizomatic assemblage provides a useful way of apprehending the multiple cities in existence under an urban rubric. Along these lines, urbanist Phillipe Panerai has employed this mapping tool in his work on representing metropolitan Paris. He writes “The assemblage sketches a vast nebulous, organized according to a constellation, characterized by an exponential augmentation of dimensions, distances and time.” This is especially crucial in an era or the city where its “design is no longer memorisable, its


limits are uncertain, its identity is at issue.”

Thus, unlike the network which is a more confined and delimited space with a particular logic, the assemblage exists in multiplicity and can defy the logic of the existing order.

Drawing on work in this vein, Portzamparc writes that “the rhizome is not a territory; it is a figure of analysis, a mode of apprehending dynamics of living. It is a schema of comprehension which grasps the particularity of the metropolitan dynamic.” He expresses the “tissue” of Paris in terms of three multifunctional “rhizomes,” the South (Saclay-Orly), the North-East (Creil / Disney) and the North (Gares/Roissy). While his articulation of Paris somewhat calls into question the dominant logics of the city in terms of centrality, it nevertheless appropriates the promises of innovation, dynamism and creativity of Deleuze and Guattari’s articulation and ties them to the technological innovation of industry and financial institutions.

Linking capacity to change with economic growth, Portzamparc’s rhizomes are more akin to the multipolar fields already discussed. More insidious is the fact that Portzamparc’s model is explicitly taken up in the policy initiatives under the direction of Christian Blanc and the Society of Grand Paris (SGP) and put into the service of decidedly non-critical and non-revolutionary aims (see Figure 6).

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159 Atelier Christian de Portzamparc, “La Métropole internationale de l’après-Kyoto le Grand Paris.”
Figure 6: Christian de Portzamparc’s rhizome. While using the language of the rhizome, Porzamparc largely reproduces a model of a polycentric city.

Non-Representational Matrices

Critical of large-scale urban design, one of the ten teams, AUC (Ab urbe condita, “since the foundation of the city”), led by the youngest architect, Djamel Klouche, refused altogether to present a utopian design or vision of Paris. Recognizing the violence of large-scale planning based upon an imperial regime of visuality and the
totalizing and universalizing imposition of a single perspective onto a mixed a
fragmented space, Klouche aims to map the city outside of conventional cartographic
modes or blueprint designs. AUC write “[w]e propose neither a model, nor plan, nor
images of an ideal post-Kyoto metropole or of a future Grand Paris.”160 Paris is a
fundamentally excessive space that resists any attempt to fix it in description or visual
signification. Notably, and against the nine other teams, AUC stresses instead the
pressing need to historicize the coming into being of the metropolis by tracing the
artistic, technological and political paths to the existing city. For “the 21st century
metropolis is already here...It is not a place that one can design, it is a condition to be
described.”161 The task of Grand Pari as they understand it is to comprehend the existing
city, not to project a utopian future.

Instead of maps and designs the team unilaterally resists images of the city and
presents instead what they term “matrices of history.” To deal with the “crisis of
representation” they choose to display a multivalent timeline that is “better capable than
the plan to grasp the subjective dimension which largely conditions the potentialities of a
territory and the possibilities of action in the territory.”162 The material and imaginative
histories of culture, politics, art, economics and technology layered as a palimpsest over
the space of the city can be read, not as guides for a future to come, but in order to
better understand the conditions of the present.

160 Le Moniteur Architecture, Le Grand Pari(s): Consultation internationale sur l’avenir de la
métropole parisienne, 82.
161 Le Moniteur Architecture, Le Grand Pari(s): Consultation Internationale sur l’avenir de la
métropole parisienne.
162 Ibid., 92.
A number of other teams also acknowledged the problems of urban representation and the qualitative boundlessness of Paris. Jean Nouvel describes any representations of the city as “lies,” always partial, incomplete and imperfect. He also criticizes the traditional cartographic “tools of representation” used in architectural practice as reductionist and mistakenly tied to the “genius” and fixed standpoint of the architect as opposed to the ever-changing lives of inhabitants.\textsuperscript{163} He writes “territories are not cinema, a screen upon which to project ideas and projects. They are moving, and it is this movement that must…orient them.”\textsuperscript{164} Employing the seemingly contradictory methodologies of ethnography (the reading of signifying structures to enable a rich description of places across the city) and Situationist Internationale inspired dislocational spacings (to disrupt total systems and structures and lay bare the fragmentary and disjunctive urban fabrics), Nouvel and his team seek alternative and critical representations of the urban.\textsuperscript{165} Yet these experimental approaches do not appear in Nouvel’s final designs which recapitulate more commonsense models of urban representation.

These attempts to avoid the pitfalls and violence of representation through alternative means, however, may not go so far as to intervene in the symbolic and imaginative ordering of the city and to actively bring about the production of a new form


\textsuperscript{164} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{165} These spatial experiments include extensive fieldwork across the region, to record activities, rhythms, movements and interactions on a block by block basis. The almost ethnographic precision of the work is extensively chronicled in the accompanying workbooks to the project.
of life and new modes of belonging and relationality. While architectural representations condition the material and social interactions of a city through a direct ordering of space, this does not ensure de facto that they will do so in a new or radical way. The “non-representation” renderings of the city, while avoiding a futural utopia, nevertheless still re-present a particular way of understanding the city as a unique social and historical phenomenon. AUC’s narrativizing matrix avoids an image of the city, but must still situate Paris within a rich symbolic (and totalizing) framework that largely determines how Paris is to be understood. Similarly, Nouvel’s research method may provide a more direct experience of the city, but this experience is not necessarily reflected in the plans they present. *Grand Paris* is not evidence for the merit or danger of representation writ large, a dubious debate, but rather, demands an analysis of how representations of the urban work to bring about new worlds through their specific material and ideological effects.

**Works of Representation**

It is clear that the ten architectural teams created varied and even contradictory visions of what Paris is and what it might be thirty years in the future. The architects use a variety of representational and critical tools to present incomplete and incommensurable understandings of urbanization processes and of urban life. But taken together, the ten designs become the basis for explaining and illuminating *Grand Paris* policy decisions to the general public. Not only does metropolitan Paris resist imaginary delimitation, but development and planning efforts are hindered by other political and social dynamics which render the critical ambitions of the architectural teams
implausible. Jean Nouvel self-consciously warns in a workbook accompanying his exhibit:

All work of development proceeds from a work of representation: it passes through it. That which the architect, the developer, and the elected official, manipulates, with more or less fortune, are the representations and fields of representation through which they pass to exercise their will, their knowledge and their powers. The transcription of these representations into reality depend very exactly on the extension, the quality and the amplitude of these abilities. The narrower these are, the more appalling the results: Every passage brings with it a thousand demonstrations of temporary good will which produce durable hells.166

If representations are violent and bound to fail in capturing or expressing the world, they are nevertheless effective as tools of translation and means of communication. But the manner in which designs are publically read, or taken up into policy is always unchartered. If the stakes of representation are high, the path from image to reality is perilous. And the “will, knowledge and power” of the architect are not as important as the situatedness of the architect within discursive and institutional arrangements.167

In the Grand Pari project, the architects were tasked by President Sarkozy directly and the representations, whatever their orientations, were undertaken as part of a political strategy to respond to an urban crisis (of the suburban uprisings of 2005, and the ongoing global recession) and to consolidate the primacy of the state. Situated in such a way, a number of teams at the outset were hesitant to participate and questioned the extent to which they were being employed as political tools for a regime they did not in fact support. The known leftist-leanings of many of the prominent French teams

166 Nouvel, Cantal-Dupart, and Duthilleul, Le Grand Pari de l’agglomération parisienne, Chantier 1:272.
167 In this sense, a consideration of the “intentions” of the architect provides little analytical purchase.
made them odd collaborators with Sarkozy’s conservative Union for a Popular Movement (UMP). While the architectural teams were eager to take up the challenge of refiguring the city and the body politic, they were loath to be pawns of a demagogue.\textsuperscript{168}

Urban architecture, situated between competing economic, political and aesthetic incitements, is at what Winy Maas has referred to as an “impasse” that fundamentally calls into question architecture’s revolutionary potential as well as its ability to direct large scale social change.\textsuperscript{169} Grumbach makes a similar indictment of the profession, claiming that architectural reflection in the last twenty years has too often been put into the service of state programs, “in fact, there has been capture of this reflection by bureaucrats, technicians, offices and engineers.”\textsuperscript{170} Balancing the desire to, in Henri Lefebvre’s terms, “change space to change life” with the reluctance of having aesthetic work co-opted by the existing order, the architects were faced with a significant choice as to whether or not to participate.\textsuperscript{171} Like other of his colleagues, Grumbach was skeptical at first of the consultation, and only agreed to participate after a series of meetings with Sarkozy convinced him of the merit of the project. In the end, the reticent architects were convinced by the exigency of the urban crisis along with the promises of a multidisciplinary and large-scale design exhibition which would give credibility to the

\textsuperscript{168} Van der Haak, Bregtje, \textit{Grand Paris the President and the Architect} (Brooklyn: Icarus Films, 2009).
\textsuperscript{169} Patteeuw, \textit{Reading MVRDV}.
\textsuperscript{170} Bertone and Leloup, \textit{Le Grand Paris}, 27.
\textsuperscript{171} For Lefebvre, social revolution was fundamentally tied to the constructions of new spaces. In contrast to the technocratic regime which dominates urban planning, Lefebvre demands more democratic ways of producing space socially. On the dynamics of spatial relations as social relations see especially Lefebvre, \textit{The Production of Space}, Lefebvre, \textit{State, Space, World}. 101
architectural profession as well as publicity to the individual firms. These lofty possibilities outweighed the perils of the exhibit’s capture.

The ten projects are indeed remarkable in their ability to evoke what the metropolitan region could be and as such they provide a contrast with what the city is. Visions of full employment, affordable and universal housing and grassroots democratic organization reverse the precepts of the existing hierarchical and elite-run Paris. A mixed terrain of tree-covered highways, public bikeways, urban playgrounds, interactive art installations, and community-controlled spaces starkly oppose the crumbling concrete monotony of the near periphery. The very notion that Paris could look very different from the way it does today is a critical maneuver that is necessary to spur change and in identifying actionable lines of antagonism, these visions can identify the decisive points of politics. While the ten Grand Pari projects stimulate the imagination and generate hope for a different and improved future, the question of the metropolitan structures, material dispositions, and regimes of centrality upon which the visions rest is nevertheless determinative. While the vision of the projects is remarkable in its embrace of seemingly critical spatial practices, what other work the projects do is equally, if not more important.

Not reducible to a guide or prop for urban planning, Grand Pari provides an extensive and unparalleled archive of research and theorization of the contemporary metropolitan form in general and the contours of Paris in particular. Yet it was clear from the outset that the role of the exhibit as apology for policy was paramount. As stated in the official objective, “[m]ore than a forum of ideas, it is a matter of a call for
projects of research and development whose outcomes will *illuminate decision.*” Accused of being “too intellectual,” the most interesting and politically potent aspects of the project were ignored, while only a selection of ideas that accorded with dominant paradigms were taken up. Those that were taken up into official state discourse were done so in the service of political agendas, in a conservative *détourne* of the radical orientation. The projects do not “illuminate decision” in the sense that they lead the charge for policymakers to follow, rather, the architectural exhibits serve to elucidate decisions already made, allowing them to be seen in a softer and less controversial light.

Their acts of communication are made even more effective due to the revered position of architects as cultural producers in society. The utopian designs, as intellectual and aesthetic projects would seem to transcend social relations and party politics, serving only the greater public good. Here this fact is used to bolster the unquestionable nature of the designs, and to enable them to more effectively serve as a smokescreen for the political agenda behind them. Thus, in both the representation that they provide and in their translation into policy, the projects are complicit in the work of depoliticizing urbanization by reducing the value of communal management and cementing a logic of state-led urbanization based on speculative redevelopment. There are five main strands of this logic that will be considered in detail. 1) Heeding Sarkozy’s demand to “think big” the designs reinforce the understanding of the “grandeur” of Paris as well as the elite vision required to reproduce this condition. 2) Working to improve the “imageability” of the city, the projects create a universal and inclusive fantasy of Paris which allows

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inhabitants to situate themselves in an urban frontier. *Grand Pari* gives a unified identity to a fractured city and presents the urban landscape as being consensual, non-contradictory and non-dialectical. 3) The public art aspect of the exhibition provides the illusion of democratic participation and collective spatial practices and the promise of “beauty” and culture but actually reinforces the power of the productivist state as the sole agent capable of managing large-scale spatial change. 4) The presumed non-conflictual nature of the city is reinforced by an emphasis on “flexibility” and “mixity” which make of diversity and difference an economic value. This flexibility is the spatial correlate to the more general context of flexible or precarious capitalism and enables the further entrenchment of flexible forms of labor, networked organization and short-term futures. 5) Privileging global finance and a market logic over the needs and desires of inhabitants, the project cements values of privatization, economic growth, deregulation, and competition that mark this regime of accumulation and the uneven development entailed therein. Through these five mechanisms, the projects illuminate the path to subsequent reforms, in particular, by reinforcing the priorities of state intervention in regional redevelopment, and in naturalizing a speculative logic of urban growth and change.

*Grandeur*

Drawing on the main valences of “Grand-ness” outlined in the Introduction, there are three main ways in which the emphases on a “Grand” Paris and a “grand” vision work in the *Grand Pari* exhibition. Firstly, they invoke the nostalgic ideals of majesty and grandeur that are seen to have once defined the monarchical city of Paris.
While the French Revolution was to break the hold of power by “les grands” (elite or wealthy) of the city and implement a new civic universality, the history of Paris remains intimately connected to this legacy of elite culture, power and wealth. The luminous and grandiose history displayed in the exhibition ignores peasant and labor actions and eschews democratic and popular political actions that have been so important in creating the city. It is no coincidence for example, that while the reign of kings is prominent and state planners like Haussmann and Delouvrier get ample consideration, there is little positive mention of the Commune of 1871, May ’68, the uprisings of 2005 of other socially produced spaces of resistance.173

For Sarkozy, in fact, the task of the exhibition is to continue this heroic grand legacy and reunite truth, beauty and wealth.174 Taking up the challenge of Napoléon Bonaparte, Christian Blanc vows to make of Paris “not only the most beautiful city which exists, the most beautiful city which has existed, but also the most beautiful city that can exist.”175 The figures in this history—Bonaparte, Haussmann, etc.—are limited to those who have added to the glory of Paris and who conspicuously emphasize beauty, circulation, and competition in the city at any cost. Blanc’s development plans reiterate these concerns and aim to extend this narrative into the 21st century. Blanc, nicknamed, “Monsieur Grands travaux” ( “Mr. Grand Works”) frames the plan as a social project, but it

173 In his book written to justify the Grand Paris plan, for example, Blanc traces a narrative of Paris back seven thousand years, throughout which, the site of Paris has invariably played an important role in local and regional economies. From a strategic trading axis in Bronze Age Europe to the residence of Roman Emperor Julien, to the seat of the 18th century Enlightenment, Paris it would seem, has long been important, a natural and immutable pole of power, wealth, decision making, culture and art science and technology. Blanc, Le Grand Paris du XXIe siècle.
174 Sarkozy, “Inauguration de l’exposition ‘Grand Pari(s)”.’
175 Blanc, Le Grand Paris du XXIe siècle, 33.
is clear through his analysis that the revitalization effort of *Grand Paris*, like the Second Empire reforms before it, is also about subsidizing private development during a recession through debt financed state projects. In a time of fiscal austerity, the *Grand Paris* plan stimulates the economy and provides a veneer of urban vitality to inspire confidence in investors.

The grandeur of the expert vision was also redoubled in its final display set in the Carlu Gallery temporary exhibit hall of the *Musée D’architecture et Patrimoine* located in the Trocadéro, a massive *palais* across from the Eiffel tower and former site of the 1878 World’s Fair. With vaulted ceilings and an impressive interior, the *palais* space is a resplendent reminder of both monarchial sovereignty and the profundity and promise of modern construction. The ten ultra modern kiosks, or “modular villages,” of the exhibit—filled with maps, glossy photographs, interactive neon consuls and videos on plasma screen televisions—reproduce this imaginary, while updating the meaning of grandeur for contemporary audiences. Innovation, technological expertise and futurist media now redefine the spectacular greatness of the historic city.

Secondly, the *Grand Pari* projects stress the unprecedented magnitude of the state-directed development plan. While most recent Presidents will bestow upon the City of Paris a pharaonic parting gift in the form of a single architectural monument or *grand projet* (the eponymous *Centre Pompidou* and *Bibliotheque de France Francois Miterrand*, for example), Sarkozy has gone even bigger, and aims to transform the entirety of Paris, turning the city into a monument in its own image. In terms of its size and its scope,
*Grand Paris* represents the first major wholesale redesign of the region since the Haussmann era.\(^{176}\)

Such planned reforms also bolster the image of Sarkozy himself as a leader who is willing to take risks and reorient the country in new directions, an image he has been trying to fashion throughout his time in office.\(^{177}\) He self-indulgently capitalizes on the popularity of the *Grand Paris* plans to entrench the idea that he is the sole one capable of bringing the plans to fruition, the sole one capable of piloting the city into the 21\textsuperscript{st} century. Only somewhat in jest did he remark to the architects, “I hope that you will aid me in being reelected because it will take time to do all of this. Five years will not suffice.”\(^{178}\) A big vision requires a “strong man” in power, with the authoritarian leadership to ensure opposition is impotent. The specter of social disintegration and the supposed immanent fragmentation of the body politic, tropes repeated again and again by Sarkozy, help to condition the need for a massive overhaul, while the architectural

\(^{176}\) Although in this case, the teams are not given the near-limitless powers afforded to Haussmann, and slum clearances and tabula rasa overhauls are impossible, echoes of Haussmannian redevelopment in terms of security and the embourgeoisement of public space nevertheless abound. Instead of the construction of grand boulevards to enable clear passage of marching armies, there is rather a transportation system that must be revamped to prevent the fires from the *banlieues* spreading downtown, and in place of razing the slums, there is a move toward raising the profile of crumbling grand ensembles.

\(^{177}\) See especially “Nicolas Sarkozy: The Incredible Shrinking Président,” *The Economist*, September 9, 2010. From an original “Grand vision”, Sarkozy has seen declining poll ratings and weakened ambition over his term as President. Without popular support for measures such as large scale pension reform Sarkozy has been forced to bolster his popularity with desperate measures of xenophobia—such as his war on Roma in the summer of 2010 and the banning of the Islamic headscarf. The *Grand Paris* project in many ways is another attempt to rescue his faltering image.

projects provide a convenient means by which to enact conservative policies under the guise of social revolution.\textsuperscript{179} The urgency of the large-scale project also creates an exception that facilitates and justifies the state involvement over local initiatives (to be examined in more detail in Chapter Three).

Thirdly, the “grand” discourses of the development plan entrench the elite nature of architectural practice which privileges the vision of one single perspective over all others, and celebrates the architect-designer against user-inhabitants. The elite, exclusively European, and mostly male makeup of the solicited “visionaries” is striking, though unsurprising, and indicates the conservative establishment that has long dominated planning practices. Not only was a plurality of perspectives explicitly not the point of this “shared vision” but the elite status of the architects reinforces the undemocratic nature of both urban imaginaries and the production of space. The project sends the message that the future is far too vast and important to be left in the hands of Franciliens themselves. The “grand” purview of the project and the competitive creativity of the experts in the project serves on a basic level to suppress active civic deliberation and reinforce the notion that the social production of space is best left to those in the know.

\begin{footnotesize}
\textit{Imageability and Coherent Identity}
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The necessity of cementing the elite nature of redevelopment is paradoxically paralleled by the need to encourage residents of the Île-de-France to see themselves as part of the Grand Paris dream. This is especially important in a city that is defined by

\textsuperscript{179} See especially Alain Badiou, \textit{The Meaning of Sarkozy} (London: Verso, 2009).
fractured territory and concerns over social coherence, citizenship and authentic “Frenchness.” One of the main functions of the architectural exhibits may be to reconfigure what Soja calls “a spatiality of human life” or David Harvey describes as the “geographic knowledge” of the city.\textsuperscript{180} The \textit{Grand Pari} exhibits give to the inhabitants of Paris a compass which allows them to find their location in the ever growing region and a mirror in which to recognize themselves as Parisian, no matter where they might be. Acting as tools of orientation, the architectural representations both unify and equalize the city as belonging to all effected by it, and differentiate the city by creating identifiable locales of “beauty,” “history,” and “significance.”\textsuperscript{181} This kind of reimagination is especially important in order bring together a city torn apart by often invisible histories of violence, exclusion and inequality. In making the city more visually accessible to all, it thus constructs an urban identity to which all inhabitants can hopefully ascribe. To a city without the means to represent itself, the \textit{Grand Pari} plans provides a totalizing depiction of the region, a self-representation for \textit{banlieue} residents as inhabitants of Paris, and a fantasy of metropolitan conviviality.

For Kevin Lynch, the ability of the city to be recognized, what he terms the “imageability” of the city, should be a key concern of urban planners impossibly tasked with bringing together the variegated perspectives of the city lived on a daily basis. Architectural and urban plans are important apparatuses to provide inhabitants with “a coherent and detailed mental image of the city” without which the interaction between


\textsuperscript{181} This process of unification and differentiation, it should be noted, is a symbolic analog to the material processes of uneven development through which capitalist urbanization occurs.
self and place would remain fragmented and ephemeral. A unified presentation allows the city to become more imaginatively consistent, and gives the viewer a place within the city, a form of mental mapping in which one can place oneself in the larger surroundings and feel one’s place there against the “unintelligible mess” of urban life. The ability to read the city and imaginatively feel a part of it is necessary for a sense of political belonging and collective public life. When Aristotle envisioned the perfect *polis*, for example it was designed in such a way that each citizen was recognizable to all and within earshot of all. In the ideal political community, one had a sensual experience of the city and its residents and link that to other sensory experiences of civic life. But when there is a community larger than this, inhabitants require guides to determine who belongs and who does not, and to be able to recognize the city as a whole from the vicissitudes of urban encounters and activities. These affective aspects of urban life, forms of imaginative citizenship read through city spaces, are fundamental to any political community. This spatio-civic understanding is also rooted in a relation to otherness, the other within the polis.

The original gridded urban planning, a hallmark of Roman urban design, was precisely an attempt to deny that complexity and difference could reside within the city. Moreover, the city was to reflect and produce the social interaction desired by the planners. Uncoordinated elements of the city and undesirable residents were joined not

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183 Ibid., 33–34.
185 Ibid., 1326 b24–25.
through active political engagement, but through architectural artifice.¹⁸⁷ In order to arrive at a whole that can be depicted on a map or a blueprint, one must substitute the unmediated experiences of living and project an image that simplifies and generalizes, creating of antagonistic and dissimilar objects a new imposed whole.¹⁸⁸

What Haussmann initiated and the subsequent zoning regulations reinforced, was an idiosyncratic “Parisian style” such that topography was regular and buildings were immediately understandable as uniquely belonging of Paris. The legacy of these zoning practices in the city of Paris—continuous building facades, vertical limits, uniform ornaments, etc.—contrasts sharply with the unregulated growth outside of the municipal limits. In many ways, the deregulation of Paris and redesign of the suburbs is an attempt to provide a more recognizable fabric to the metropolitan region through giving to the banlieues markers of Parisian identity and through breaking down the stylistic uniformity of the historic core while adding new unity to the margins.¹⁸⁹

Like a mirror, the depictions of the city provide a unified identity to a subject (here Paris and “Parisian”) that was previously boundless, and an ideal toward which the

¹⁸⁷ Sennett writes that “for the visual designer who addresses the exterior physical fabric of the city is constantly dealing with parts which cannot and should not, be bound together in a whole. Put schematically, the world of things—made by different hands at different times—is a relation of otherness, of discontinuity, rather than of secret, elective, affinities waiting to be joined.” Ibid., 88.
¹⁸⁸ This process of course is not limited to urban planners, but is a dynamic necessary for functioning in the world, where interactions with others and with the environment are always mediated through symbolic and imaginative meaning systems. However, this dynamic is at the kernel of architectural practice—a practice which influences greatly the way in which individuals situate themselves within a city space.
¹⁸⁹ Many of the zoning regulations to create this effect are still in force today, and the debates over the consistency of space around Paris are illustrated most dramatically in efforts to change the law limiting all building in Paris to a maximum height of 37 meters.
city must strive. Frédéric Mialet, an architectural critic involved with *Grand Pari*, describes the need to refocus from the central city to the metropolitan territory, in order to "create a veritable identity of the scale of the urban region." Jean Nouvel takes up this task directly, describing his Grand Paris as a "shared, happy, attractive identity."

These rhetorics echo the more general tenets of republicanism that stress "solidarity," "social cohesion," and "unity" but employ them on the regional scale.

In this way, the *Grand Pari* project creates the *imago* of the city, rendering the disparate and multiplicitous actions, movements and knowledges of the excessive city a unified gestalt through which each part of the city can recognize/misrecognize itself.

Another way to think urban imageability—as orientation, self-recognition and subjectivity—is according to the Lacanian process of identification. While this representation may provide a shared vision it does so at the expense of difference and complexity, the agency of the city now, in Lacan’s terms, "in discordance with its own reality."

The city, as both subject and object of planning and building can only act in ways at odds with its actual conditions of existence. Not only does this necessarily fail

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190 See “The Mirror Stage” in Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits: A Selection* trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002). For Lacan, the *stade du miroir* is not only a "stage" in the sense of a period of development, but also a "stage" as an arena in which imaginative processes continually take place. The exhibition here is the *stade par excellence* in the redevelopment of Paris.


192 Lacan, *Ecrits*, 95. Recognition and misrecognition are not opposites here, but are twin processes under Lacan’s notion of *méconnaissance*. To the extent that recognition takes place, it can only be under mistaken conditions. Crucially, this both allows the subject to act, but also limits the actions taken.

193 It is for this reason that Fredric Jameson, “The Politics of Utopia,” *New Left Review* 25 (January 2004); Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage, 1992) argue that utopian designs are apolitical—representing only dead cities in
to engage the everyday life, the “Real” of the city, but as apparatuses of subjectification, the dominant depictions of Paris alter what kinds of actions can be taken on behalf of, or against, the urban form.¹⁹⁴

Yet the unifying identity that is given in the city only provides one orienting paradigm. In order to understand and participate in the life of the city, one needs multiple entry points and a range of signs and representational tools. Equally as important to the readability of the city is a differentiation of different spaces within the whole. The text of the city requires differentiation of signs from each other as well as their overall spatial connection. As Finn Giepel describes it, “We do not need lengthy studies to figure out that the city dweller perceives neighborhoods through their differences. Certain landmarks such as monuments, traffic nodes, avenues and cultural

which an imaginary object comes to stand in for what was once a dynamic and living entity. The “taxidermic” object may at first glance display a very close resemblance to its model, but is fundamentally lacking the substance, flows and changeable nature that defines that which it represents.

¹⁹⁴ Roland Castro, a former analysand of Lacan, invokes the psychoanalytic subject/city analogy explicitly in order to stress the importance of refiguring the symbolic aspects of the city, that is, the systems of language and discourse that give meaning to places and sites in relation to one another. As a heuristic guide for his proposed Grand Paris, Castro utilizes the “borromean knot,” used by Lacan to diagram the topology of the human subject. The three interlaced threads of the borromean knot suggest a fundamental interdependence and mutual constitution between the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic in subject formation, if any thread is broken, the whole structure falls apart. According to Castro, the city must also interweave these three elements or risk becoming pathological, “if there is not symbolic, if there is not real, if there is not the imaginary, the city doesn’t work…these three elements are the necessary ingredients to make a good city.” On the scale of the metropolis, imaginative visual cues and symbolic places of social interaction and meaning must be created in ways that accord with the real. Architecture can help in this task. Roland Castro quoted in Bertone and Leloup, Le Grand Paris, 51. See Hendrix, Architecture and Psychoanalysis. In contrast to an architecture of disjuncture, which would interrupt the totalizing experience of the urban in order to access or glimpse the real, Castro aims to unify these three aspects in more robust articulations.
venues allow him/her to build a mental map and thus read the territory. In reading it, he occupies it, that is, he makes it his own.” Symbolic landmarks in the city provide sites through which local iterations of neighborhood and proximity can open up to a universal urban category. Giepel in particular is concerned with planning that enables both bird’s eye vantages and De Certeauian “step by step” mappings. Together, these give the city “magnitude and permeability.” Giving a unified identity to the territory must also be accompanied by more local positioning lest the homogeneity become disorienting.

In order to remap the city as a unified whole and to more evenly distribute on the surface, where its value lies, a number of representational moves are needed. On the one hand this involves monumentalizing and “localizing” the suburbs, making them destinations in their own right, spaces of creativity, familiarity, and recognizable identity. In the words of Roland Castro, the troubled housing projects that pepper the periphery must be gentrified and injected with new symbolic life “such that each possesses a value, a proper logic” of its own. On the other hand, the localization must reiterate the totality; monuments may pepper the suburbs, but only if they echo the greater refrain of Paris.

Utilizing this dual approach, the Studio 09 team of Bernardo Secci, roamed the streets conducting interviews trying “to understand what people considered remarkable

197 Le Moniteur Architecture, Le Grand Pari(s): Consultation internationale sur l’avenir de la métropole parisienne, 218.
places, [sites] which had significations in their memory.” They then created a map of existing “significant” places, the psychogeography of which largely supported the idea of the center as meaningful and the suburbs as meaningless and devoid of significance. If only meaningful places which saturate the core could be grafted onto the suburbs, they surmised, then the city itself could become truly grand. Though the project hints at the affective experiments that the Situationist International would embrace, it serves here to reproduce a very particular symbolic order, that of a meaningful core and evacuated periphery.

In a similar fashion, Jean Nouvel suggests that the “beauty” of Paris still lies in its large scale public art projects, and therefore, he promotes the creation of new site-specific art, especially outside of the historic core, to add more “destination points” and more splendor to the already richly landmarked city. Yet these new sites are not meaningful on their own, but must be read in relation to the existing quintessentially Parisian landmarks of the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, the Arc de Triomphe etc. The core remains omnipresent as the cipher of meaning and value and the tourist gaze identifies this value.

Castro, for whom poetry is the motif of urbanism and urban life, also has specific projects in mind to distribute symbolic markers across the Île-de-France. He suggests new landmarks to celebrate not only the grand historic past, but the complexly woven contemporary urban fabric. Castro’s somewhat radical proposals include a memorial for the nation’s “painful memories,” a multicultural village with pavilions that reflect the national makeup of the region, an exhibit of inquiry to reassess French heroes

198 Ibid., 172.
(Molière, De Gaulle, Mandel etc.), and a vista point North of the city from which to view all of Grand Paris in one perspective. This are paired with more conventional suggestions of a Sydney-esque opera house in Gennevilliers, a children’s playground at Fort Charenton, a footpath along the national 305 highway, and a “canal of knowledge and scholarly exploration” along the Canal de L’Ourcq.\textsuperscript{199} If implemented, these “landmarks” would question the legitimacy and coherence of the Republic and the heroic past upon which it is founded (they are unlikely to ever be constructed). Despite his acknowledgement of the poetic and the political nature of collective building and making, Castro’s urban production still reduces, however, to one of “place making”—localizing meaning against what he sees as the meaningless and alienating void of global relations. “True” places for Castro come into being with landmarks and it is only through these landmarks is it possible to “incarnate and refound the republican identity today.”\textsuperscript{200} While a number of his projects have undeniably critical elements, they are also instruments of city branding. He concludes, non-ironically, that “In the future Michelin guide of Grand Paris, one will find a multitude of places for a metropolitan voyage. Grand Paris becomes, place after place, an inexhaustible destination.”\textsuperscript{201} Not only does this logic define a place according to the standards of the world-tourist, but it places very limited strictures on the usefulness of symbolic and imaginative ventures.

The shift here from space making to place recognition is important, turning the lived practices of daily inhabitation and processes of social production into the

\textsuperscript{199} Ibid., 215.
\textsuperscript{200} Ibid., 121.
\textsuperscript{201} Le Moniteur Architecture, \textit{Le Grand Pari(s): Consultation internationale sur l’avenir de la métropole parisienne}. 
dominating claims of insular communities, and the somewhat intangible symbolic and material matrices that spaces always are, into commodifiable objects to be entered into the market. This as a means to bring housing, art and even life experiences completely within capitalist exchange. Here, in line with Neil Smith’s analysis, it is possible to see the uneven development of urbanization (and suburbanization) as the “geographical expression of the more fundamental contradiction between use-value and exchange value.” Smith, Uneven Development.

Space in these formulations becomes abstract and commodified, relationships important only insofar as they increase exchange value. As the tourism industry occupies a large place in the regional economy, extending to Grand Paris new venues for exploration and exploitation opens up new markets and opportunities. Commodification becomes the operational logic of spatial practice.

With a priority on exchange value on the policy end of the project, there is a rearticulation of the language of unification and differentiation. Blanc proposes a multifaceted plan of economic and infrastructural investment to “give soul to the metropole,” “create a same language” for the city, eliminate barriers, “restore geographic identity” and promote the emergence of “unifying symbols.” But he also claims that this new city will be based on “diversity.” The diversity of spaces for Blanc has nothing to do with antagonism, essential alterity, or genuine conflicts over the meaning of space (what Henri Lefebvre would call “differential space”), but is about drawing elements of

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202 Smith, Uneven Development.
203 In the summer of 2011, the magazine of Greater Paris, Megalopolis published a vacation guide with just this purpose—to explore “100 fun sites on the other side of the periph” Marina Bellot, “Cet Été, Partez en banlieue!,” Megalopolis, July 4, 2011.
204 Blanc, Le Grand Paris du XXIe siècle, 146.
the larger Île-de-France region into Paris, thus enabling a new territories for investment and consumption.\textsuperscript{205}

One of the main problems with this form of unification and imagination is that any actual difference or conflict in the plan for the future city is erased. Dialectical conflicts between labor and capital, urbanization and suburbanization and the universal democratic republic and its inherent others are denied and this refusal to recognize antagonism as a productive and creative force overwrites conflict with a depoliticized consensus. The dream of Grand Paris is in fact premised on the assumption that all Franciliens will feel in concert the need for the proposed changes. According to Blanc, despite “practical and cultural divergences in the manner of vision” the teams, like the wider population they are supposed to represent, are nevertheless “in the same boat and want to arrive at the same port.”\textsuperscript{206}

In failing to attend to the relational dynamics that create uneven development and concentrations in wealth, grandeur and power, Grand Paris remains a hegemonic project. In erasing the territorial banlieue, an aim of the plan, though one that can be achieved only dubiously, Sarkozy and the architects re-cover boundaries in order to present once again, a coherent metropolis. Even if more diffuse monuments and valuable sites succeed in connecting the city in ways previously unseen, the question of the banlieue and of conflicting urban forces will nevertheless still remain. To maintain this as a visible part of the city is a political task. It cannot be subsumed in the solidification

\textsuperscript{205} Lefebvre, \textit{The Production of Space}.  
\textsuperscript{206} Blanc, \textit{Le Grand Paris du XXIe siècle}, 152.
of an identity or place-unity, nor collapsed into a world-city that extends everywhere, harmonious and organic with its surroundings.

Urbanization and Public Art

In addition to scopic ventures, the question of who belongs in Grand Paris is also responded to with an attempt to make Grand Pari accessible to all inhabitants of the metropolis. The Grand Pari exhibition is widely accessible in various media, but moreover, the cityscape, the future Paris as the object of the project, is quintessentially a commonly produced and experienced thing. The public nature of the concourse and plan are quite conspicuous, and both the Grand Pari “research and development” phase and the broader Grand Paris renewal plan each involved extensive open debates and consultations with concerned inhabitants and interest groups. The exhibition was also broadly publicized and during its tenure, saw an estimated 250 000 visitors. In addition to the official exhibit, each architectural team also produced a supplementary archive of literature, qualitative data, blueprints and designs most of which are freely available on the official Grand Pari website.207 The Minister of Culture and Communication, Christine Albanel describes the open, collective and transparent nature of exhibition as “above all to permit all Franciliens and beyond to appropriate for themselves their metropolitan future to think it and to discuss it.”208 The interactive and open framing of the project, however, also support more private interests such as increasing the economic

207 République Française, “Le Grand Pari De L’agglomération Parisienne.”
208 Le Moniteur Architecture, Le Grand Pari(s): Consultation internationale sur l’avenir de la métropole parisienne, 9.
competitiveness of Paris, depoliticizing the building of the city and limiting the interventions of urban aesthetic ventures.

In addition to providing an “imageable city” for inhabitants, the creation of “recognizable” public spaces is a hallmark of efforts of urban branding. To give the city a particular identity and to make of it a tourist destination and site of potential investments perpetuates the commodification of spaces and regional intra-urban competition. Architecture generates a new image and a new material ground for the city and large-scale public architectural mega-projects such as Grand Pari perform this function most spectacularly. Thus, even when the premise is one of community collaboration, art in public spaces often functions to reproduce existing conditions of inequality. The art and architecture associated with Grand Pari, while ostensibly in the service of the public, cannot be naively equated with a necessarily progressive politics. Grand Pari seems to follow instead, a more general trend of state-sponsored public art insofar as it “capitulate[s] to the changing modes of capitalist expansion. What appears to be progressive, even transgressive and radical, may in fact serve conservative if not reactionary agendas of the dominant minority.”

The “publicness” of Grand Pari should thus be questioned both at the level of its production and at the level of the object produced (the future Grand Paris).

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210 Participatory planning was incorporated as a large element of the Grand Paris project. The debates over the transit network, outlined in Chapter Two, offer a glimpse of how the public’s role was conceived in this process. On the more general question of what Paris will look like thirty years down the road, the general public was also encouraged to make use of new media and create their own videos of their plans for Grand Paris, modeled after those of the architects. These videos were then shared through the “My
When placed in the context of what Rosalyn Deutsche has called the “dominant paradigm of urban aesthetic interdisciplinarity,” the openness and free vision of the Grand Pari public consultation can be seen to be structured by more fundamental exclusions, including a false assumption of consensual building practices and a paucity of real participation.\textsuperscript{211} Deutsche notes that from the 1980s onward, massive urban development has coincided with an intensification of official rhetoric about public space and an increase in public art commissions. The model linking art and urban development depoliticizes city building under the guise of democratic inclusion. Deutsche writes:

Promoting the participation of art and architecture in urban redevelopment projects, this model neutralizes the political character of both art and the city. It couples an aesthetic ideology positing that art and architecture transcend social relations with an urban ideology that presents the organization of cities as the natural product of biological, social or technological evolutions undergone by a supposedly organic society. These concepts sanction art’s role in the urban environment as beneficial while legitimating existing urban conditions as inevitable.\textsuperscript{212}

While Deutsche is mainly concerned with this paradigm as it is expressed in the United States, a similar phenomenon has been occurring in France in recent years. This phenomenon is especially pronounced in Paris, where art and architecture are valued to such an extent as markers of a unique cultural capital and where public intellectuals play important roles as translators of the contemporary moment. Indeed, in France critical architectural theory in particular has been actively co-opted into statist urban planning

\textsuperscript{212} Ibid.
since the 1970s. Staging state projects through architectural discourses thus serves to legitimize both.

The yoking of public exhibition to large scale redevelopment presents a veneer of collective participation in the theorization and creation of the city, but this participation is also neutralized in the planning process, reducing it to the consumption of the exhibition alone and foreclosing any real active engagement, deliberation or production. The “participation” that is seen, as expressed in the “shared dream,” entrenches the consensual form of “post-planning” that sees the city as an organic and homogenous entity. \textit{Grand Paris} works by rhetorically and representationally including all, but only becomes public by excluding unwanted elements or conflictual dynamics from the city.

Paris’ planning history gives force to these criticisms. The most obvious example of the use of aesthetic and cultural creations in pursuit of a political agenda is Haussmann’s massive overhauls of Napoleonic Paris. The Hussmannian beautification schemes are emblematic of the insidious workings of state-urbanism and are based on creating a spectacle to “put an image ‘in place of a city which had lost its old means of representation.’” In his renewal scheme, Haussmann aimed to create new communal venues for bourgeois social life. A system of public parks and leisure spaces created the illusion of social equality at the same time that they provided venues for the investment of surplus capital to the benefit of already wealthy private developers. So the creation of

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\item \textsuperscript{213} Lukasz Stanek, \textit{Henri Lefebvre on Space: Architecture, Urban Research, and the Production of Theory} (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).
\item \textsuperscript{214} T.J. Clark, quoted in David Harvey, “The Political Economy of Public Space,” \url{http://davidharvey.org/media/public.pdf}.
\end{itemize}
supposedly “beautiful” places of public life served to further concentrate wealth at the same time that it necessitated that poor populations of workers be removed from sight. In this case, slum clearance schemes relegated large populations out of the public and into new shantytown suburbs that could then be amputated from the city proper. Thus, according to Susan Buck Morss, class relationships of all kinds were covered over as the state attempted to “create social utopia by changing the arrangement of buildings and streets—objects in space—while leaving social relationships intact.”

The specular image of the city provided by Haussmann is alienating for the inhabitants, who see themselves, but only mistakenly. It also violently requires that certain undesirable elements of the city be placed out of sight.

The attempt of Grand Pari to make the banlieues formally indistinguishable from Paris is driven in no small part by Sarkozy’s attempts to prey on middleclass fears of a dangerous and invasive deteriorating periphery. This is redoubled by the aesthetic injunction to present a beautiful city, linked to what Grant Kester calls a hegemonic and “aggressive phenomenology dedicated to the suppression of all traces of an autonomous working class culture, and realized in concrete form through the physical arrangement of the city itself.”

While beauty cannot be simply equated with violence and can in fact be effective in creating a common affectual sensorium, beauty has been used in the service of very undemocratic and harmful policies of urban planning. Roy, “Praxis in the Time of Empire,” 19, writes that the trope of beautification is especially difficult for architects to resist. “For professions like architecture and planning, the disavowal of this rule of beauty is difficult because empire presents a range of aesthetic opportunities—to experiment, build, construct, the Corbusian fantasy of colonialism.”


Grant Kester “Out of Sight Is out of Mind: The Imaginary Space of Postindustrial
power is maintained through making certain elements of the city invisible and unthink­able. According to Kester, this is emblematic of a modern aesthetic whereby pain and displeasure must be kept out of sight as sensibilities become more “refined.” He continues, “the working class is registered along a continuum of fundamentally aesthetic encounters that range from delectation to disgust and shock.” The anger, fear and shame of the banlieue are equally unsuitable modes of public consumption, and must be prevented through active clearance of unsightly elements, and when that fails, through the making invisible of certain populations, through public percepticide. Sarkozy’s ominous pledge that in the future Paris will be “a city where one no longer speaks of the banlieue,” demonstrates the necessity of purging spaces of conflict from visibility and public consciousness. 218

There is then a dual logic to forming the city: bringing people together representationally is always done through the violence of differentiating who counts and who is excluded in law and in space. 219 This is the relationship of public otherness at the core of political and urban life. Public art programs in the service of urban redevelopment thus use the rhetoric of beautification, unification, historical continuity to

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218 Sarkozy, “Inauguration De L’exposition ‘Grand Pari(s)’.”
219 Sennett, The Conscience of the Eye, 228, writes that from the ghettoization of Jews in medieval Venice onwards, “the ‘city’ would stand for a legal, economic and social entity too large and various to bind people together. Community of an erotically intense sort would require the division of the city.” The ambiguous nature of the social bond whereby unity comes together only through often violent exclusions is also of course the basis of Sigmund Freud’s Sigmund Freud and James Strachey, Civilization and Its Discontents (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005). A similar process has been at the heart of much of the 19th century history of Paris and its banlieue, and while the Grand Paris plan aims to unite and not exclude, it would be prudent to consider at what cost and for whom this unity is ultimately achieved.
create an image of the city devoid of any conflict (*banlieue*/Paris, legal/illegal, Muslim/French), and devoid of dialectical forces, such as those between labor and capital. Conflict becomes instead embodied in those figures who wish to disrupt the beautiful city, or in those others who would criticize the utopian “shared dream” here the *banlieuesard* and critics of *Grand Pari*. Economically, public art is used to brand Parisian space and make the city more competitive, but this space is based on a political unity that is itself exclusionary.

*Spaces of Flexibility*

Across all of the *Grand Pari* projects there is a disavowal of the purely technocratic planning regime of the modernist era and an embrace of a more critical and tempered “postmodern planning.”220 Like many disciplines of the imperialist state, urban planning and architecture have responded to the conditions and critiques of postmodernism with a measured reflexivity and have positioned themselves in line with a new series of orientations and guiding principles, replacing strict codes and regulation in the service of future-proofing, with flow, flexibility and openness to change. Unlike Second Empire or post-WWII reforms, the ten teams here reject the rational parceling up of space, and a homogeneity of form and function, instead focusing their efforts around a series of concerns which include connectivity, mixity, and organicism.

The bourgeois spatial relations that would see a strict separation between the public and private are refigured with spaces that blur these distinctions, while places of

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work, residence and leisure are intertwined in “mixed use” neighborhoods. Efforts to “dezone, decode, deregulate” as one team puts it are a welcome response to the regimented order of modernist functionalism it is also clear that these new paradigms are so different from their predecessors. Both the modern and postmodern urbanisms work with the dominant mode of capitalist accumulation. In a post-Fordist era where flexible labor reigns and diversity and mixity are commodified, it is precisely these planning techniques that facilitate the functioning of capital.

The flexibility of spaces that _Grand Pari_ purports cannot be understood outside of the more generalized context of flexible capitalism—marked by precarious and unstable labor, domestication of unions, continual deskilling of industry and service, part-time and contract assignments and breakdown of organizational hierarchies. The very fungibility of capital, labor, and spaces gives them value. Yet who controls how spaces change and for what ends they become otherwise is crucially important. The ever changing conditions of neoliberal space are not liberating spaces of desire and enjoyment, but are caught in the ever changing conditions of how capital works today. Flexible spaces are not free form regulation, exploitation and control, but are ever more infused with these. Flexibility becomes an element that increases exchange value.

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221 Le Moniteur Architecture, _Le Grand Pari(s): Consultation internationale sur l’avenir de la métropole parisienne_.

222 In architectural writings as well much has been made about the desire for “flexible” buildings and spaces. See especially Jonathan Hill, _Actions of Architecture: Architects and Creative Users_ (London: Psychology Press, 2003).

223 Indeed, from its earliest articulations, spatial flexibility has been linked to economic expansion. Richard Sennett traces the flexible use of space to Medieval Europe where it emerged in course of the development of the economic corporation, an institution with the legal right to change its activities in the course of time. See Sennett, _The Conscience of the Eye_, 188.
Corporations historically emerged as legal entities in order to secure the ability to account for unforeseen events and to change the course of productive action or the function of an enterprise to account for those changes. The ability to change space according to the ever-changing conditions of profitability is equally as pertinent today.

It is precisely an emphasis on flexibility that underwrites many of the Grand Pari visions. Nouvel demands the need for mixity and flexibility of spaces in order that they be lived. It is this flexibility that turns a simple park space into a multifunctional “central Park,” or an unused river embankment into a permanent World’s Fair. Flexibility and multifunctionality allow for green garden business towers, and for the central food wholesale market in Rungis to be sold as a place of individual consumption and gastronomical exploration. Giepel in a slightly different vein, sees flexibility as arising out of necessity and lauds a romanticized ‘thirdworld informality.’ He wistfully claims that “[i]n Asian agglomerations, small multiservice markets are omnipresent.”

AUC also invokes Asian multiservice locales as a model for mixity, citing Japanese train stations which also function as shopping destinations, where “a train may open unto a sock display.” Centers of transportation are in fact central to AUC’s project of an urbanism of conviviality and inheritance and they use the emblem of Les Halles as being a vital mixed-function meeting place between different peoples within the city—tourists and locals, commuters from the banlieue, laborers, shoppers, wealthy, poor etc. The promise of mixity here assumes that proximity will bring about equality and that democratic encounters between luxury shoppers and low-wage laborers can be staged through the

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spacing of daily movements. These malleable spaces are still conditioned by broader economic and social forces that are made invisible through the focus only on their surface manifestations.

Portzamparc uses the neologism of “mix-cités” and describes what he calls a “Hybrid Cluster” to describe the ideal multifunctional location. He writes that a “Hybrid Cluster, is the possibility of a space both hyperspecialized and hyperflexible; but its flexibility is in choice, not in space. It’s a space dedicated at the same time to the creation of economic added value through the synergy of innovative enterprises, and the urban value added by the social synergy of the “connection square” which infiltrates in all of the interstices.”  

Flexibility of space and social production is where surplus value is created in cities today and Grand Pari is focused on ways of capitalizing upon it. Rather than the fluid intensification of common being through communal interaction and exchange that defines Deleuze’s rhizome, for example, what we have in Grand Pari is a very directed flexibility, one that works to satisfy the immediate needs of profit.

In addition to stressing the changeable nature of the urban form, flexible capitalism is also marked by the idea that there is “no long term,” the future given is tenuous at best and therefore the planability of the city is always tempered by the vagaries of the market. Unlike stable forms of territory favored by Fordist production, today stability and changeability are seen as interlinked. Grand Pari is unlike a conventional development plan in that it is concerned with a future 30-40 years from the present, but material visions of this future are attenuated by the changeability that flexible urbanism entails. According to this logic, “the durable city is the transformable

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225 Ibid., 98.
The pari of Grand Pari self-consciously reinforces the idea that the 21 century city is a very unstable and unpredictable, even precarious, entity. This lack of control of the future, and inability to fully direct the city absolves the state and inhabitants of responsibility and entrenches the logic of laissez-faire and risk through a paradoxically framed grand project.

Logics of the Global Market

If territorial flexibility links Grand Paris to capitalist operations, this dynamic is further entrenched by the “global city” regime prioritized by the architectural projects. Almost all of the Grand Pari teams concede that a consideration of Paris must move beyond its immediacy, to global causes and effects, for as Portzamparc notes, the global condition and the metropolitan condition are irreducibly linked. He stresses that insofar as there can be a crisis in urban planning, this is linked to global transformations, and “[t]he metropolitan crisis is the spatial side of the global crisis.”\(^\text{227}\) Importantly, and indicative of the majority of the Grand Pari projects, the city for Portzamparc is defined in terms of its financial capacity. This definition has two major effects: the city is ontologically equated with networks of international finance, and as a result, competition becomes a guiding metric of capacity, health and prosperity. The reasonable outcome of these premises is that Paris must aggrandize through marketization and in specific, through speculative real estate and investment in informational industries.


If the problem of the Parisian metropolis is framed equally about being too diffuse and too global, and too segregated and insular, the world-city discourse provides the solution of flow and connectivity as a way to coherence and equality. This involves coming together through expansion, or in the words of Jean Nouvel, we must “decenter to unify.”

The first notable way that the Grand Paris projects attempt this reorganization focuses on infrastructural arrangements—extending transportation to the periphery (to be examined in detail in Chapter Two) and delimiting new poles for economic investment.

According to Portzamparc, “The riots [of 2005] brought the metropolitan crisis to even the people of Paris…There are places where the public authorities should step in, where value should be generated immediately.”

In close collaboration with Portzamparc, Christian Blanc also describes the “simple and immense” task of transforming Grand Paris into a 21st century metropolis in terms of economic growth and global competition. Repurposing the tools of critical theory for a conservative political agenda, Blanc describes contemporary Paris in terms of an economic “rhizome” which must be developed for its immanent economic potential.

Investment under these conditions should follow the logic of Hollywood or Silicon Valley where activity and territory fuse in the same identity at the heart of the regional “cluster.” On the explicitly stated ideal of Silicon Valley, Blanc reasons that it is out of the close interactions between research institutions at Stanford and the private technological firms 

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228 Castro, in Ibid., 221.
230 The cooption of the language of the left is not unique to this case alone and indicates, perhaps the dialectic of “theory” and the conditions for thought.
that innovation can be concentrated in a particular region. But this illustrative example of extreme privatization and inequality demonstrates forcefully the lack of redistribution these developments bring about and their potential to further hierarchize the region.\footnote{The profits of the technological boom may have benefitted the private university of Stanford, and its west Palo Alto residents, but this type of regional growth is not equitable or distributive. The large income disparities in Silicon Valley of high-tech employees and low-wage laborers are accompanied by extreme residential segregations. East Palo Alto, for example, sees little of the money that is generated in this technological hub.}

Blanc welcomes the language of the rhizome and the social ontology that it suggests, as it provides a way to understand the metropolis as global and mobility (for Blanc, transportation) as key to this globality. It also furnishes him with a model of an urban cluster, where nodes can be enhanced for the overall prosperity of the region. In the \textit{Grand Paris} rhizome, he writes, “Each element of the territory constructs itself by relation with Paris, but grows by its own energy.”\footnote{Blanc, \textit{Le Grand Paris du XXIe siècle}, 149.} He claims that his rhizome, which implies a constantly open assemblage, is useful in development as the “potential” for investment and growth is found at each node. Whenever a strong industry is found (like a creative and youthful Disney approved animation studios, for example), there is also the potential for development.\footnote{Ibid., 151.}

In the \textit{Grand Pari} exhibit as in urban theory more generally, the articulation of a global city or world city is dominated by the circuitry of finance capital. As Ananya Roy argues, this is a problem because “[t]he global/world cities framework asserts a hierarchy of cities but is unable to account fully for the materialization of such a hierarchy, and
even less so in relation the long histories of colonialism and imperialism.” \(^{235}\) Defining the global solely in term of flows of capital among wealthy cities of the global North misses other important shaping mechanisms such as colonialism, labor, social networks, informal economies and everyday practices that also contribute to the construction of the global, and to the construction of Paris.

What is missing from all of the exhibits then is an account of how the world metropolis is itself productive of inequalities, and the more fundamental and structural ways in which uneven development, working through processes of “equalization and differentiation,” is created through global competitiveness and private investment. \(^{236}\) While the contours of planning practices have changed, the differentiating function that planning performs (into those areas ripe for capital investment and those excluded from it) remains. This is the privileged reading of the urban as a theater of capitalist accumulation.

**Architectural Counterrevolution**

It was never clear from the outset how the architectural projects of research and development resulting in the *Grand Paris* exposition were to be deployed or accounted for by the various institutional networks that collectively govern the metropolitan Paris region. How specifically the projects were to ‘illuminate the path’ to the future city was largely left up to the political decisions and to the discretion of Blanc, who was appointed in order to see *Grand Paris* to fruition. The architectural projects may indeed

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\(^{236}\) Smith, *Uneven Development*. 

help to guide this policy, but as Marc Wiel argues, many of the plans taken up by Blanc and Sarkozy had been proposed prior to the Grand Paris consultation and that what the exhibit did, more than anything, is serve to “communicate” the projects already conceived. Wiel goes so far as to describe Blanc as the “eleventh team” in the competition, “who didn’t compete because he had already won.” Thus the architectural challenge, while seeming to be free and designed to open up debate, in effect shut down deliberation and contestation. The fact that the exhibition was based not on competition, but on consensus, further elides any actual disagreements over how the city should be build and the priorities for development. We must see the project then, less of a blueprint to be implemented and carried out, but as doing work on its own. That is, to provide a theoretical and representational basis for the new plans and to work to create a vision and an image of Grand Paris where one did not before exist and a new language to understand urbanization. Once the Grand Paris reforms are set in motion, Paris’ contingent future is out of the hands of the architects, residents and state officials—a shared wager (pari) on the city to come.

While the material changes proposed by the ten teams were large scale and ambitious, the actual changes instigated by the national government 2009-2012 were rather tempered, limited for the most part to infrastructural development of transportation and housing or institutional streamlining. Insofar as the Grand Paris representations were a part of a larger urban renewal plan, it is important to consider

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237 Wiel, Le Grand Paris, Premier Conflit né de la décentralisation, 175. Wiel notes in particular how the transportation project “le grand huit” was in the process of being approved as part of the Schema directeur region Île-de-France (SDRIF).

238 The end result of the concourse is not “winner take all,” but that “all are winners” in the shared dream of Grand Paris.
what changes in policy and institutional arrangement occurred out of the project, an inquiry that the remaining chapters will address. It is clear from analyzing the images and discourses surrounding *Grand Pari* that the work of representation was broad and powerful, communicating a new era of Paris as a global city and cementing a neoliberal market approach to urban development as the only viable path to that goal.

Even the framing of the consultation as being “research and development” is borrowed from a market-based approach to product design and technological innovation. This essentially treats the city as a commodity like any other—something that can be formulated in workshop and executed in a factory. Such a view denies the social relationships and dynamics that are the generative force behind urbanization and puts in place of the antagonistic and dialectical interactions of inhabitants and their environments a unilinear and centrally directed building plan. Furthermore, the “shared dream” of *Grand Paris* was presented as a public endeavor, something produced by all citizens, and of concern to all those living in or affected by the metropolitan region. But the populist discourses of the universal dream were coupled with a vision that stressed coherence, unity and grandeur in the terms of the elite and of capital.

This plan is political as much as it is economic or aesthetic. When Le Corbusier was presented the choice in 1923 between architecture and revolution, he sided on the practice of architecture as a weapon which can stifle revolutionary potential. Housing and roads, not canons or guns would forestall revolt and temper anti-government sentiments. Sarkozy is no architect, but he employed the ten architectural teams and Blanc to similarly reform the city in order to defuse a volatile situation of social unrest. This blocks the path of collective emancipation and the movement of the popular classes
and acts in concert with other policies—of obsessive security, criminalization of the poor and of immigrants, evictions of squatters—that serve in the ongoing disappearance of places of encounter, of meeting and of publicity. Thus they contribute to the degradation of collectivel life. Through *Grand Pari*, Sarkozy is able to accomplish this while forwarding a plan that will actually exasperate the conditions of unrest it purportedly addresses.

The architects of *Grand Paris* all participate to a greater or lesser degree in this practice, acting as intellectual support for what Jean-Pierre Garnier calls the “contemporary urban counterrevolution.” In the creation of new urban growth centers, the poor and poverty classes are forgotten. While the architects hail the return of “state providence” and a “social Europe” and are critical of the word “neoliberalism,” they do not question fundamentally capitalist relations of production.

*Grand Pari* is an ambiguous project in that it recognizes the urgency of transforming space, and has elements which are highly critical of the existing spatial distribution of Paris, but it also contributes to the reproduction of such a distribution. The stakes of the architectural projects, indicative in many ways of contemporary architectural practice more generally, are high. With the exhibit, the architects attempt in many ways to take up the task of immanent critique, but they are acutely aware of their limitations. Within the *Grand Pari* project, Jean Nouvel states is this weighty responsibility and vocation of how to orient the city well, “The question is political

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240 Ibid., 137–147. Garnier argues, for example, that urbanists in the service of the state pose the “housing question” as a lack of units and overpopulation, so as to not pose the more underlying social questions of how the creation of luxury housing for the rich relies upon the exploitation and dispossesssion of the poor.
because the dysfunctions, disagreements, segregations of our metropole are patent…

The question is never more political than at the beginning of this century [which] is marked by a menace due in large part to the poor management of our urban overdevelopment, and our industrial territories.” Such poor management is a “[m]enace for our health and the future of the planet.”

Castro also uses the neologism of “la topolitique,” or topolitics, to reunite topology with politics and to express the right to the city as represented across the urban fabric.

Whatever their complicity may have been in representing the city in a way that attenuated their aims, each of the ten teams of architects saw their challenge as being urgent and the burden of the future city resting on the power and capabilities of architecture against technocratic planning and against political posturing and partisan institutional reform.

But how to change special and social relations in the city from within hegemonic forms of political economics and aesthetics? The failure on behalf of the Grand Pari architects exemplifies a long-standing cooptation of critical spatial thought within French planning institutions. As Łukasz Stanek notes, since the 1960s, the French state has founded planning on the knowledge of urban studies, and has used social theory as an

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241 Le Moniteur Architecture, Le Grand Parí(s): Consultation internationale sur l’avenir de la métropole parisienne.
242 Bertone and Leloup, Le Grand Paris, 52.
operative tool in policy making. Stanek is concerned particularly with the relationship between Henri Lefebvre and the institutions of planning, but his research points to broader trends well. Speaking of the advent of the incorporation of urban sociology into French urban planning, he writes, “What appears as a paradoxical renewal of sociology by the state’s stabilizing the employment of its most critical opponents is to be seen as a particularly intense moment within a more general process specific to the modern state: that of the institutionalization of critique within the process of urban planning.” With *Grand Pari* the knowledge regime of architecture is fully engulfed by apparatuses of state planning.

The failure of *Grand Pari* to exert radical change in France may also indicate broader limits of architectural practice. In his 1998 essay, “The Brick and the Balloon,” Frederic Jameson addresses the relationship between urbanism and architecture as fracturing along the lines of the meaning of cultural production under conditions of postmodernism. Given the close connection between architecture and economics, its integration into the commodity market is more pronounced than other aesthetic forms. For Jameson then, the urban question is rooted in the question of “the relationship between the distinctive form land speculation has taken today and those equally distinctive forms we find in postmodern architecture.” Cultural production cannot be so easily divorced from the economic.

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244 Stanek, *Henri Lefebvre on Space*, 79.
245 Jameson, “The Brick and the Balloon.” See also Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991; Fredric Jameson, “Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,” *New Left Review* 146 (1984): 53–93. Jameson here makes the claim that “Of all the arts, architecture is the closest constitutively to the economic, with which, in the form of commissions and land values,
The alignment of the architectural visions of a “polycentric,” “networked,” or “rhizomatic” urban form with that of Blanc’s investment plan are not accidental. These are the forms given by late capital, and each of these exists within a spatio-temporal frame that is bound to the conditions of capitalist growth. In architecture in particular, this economic focus results in an erasure of the past and a focus on the speculative future at the expense of history. Jameson sees this condition as fundamental, the “colonization of the future as a fundamental tendency in capitalism itself, and the perpetual source of the perpetual recrudescence of finance capital land speculation.”

When we have this orientation to the future, it not only creates a disjuncture with the past and with existing ways of being in the city and in space, but it moves processes of labor and of collective making into an unknown future, thus further surrendering the ability to direct the changes to occur.

The *Grand Pari* project relies upon this particular future oriented mode of speculation and vision, and in so doing, it posits a parallelism between the artistic utopian representations of the city and the institutionalized governance directing policy and investment. It poses a relationship, as it were, between the aesthetic and the it has a virtually unmediated relationship. It will therefore not be surprising to find the extraordinary flowering of the new postmodern architecture grounded in the patronage of multinational business, whose expansion and development is strictly contemporaneous with it.” Yet this goes beyond deterministic relationship from investment to architectural product, and always involves a dialectic between the aesthetic and economic. Urban land speculation and rent are quite relevant to the political promise of the *Grand Pari* initiative. While the individual architectural designs and local imaginations must be considered in their own right, and in there conditions of specific possibility, construction, building and change, equally important is a large scale analysis of how value in the city is created and land developed and sold under regimes of capitalist real estate.

Jameson, “The Brick and the Balloon.”
economic through the political. Both the designs and the urban redevelopment project more generally rely equally on a conception of the future as a structural feature that bears claims of value, both spectral and never given, yet felt in the present forms and lives. In casting the vision thirty years into the future, the Grand Paris exhibit provides a suitable prediction upon which a long-term business plan, for example can be based. The “ghostly future” is “the seam that connects and separates culture and economics.” The political project of Grand Paris uses this future and the associated architectural works of Grand Paris to ensure that wealth is distributed unequally across space and populations and to quell unrest in the body politic.

The symbolic function of the project is to provide a unified representation to a city that had no means of doing this but the dream of Grand Paris connects the imagined city to an existing meaning system and a symbolic of diffuse centralization, global finance, and competitive urbanism. Alongside the public nature of the plan, this enables policies of neoliberal marketization to appear as commonsense. The process of unifying and equalizing the city as an imaginable space, and separating it into areas for investment and areas not worthy of investment guides the development of the region. Tied to such a logic, no radically new city is possible. The dream or nightmare of metropolitan Paris is wagered on whether future inhabitants will accept such a vision.

247 Ibid.
Chapter Two

Moving through Grand Paris: Mobility, Connectivity and Transit-Oriented Redevelopment

By the term “Haussmann” I do not mean merely the specifically Bonapartist manner of the Parisian Haussmann – breaking long, straight and broad streets through the closely-built workers’ quarters and erecting big luxurious buildings on both sides of them, the intention thereby, apart from the strategic aim of making barricade fighting more difficult, being also to develop a specifically Bonapartist building trades’ proletariat dependent on the government and to turn the city into a pure luxury city. By “Haussmann” I mean the practice which has now become general of making breaches in the working class quarters of our big towns, and particularly in those which are centrally situated, quite apart from whether this is done from considerations of public health and for beautifying the town, or owing to the demand for big centrally situated business premises, or owing to traffic requirements, such as the laying down of railways, streets, etc. No matter how different the reasons may be, the result is everywhere the same: the scandalous alleys and lanes disappear to the accompaniment of lavish self-praise from the bourgeoisie on account of this tremendous success, but they appear again immediately somewhere else and often in the immediate neighborhood.248

The commitment to the ideology of harmony within the capitalist social order remain the still point upon which the gyrations of planning ideology turn.249

Mobility, circulation, flow and speed are some of the most common metaphors for describing the spatio-temporal dynamics of modern urban life. Transformations in how people, capital, information, affects and commodities move and the direction of these movements can drastically alter the shape of a city and the encounters and activities of collective life therein. With an orientation toward greater capacities for movement, development of the regional transportation network has been absolutely central to Grand Paris and both the architectural exhibitions and the laws directing the initiative stress the need to improve mobility above all other social concerns (housing,

249 Harvey, The Urbanization of Capital, 184.
employment, environmental conservation, well-being etc.). While the overarching project of *Grand Paris* remains nebulous and inchoate, the transportation plan—epitomized in the Grand Paris Express (GPE) network announced in January, 2011—is one of the few initiatives, out of the many grand schemes, to be written into actionable policy.

Not only is transportation the cornerstone of the *Grand Paris* initiative, but the Grand Paris Express transit project is unparalleled in terms of its geographic scope and in terms of the approximately €30 billion in public sector spending it represents. The first Métro extension in over fifty years and the largest subterranean rapid transit initiative underway in Europe, the GPE is an ambitious and costly means to bring about urban transformation. The proposed creation of GPE indicates in exemplary fashion that the state is willing to invest in large scale projects pursuant to the priorities of metropolitan development and global city status, a harbinger of 21st century urbanism more broadly.

While the GPE is poised to facilitate travel in the Greater Paris region, perhaps more important is its role as a vehicle to spur on investment. The Grand Paris Law of June 3, 2010, states that any new transportation system must have as its first priority that of serving urban travelers and linking technological, scientific, and economic poles on the outskirts of the city with the center of Paris.\(^{250}\) Grand Paris Express must, as a matter of legal provision, accord with these priorities. One of the key features of this transit led development, however, is that these poles must also be brought about through the creation of a transit system. The two are co-dependent. As “strategic territories”

prospective poles are taken to be sites of national interest which justifies the exceptional state presence in the pursuit of the transportation system, a system that will in turn bring these poles into fruition by enabling the labor market and changing the land use as well as land values around new stations. This dialectical movement of transit-oriented urbanization is also then a matter of rescaling the urban at the regional level and cementing the power of the new metropolis as an engine of the national economy and as site of global prestige. Poised at the conjuncture of public spending, private finance, and industrial policy, the transportation plan of GPE is used to solidify the globally competitive polycentric region favored by the state.

This emphasis is important, for the form of the urban and conduits of travel are indissociable. Changes in transit infrastructure not only affect who moves and how, but developments associated with any new transit system will change the meaning and function of the urban environment and the contours of regional economic growth and governance. Rather than an uncontested “good” for the city and inhabitants, infrastructures of transportation and the movements they enable are ambiguous and even contradictory. The proposed GPE network is a strategic tool of the state to condition movement, direct flows and to discipline life through space and the debates surrounding it must be understood as highly political discourses. Jean-Marc Offner stresses the importance of these discourses in regional agglomeration efforts, saying that “modest or major, the transport dossiers are analyzers of controversial territorial dynamics and catalyzers of relations between henceforth competitive Île-de-France
The debates over transportation are crucial sites where the meaning and function of the 21st century city of Paris are being worked through, and thus, they speak to the heart of agglomeration processes and exemplify the changing contours of urban economic growth and governance. They are also key indicators of how urban spatial patternings are tied to changing systems of production and consumption. As Offner suggests, changes in transportation provision are particularly important in framing inter and intra-territorial relations in Île-de-France, and the new transit infrastructure will undoubtedly bring to Paris an “indispensable change of scale.” Transportation here is positioned as the means of change and the engine of history. Yet the effects of changes in the transit system on the urban territory are far from obvious or unidirectional and are best understood in broad a broad context concerning the communal life of the city.

From communication facilitated by information technologies and mass media, to economic distribution and exchange to tourism, commutes and migration, urban life is constituted by circulation and movement. Attention to these urban movements as social and economic relations allows an analysis that links both processes of consumption and production, and enables macroeconomic trends to be seen in their local iterations. The GPE crystallizes contemporary relations between systems of social organization of the organization of space across a number of intersecting and competing scales according to the dialectic of regional integration and disintegration and capital territorialization and

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251 Jean-Marc Offner, “Les Déplacements, Dossier stratégique,” Intercommunalité, October 2007. A metropolitan transportation network will rely necessarily upon cooperation from a variety of levels of government.  
252 Ibid.  
detrimentalization. The stakes of this venture are huge, and the questions raised by Grand Paris, of what the city is, who belongs in the city and who decides its future, reach to the very essence of urban politics today.

If Grand Paris is an attempt to rescale Paris according to the imperatives of the contemporary world, then the transportation plan is the primary means of managing the “diffusion of centrality” from the wealthy and powerful historic core to a polycentric city-network. This chapter shifts the focus from the imaginary and symbolic refigurations of the city (as seen in Chapter One) to a material policy proposal, its logics and its intended outcomes. In order to understand the dynamics and the stakes of the Grand Paris Express, I ask three guiding questions: 1) How might we insert the Grand Paris plan into a historical trajectory of infrastructures of mobility and what then is the relationship between mass transportation and the development of the desired 21st century metropolis? 2) What are the economic, social and political factors conditioning mobility through mass transportation? 3) Beyond being a vehicle of personal mobility, what other work does the new transportation network do?

I argue that the GPE network is an important means by which the French state is pursuing development in the Île-de-France according to a functionally differentiated multipolar regional model in line with the imperatives of a global city. GPE will symbolically unify the fragmented region, while simultaneously acting as a tool of gentrification to privatize the surplus wealth of the urban through the production of real estate and rent. Thus, it is both a reaction to and a bearer of uneven development. While it purports to create territorial balance and equality by reconstituting vectors of mobility and access and reconfiguring where value lies in the Île-de-France region, it has elements
that cannot but cement and entrench the given unequal spatial order, thereby reproducing a neoliberal model of urbanization and geographic relations. Not only does the logic of polarity upon which Grand Paris rests promise to further hierarchize the region, but the Grand Paris Express plan comes about through a populist consensual planning process which limits the involvement of inhabitants and under the guise of democratic deliberation and forces localities to vie for funds and development contracts to the detriment of broad social concerns. Thus, Grand Paris Express illustrates the problematic nature of transit-oriented development as a so-called “best-practice” of urban design and calls into question the hegemonic knowledges and practices of urban planning upon which the plan is based.

In what follows, I will a give a brief overview of the Grand Paris transportation plan and its rationale, and then I will open up to a series of provocations about the nature of mobility entailed. Beginning with an account of the highly publicized debates between competing transit plans, Arc Express and Grand Huit, the chapter considers the emergence of the Grand Paris Express and the justifications for this manner of redevelopment. The “mobilizing myths” that enable the plan and the plan’s involvement in functionally and morphologically altering the metropolitan region are then used to open up to a discussion of the nature of urban mobility today.

The Path of Grand Paris Express

The map of the Paris Métropolitain (or simply Métro) underground transit is one of the most frequently produced and most recognizable pieces of cartography ever
made. Pierre Mongin, President of the state-owned Parisian public transport operator

*Régie autonome des transports parisiens* (RATP) writes,

There is a very intimate link between Paris and its Métro, its design and its Métro map. The birth and development of the Métro transformed an impractical space into a modern connected city, and this is how the system is presented cartographically. There are few metropolises around the world that have such a close connection, so dear a unity between the way a city is ‘drawn,’ and how it feels to move around it.254

Metropolitan Paris and its infrastructures of mobility are intimately intertwined in representations of the city, phenomenologies of inhabitation and in material circulations of people, goods and capital. Transportation infrastructures are thus privileged conduits in the way Paris is represented, conceived and lived.255 The Métro tracks and stations are crucial elements of 20th century modernization, and in revitalizing and extending this network, as *Grand Paris* hopes to do, this trend of transit-led development will continue.

From the first public omnibuses introduced by Blaise Pascal in 1622 to the inception of the underground transit network for the world’s fair in 1900 to the extension of rail lines to the suburbs in the 1960s, public transit in Paris has long responded to and spurred on urbanization. Yet the aims and the utility of these transit infrastructures are far from transparent. Mass transit always benefits some more than others and the public service provision of facilitated commuting is necessarily bound up


255 This triadic way of understand the production of space comes from Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*. A number of authors have traced the history of Paris through its Métro network and the rich material and imaginative worlds it brings about. In addition to Ovenden, see Gregor Dallas, *Métro Stop Paris: An Underground History of the City of Light* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2008); Arnold Delaney and Geoffrey Smith, *Paris by Metro: An Underground History* (New York: Interlink Books, 2006); Marc Augé, *In The Metro* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).
with notions of who should be able to move and for what purposes. It thus is an important factor in the composition and recomposition of social classes and demographic distributions. Even the finely-knit transit network of the city of Paris which appears to equalize neighborhoods by providing uniform service to all and unify the city with a shared subterranean foundation, achieves these ends only at high costs elsewhere.

Indeed, one of the most familiar ways of understanding the problem of territorial inequality and the long-dominant core-periphery model of unipolar urbanization in Paris is through the modern mass transportation system of which the Métro is an essential part. To illustrate, consider two maps showing the existing networks of subway and rail lines in the Île-de-France (see Figures 7, 8)

The first one shows the iconic Métro, an image familiar to Parisians as well as to travelers and urban enthusiasts around the world. Consisting of 16 lines, 300 stations and 54 transfer points, the Métro provides an easily accessible subterranean structure for movement throughout the city proper. It is estimated that the network can be accessed within less than 0.5km from anywhere in Paris, and each day some 4.5 million people utilize this resource for daily commutes to and from work, school, or leisure activities.

Each of these changes, it should be noted, is also tied to bourgeoning modes of accumulation and to social dynamics of its time. The story of the omnibus (from the Latin *omnes*, “for all”) is especially relevant here. The horse-drawn carriages, popular in the 19th century, operated according to fixed schedules and routes, and were originally designed to facilitate movement of the working masses. They increasingly became privatized, however, and once they were favored by the royalty and the bourgeoisie, they lost their status as transit for all and became associated instead with moneyed classes. Likewise, the development of the underground was also bound up with class relations and originally, the network was desired as much to showcase the splendor of Paris and its capacity for modern innovation as it was to meet the commuter needs of the time.
Movement around the city of Paris is well organized, rapid, and convenient and the infrastructure is imbued with a rich sense of history and place.

![The Paris Métropolitan](image)

Figure 7: The Paris Métropolitan

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Figure 8: The RER and Transilien Rail Network. Mass transit through the Île-de-France.\textsuperscript{258}

\textsuperscript{258} “Les Réseaux de transports en Île-de-France: Réseaux express régional,” http://www.stif.fr.
The second map, for who critic Phillipe Panerai calls “Parisians of the banlieue,” shows the transportation network as it extends into the remainder of the Île-de-France. Where the Métro stops, typically just before or on the outskirts of the Périphérique ring road surrounding Paris, it is replaced by regional rail lines, established in the 1960s by the influential urbanist Paul Delouvrier.

This fabric is threadbare. There are 5 Réseau Express Regional (RER) lines and 6 Transilien rail lines, over 500 combined stations, and the radioconcentric model of the system ensures that travelers must pass through the center of Paris if they want to make most transfers and if they want to travel from suburb to suburb. Stations are on average 2-3 km apart and the majority of residents of Île-de-France do not have easy access to reliable and rapid mass transportation. Moreover, the blank frontiers here reproduce the idea that beyond Paris is either “wasteland” or “empty space” devoid of meaning, but ripe for exploitation.

Across the region, the Métro underground and rail lines are accompanied by bus routes and tramways not shown here, though general pattern of service and disservice remains. Overall the infrastructural habitat is ill adapted to the density and distribution of the metropolis, public transportation is saturated and suburb-suburb links are almost non-existent (as a result, 80% of these commutes are done in cars). A number of recent studies have concluded that this one of the most unequal and centralized urban transit networks in the world, and the continual negligence of the banlieues in transportation exacerbates other social problems and reinforces a markedly unequal

259 Philippe Panerai, Paris métropole, 14.
colonial model of spatial relations. Clichy-Sous-Bois, for example, where the 2005 banlieue uprisings began, is only 15km from the city of Paris, but the commute to Paris takes hours using existing public transportation. As the suburban population grows, these problems become more acute. French urbanist Paul Chemetov, sums up the problem of transit in the city noting that “the region has followed an inverse path. While the center is depopulated and a benefactor of a mass transit system, the periphery, where most population lies, is continually underserviced.”

This is no accident, but the sanctioned differentiation of Paris and its banlieue is a direct result of 20th century planning efforts. In the banlieue, the Métro and RER are therefore not monuments to equality and progress but instead, are reminders of the violent geographic hierarchies that structure the region and the institutional expression of state segregation and population management.

The problems of public transportation and the urban apartheid that has emerged as a result of existing networks and their links to residential and racial distributions have been apparent for many years. Though GPE is poised to bring about a massive

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261 Panerai, Paris métropole. The term “colonial” here draws on Stefan Kipfer’s analysis of colonization as a multi-scalar state-managed hierarchization of spatial relations, often accompanied by “racialized humiliation.” For Kipfer, who bases his analysis on the work of Franz Fanon, as well as the contemporary collective Mouvement des indigènes de la République (MIR) and its key intellectuals: Sadri Khiari and Houria Bouteldja, France is in a phase of recomposing colonial relations within urban territories of the Republic. See Kipfer, “Decolonization in the Heart of Empire.”


263 Since the 1970s, mobility has been an important concern of alienated residents of the banlieue. The burning of cars, “rodeos” in which cars are stolen and driven at high speeds and then destroyed, and graffiti on trains and buses are three familiar tactics of resistance that speak to the symbolic site of transportation as a political concern. See especially Wacquant, Urban Outcasts; Paul A. Silverstein, Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race, and Nation (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004). Mathieu Kassovitz’s La Haine: The
overhaul in transit across the region, and promises to provide access to areas previously ignored or underserviced by existing structures, it is questionable whether it will be able to address the multifaceted ways that public transportation is involved in the economic and social life of the city. Following a logic of speculative development and gentrification, the GPE network is poised to recreate social division in the city and could very well preclude more radical and necessary changes in urban and suburban mobility.

The next section examines the way in which the discourses of mobility utilized in Grand Paris narrow over the course of the initiative, eventually resulting in a single consensus in support of transit aimed at regional economic development. The myriad of functions and meanings of transit and movement in and through the city are progressively reduced to two main possibilities—of enhancing neighborhood connections and sustainable communities, and promoting international commutes and competition—which through careful political maneuvering are collapsed together in uneasy unity. Alternative and more politically potent aspects of movement through the city—a means of generating encounter and political community, an intimate engagement with the material environment, a facilitator of communication, a way to pursue desires and express existential freedoms—become subordinated to the goal of regional rent production and economic development. Thus, through the unofficial and the official public debates around transportation, any broad and creative conflict over the conditioning factors of movement is rendered incommensurate with urban change, and possibilities for a critical intervention in the region are reduced.

*Criterion Collection* (Criterion, 2007) in which three young *banlieuesards* are stranded in central Paris after they miss the last train home also poignantly demonstrates the differentiated mobilities of *banlieue* residents.
The Great Debate

Determining the appropriate level of service to the metropolitan region is one of the main challenges facing urban planners and politicians. Over the past forty years, there have been a series of failed attempts to renovate the transportation network, but most have been set aside due to concerns over cost or abandoned due to inter-institutional disputes between the region of Île-de-France—which took primary control of mass transit through the decentralization laws of the 1980s— the central state, and local collectivities. What were originally local initiatives to increase regional coherence and equality of opportunity through improved daily service in and between banlieues have ceded way in more recent years to large-scale initiatives to drastically reconfigure the metropolitan region and increase the global competitiveness of Paris. Both unofficial and official discourses were framed according to this binary, in 2009 dramatically pitting the regionally sponsored Arc Express network against the state supported Réseau de transport public du Grand Paris (Public Transit Network of Grand Paris, RTPGP) in a series of national public debates. Each of these perspectives, however, suggests that transit

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264 While most would agree that the lack of service to the banlieue is a problem, the framing of the problem varies significantly and the implied solutions are divergent. Understood as a problem of colonial spatial management, for example, the proper response is anti-colonial uprisings, as evident in 2005. Taken as an incomplete civilizational project, the response to failing transit networks is to continue pressing for large infrastructural reform. Defined in the one dimensional terms of economic growth and increased productivity, transit becomes a mode of real estate development. It is primarily out of this latter context that the Grand Paris Express network has arisen.

265 In order to break the impasse between the state and the region over transportation plans, two public debates run by the independent Commission nationale de débat public (CNDP) were scheduled in 2009. While these highly publicized debates reveal a lot about the limits of democratic deliberation and consensual planning efforts, the details of how
networks are important tools to fabriquer la ville ("to make the city") and together, they have become the accepted lenses for analyzing and articulating transit planning. 

Though the creation of the RER rail lines to the suburbs promised to meet the needs of a rapidly suburbanizing city in the 1960s, it has been woefully inadequate and has failed to keep pace with the demographic and spatial changes that Paris has undergone in the intervening fifty years. Radial lines are spaced at a distance from one another, hours of service are limited and ring-metro lines in particular that would provide convenient service through the suburbs have been called for at the local level for years to close this accessibility gap.

One of the first projects to propose rapid transit through the banlieue was "Orbitale" (Organisation régionale du bassin intérieur par transports annulaires libérés des encombrements, or Regional organization of congestion-free transport of the inner basin ring), put forth in the 1990s by the Île-de-France Institute of Planning and Development (IAURIF) and the Île-de-France Transit Authority (STIF). This would consist of a double rocade, or ring, of underground rail through the inner suburbs with additional tramways connecting the region. Orbitale was written into the Schéma directeur région Île-de-

the debates played out are beyond the scope of this paper.

266 In many ways, this debate mirrors the original conflicts over the creation of the Métropolitan network. In the last decades of the 19th century when Paris was considering a rapid transit system of the likes of the London Underground, the main debates were between local and national governments. Louis Napoleon’s empire supported by Haussmann prioritized the needs of circulation and defense over the lives of “idle” citizens. In 1878, for example, city administrators devised a plan for the new network, but no progress was made due to stalling on behalf of the national government. The desire to balance the needs of linking to existing terminals (the national) with the needs of securing ordinary Parisians access to the city and to work (the local) was the main cleavage. After nearly four decades of urban vision there were no substantial changes until 1900. A similar impasse marks transit efforts of recent history.
France (SDRIF) master plan of 1994 but was ignored in the implementation of the plan of 1994-1998 for reasons of cost. “Orbival” (a combination of Orbitale and Val-de-Marne) presented by the department of Val-de-Marne in 2006 later resuscitated this plan and a version of it was approved by both the affected communes and the powerful departmental general council of Seine-Saint-Denis in 2008. This would have linked together the radial lines RER A, and RER E to RER B with a suburb-suburb arc southeast of Paris and was projected to decrease the number of vehicles operating in the department by 40 000/day. Also under consideration in the early 2000s was the Métrophérique located at a greater radial distance than Orbitale or Orbival, 2-5 km from the Périphérique. However, each of these plans was denied sufficient support from the central state, leaving a void in the regional system that was partially addressed with smaller stop-gap projects of construction.

These locally-grown projects which aimed to provide mainly short distance service to and through the departments of the inner suburbs were, however, reworked in a plan officially launched by the president of the Île-de-France in December 2007 under the name Arc Express. Supported by the regional transport authority, Syndicat des transports d’Île-de-France (STIF), and the majority of local governments and populations, Arc Express gained ground as a viable transit addition until Christian Blanc voiced his disapproval of the project and, as head of SGP, questioned its feasibility in the absence of sufficient support from the central state.

268 Currently, there are 7 tramways, 3 Métro extensions, 2 bus lines and a tram-train project to be completed in 2014 under construction in the region through various existing initiatives. Tram-trains are preferred in these ad hoc plans as they are cheaper to build than subways and can work well in less dense neighborhoods where there is no peak demand.
of necessary state financing. Blanc preferred an alternative second plan, the Grand Huit (literally, the “Big Eight”), which would create rapid conduits of travel for global elites through the main airports of the city and which would cement hubs of business and enterprise in the peripheries with the core of Paris. Thus, in 2009, two polarizing versions of the future transportation network and of the future city emerged.

Rivalry between these two views—the city as a space of habitation and social reproduction against the city as a space of economic production—is emblematic of the contested nature of the urban and of urbanization today, but this also ignores the way that these two perspectives are ineluctably connected to one another. Thus the dispute that pitted Arc Express against the Grand Huit over the future of mass transit in the region and by extension, the future of the Paris region, was in many ways already a false debate that obfuscates the complex conditions of mobility.

In this dispute, the urgent and quotidian needs of metropolitan inhabitants were opposed to the long term economic growth and functional polycentricity in the service of global competition, with the latter largely winning. Contention between the regionally supported Arc Express and the state-supported Grand Huit (also called the *double boucle* or “double ring”) also demonstrates the movement toward GPE through a series of “compromises.” Over the course of the debate the terms of contestation were discursively rendered commensurable, which can be done only by closing the scope of the conflict and evading interdependent social issues. In resolving the initially heated debate through a series of tepid resolutions, the debates give nonpartisan and seemingly universal appeal to a very directed political decision, decreasing the ability for democratic participation and closing the door on future criticism.
While the conflict embodied fundamental tensions between the different levels of government on the meaning of public mobility and the responsibility of state infrastructures to respond to the needs and desires of their constituents, it largely played out initially as a battle of egos between Jean Paul Huchon, President of the Île-de-France, and Christian Blanc, then Secretary of State for Development of the Capital Region. The two men at the base of the conflict represented starkly divided stakeholders. While Jean Paul Huchon and more than 200 local officials of Île-de-France denounced the Grand Huit project on April 2, 2010, the national senate and parliament voted to adopt the SGP proposal. In order to move beyond the impasse, on September 2, 2009, the Director General of STIF and the National Commission on Public Debate (CNDP), a non partisan entity, organized a series of official “public debates” on the draft documents of Arc Express and Grand Huit, now renamed the Public Transport Network of Grand Paris (RTPGP). This government sanctioned debate was to bypass the apparent deadlock between the state and the region, and allow other parties to report their interests.

In total, more than 22,000 people spoke on over 70 debate occasions, while stakeholders submitted working papers, and still others posted questions and comments to the two debate websites. Philippe Deslandes, the President of CNDP outlines the

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269 Insults were thrown and Blanc, in a heavy handed manner, even threatened not to submit the Arc Express plan to parliament for debate and consideration. He later revised this decision.

270 The commission is an independent administration charged with overseeing public participation in the elaboration of development projects and facilities of national interest.

271 The 55 RTPGP meetings attracted more than 15,000 people, while more that 835 questions were submitted to the website which saw 170,000 hits. More than 7,100 people attended the 24 public meetings on Arc Express, 800 questions were asked on the
three main principles of the debates as transparency (full information provided about the plans), equality (everyone is granted a right to speak), and argumentation. Deslandes also wanted to stress that the nature of the debate was not to hold a plebiscite where the terms are strictly constrained, but to enable a true conversation about the future of transit in the region. He states, “a debate is neither a referendum, nor a poll, it’s an exchange of arguments.” While the framing seems to indicate a robust democratic sphere and deep participation on behalf of the citizenry, and the turnout was impressive, its limits are patent. Many mayors complained that no meetings were held in their communes, pointing to the exclusionary nature of public sphere participation, and some went even further to question whether the debates mattered at all as the discretionary power over the proposal was still left up to the Société Grand Paris (SGP), the state appointed legal entity created to oversee transportation implementation. Furthermore, many of the most influential participants were not individual citizens, but lobbyist organizations such as local chambers of commerce and businesses. The outcome of the debates lends credence to both of these critiques.

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273 The debates provide a good illustration of the limits of the republican bourgeois public sphere, which is never accessible to all in the same way. Not only was the debate constrained to limited options at the beginning, but operations of exclusion based on class, location and property ownership defined whose concerns were most readily heard. Focused on stakeholder and interest groups over the general population, the exceptional...
Despite the fact that both Arc Express and RTPGP coincide in the belief that it is in the interest of Paris and of France to strengthen the transit network in order to economically develop the region and increase regional balance and equality, the two main ideologies underpinning that belief do differ in important ways. The former believe that the transportation system should arise out of local concerns, be constructed to facilitate daily travel through an extensive and vast network with many transfer points and multiple modalities, facilitate short trips and serve a great number of people. The latter held that transportation should be in the service of broader economic goals and that the network should link major economic hubs to global nodes and increase the attractiveness for investment of Grand Paris in the aim of developing the region. In both debates, in fact, these goals were expressed by concerns over the lack of adequate service in the banlieues and the orientation of the existing infrastructure to central Paris.

The objectives of Arc Express are to foster links between the inner suburbs and to improve the quality of transit service across the region. In this view, users’ living conditions, a reduction in excessive travel times and poor relations between the suburbs are predominant issues. Arc Express repeats that the STIF must have the residents of the near banlieue as their top priority, and a “fine service” of interwoven multimodal options across the region. On the other hand, the RTPGP is intended to serve both the center of Paris and the near and far peripheries. The main connections are to link Roissy and Orly airports with the business district La Défense and the scientific poles of}

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Le Bourget and Saclay (see Figure 9). The SGP claims that Saclay in particular has been underused for the past twenty years, and want to use the occasion of the infrastructural investment to revalue the land and decrease the so-called “rent gap” between the current value of the land and its potential value.

Figure 9: Proposed maps of Arc Express and the RTPGP.\(^{275}\)

The details of the two plans also demonstrate the difference in service, cost, and aim. Materially, the two systems would consist of different structures and would move people in very different fashions around the city. These material conditions effect the

social construction of the region and the types of communication therein. Arc Express, is an underground automatic metro that creates a ring around the inner suburbs of Paris at a length of 60 km. The stations are located 1.5km apart for easy access and include correspondences with 38 RER, Métro and tram lines. The vehicles would travel 25-40 km/h and would have a capacity of 30 000 passenger in peak hours and 1 million passengers per day.\textsuperscript{276} The plan consists of four main arcs (north, south, east and west), while the priorities and the plans considered by the debate were the south arc (Issy-les-Moulineaux or Meudon to Fontenay-sous-Bois or Noisy-le-Grand); and the north arc (from La Défense or Nanterre to Meudon or to Fontenay-sous-Bois and Noisy-le-Grand). The estimated costs for these two loops would be €3.1 and €2.3 billion respectively (€7.1-€8.3 billion for the entire loop), and the funding is to be raised locally through the region and tax initiatives, and not primarily through debt. Arc Express is a moderate plan designed to bring large parts of the city into the same finely knit transit web, and to encourage communication and interaction between disparate parts of the regional territory. It aims at uniform and equalized service to create a more genuine balance in the region between those areas where people leave from and go towards each day.

The infrastructure of the RTPGP, on the other hand would consist of three high-speed underground metro lines completing two large loops through Paris and the outer suburbs at a total length of 130 km. The automated trains would run at an average of 65 km/h and would significantly reduce travel time to the major hubs along the way. According to estimates, the network would be capable of providing 2-3 million trip per

The estimated cost of the RTPGP is much more than Arc Express, however, between €21.3 and €23.5 billion to be financed by stakeholders, new taxes and partially by debt. The RTPGP focuses on travel between already established and newly emerging hubs and explicitly prioritized particular areas of the city over others. It claims that areas with high levels of employment and business should be the most accessible and that speed is to be valued over breadth of service.

At the debates of Arc Express there was a general approval of the plan by the local elected officials, and there was a general sense that this plan could feasibly reach some of its stated goals. However it was seen as being insufficient, and the departments of Val D’Oise and Essonne especially were claimed to have been conspicuously ignored by the proposed infrastructure. Many amendments were suggested over the precise location of the stations to be serviced. In addition the technical aspects of the project, accessibility issues, service quality and schedules, and environmental issues dominated the Arc Express public “conversations.” At the debates over RTPGP, strong support was voiced from economic actors, but a question repeated often was whether or not this plan would not exclusively serve business interests to the detriment of the working classes. Questions also were raised about the ability to finance the project and how the role of the region in global competition would by influenced by the proposed tracks. Of particular interest to those in support of the plan and those opposed to it was whether to extend the network to the Saclay plateau through agricultural land, in order to further

278 Commission nationale du débat public, “Bilan du débat public projet Arc Express.”
invest in development of high technology. Much of the debate for both projects concerned the placement of specific stations.\textsuperscript{279}

The Arc Express and RTPGP can be understood according to two conceptions of what the transportation network should do and two imperatives of urban growth. While Arc Express sees the transportation system as being necessary to facilitate daily commutes, mainly for employees in the banlieue to their place of work, now increasingly also outside of Paris, RTPGP sees the network as primarily easing travel between nodes of international connection. Urban growth for the former should be carefully managed and thought of at a local level, while for the latter, global competition and relevance on an international scale are primary (see Table 3).

Yet the plans do not easily map on to the binary heuristics of sustainability/growth, alter-globalization/globalization or Keynesianism/entrepreneurial austerity. Considered through each of these binaries, the distance between the pairs is remarkably small. Indeed the proposed plans demonstrate an agreement that transportation networks must be built to ensure development in the region on the premise that circulation is good for economic and social life. And both agree that speculative development, focused around the new stations will be good for the region. Both entail, that is, what I elsewhere describe as the Global City State Mode of Production.\textsuperscript{280} Not only do they fail to ask for what reasons people are moving (i.e. so employed workers can go to work), but they also fail to fully articulate the ways in which

\textsuperscript{279} Commission nationale du débat public, “Bilan du débat public sur le réseau de transport public du Grand Paris.”
\textsuperscript{280} Enright, “Building Grand Paris: Reconsiderations of the State Mode of Production.”
transportation is tied to other material conditions of life such as housing, poverty, employment and racism.

It is not too surprising then, that the ideological differences were eventually worked out and the figureheads were able to come to terms with their shared beliefs. While at first, everyone wanted to "mark his territory" and in the beginning stage of the debate were marked by disagreements, attacks and insults as Sarkozy and Blanc squared off against Huchon, within months, this gave way to a more conciliatory atmosphere.  

Through conversations brokered by the International Studio of Grand Paris (AIGP, an extension of the Grand Paris architectural exhibit) the plans came to be seen as complementary and not in contradiction to one another.

In mid-November of 2009, Jean Paul Huchon, the president of Île-de-France proposed a merger of the two projects and declared that the remaining scheduled debates were to consider not the merits of either plan, but the possibility of their consolidation. The CNDP changed the debate terms at this time from comparison, competition and argumentation to “reconciliation,” “complementarity” and “convergence.” In early 2011, the SGP declare the "shared vision of the State and the Region" articulating a unified plan for the future of the metropole and the public debate was credited with being the vehicle of consensus, “the debate led to compromise.”

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283 Commission nationale du débat public, “Bilan du débat public sur le réseau de transport public du Grand Paris,” 14–15. The accord is credited to the “méthod Momo,” which, according to an expression by Roland Castro is a unique method of dialog and debate among centrist politicians who can compromise across party lines. Matthieu Duprieck, “Grand Paris: Les Secrets de la méthode ‘momo’,” L'Express, January 26,
| **Developers** | The president of Île-de-France, Jean Paul Huchon, with the support of STIF, and the majority local departments and communes. | Society of Grand Paris headed by Christian Blanc, with the support of the national senate and parliament, and president Nicolas Sarkozy. |
| **Goals** | • Establish a “fine mesh” of links servicing local inhabitants in daily commutes.  
• Promote regional balance and equality.  
• Create short-term solutions to longstanding problems of transit disservice. | • Foster high-speed conduits of travel between sites constitutive of the global city, namely airports, business and technology centers, commercial sites.  
• Increase regional attractiveness to global investors.  
• Ensure long-term economic development. |
| **Features** | • extensive and dense network  
• uniform service  
• large service area  
• many transfer points  
• multiple modalities  
• priority of the near *banlieue* | • rapid connections  
• reduction in travel times  
• large service area  
• express trains with few stops  
• international connections  
• prioritized service to strategic development sites |
| **Service** | • underground, automatic vehicles  
• single ring around inner suburbs  
• 60km in length  
• 1.5 km between stations  
• vehicle speed of 25-40 km/h  
• capacity of 1 million passengers/day in peak service | • underground automatic vehicles  
• 24-hour/day operation  
• three lines consisting of two large loops through the outer suburbs and a vertical connection  
• 130 km in length  
• vehicle speed of 65 km/h  
• capacity of 2-3 million passengers/day in peak service |
| **Cost** | €7.1-8.3 billion | €21.3-23.5 billion |

Table 3: Comparing the Arc Express and RTPGP.
The consensual mode of decision making forecloses debate even as it opens it up. In the public debates over the transportation plan, the limits to thought are patent and what the process revealed more than anything, was the extremely limited scope of thinking around what transportation can mean and how infrastructure should be created. At the heart of both plans is the notion of transit led development. Urban development contracts ("contrats de développement territorial" or CDTs) explicitly central to the RTPGP plan were also supported by local proponents of Arc Express who wanted a role in the network’s inception and stood to benefit from new stations in their localities. Phillipe Subra notes how communist and other leftist mayors in the region in particular were faced with a difficult political and ethical choice in demonstrating support for either transportation initiative resulting from the temporality of goals and the desperation for funding. When Blanc announced his transit plan in 2009, many communists in fact announced their immediate support on the sole basis that the plan included their particular city. For Subra, the dilemma facing leftist officials in Grand Paris consists in that in being against either plan, “they risk losing control over the sociological evolution of the cities they manage,” and in supporting the plan, “they pass to the side of opportunities of financing and development they cannot refuse.”

Many officials were hesitant to support the plan that would in the end be a detriment to their cities and to regional solidarity and cohesion, but desperate for funding from new developments that might alleviate the grave social conditions of their communes. With officials forced to submit to the logic of consensus and compete for scarce resources, local and particular

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284 Only the town of Saint Maur refused to accept a station.  
demands took precedence over broader demands of class or of a more amorphous banlieue solidarity.

Through this consensus, the focus of Arc Express on short and medium term goals and the immediate needs of inhabitants came to be seen as commensurable with the RTPGP long term goals of economic development, even if though the merger of the plans would mean that it will be another 15 years before the system is operable. The urgency of the problems facing the region are set aside in favor of medium and long-term development. Moreover, the goal of economic growth through the redevelopment of land around new stations actually undermines the needs of inhabitation as residents in the long term will not be able to afford to live in regions that are serviced by transit. When details were genuinely contested, the state-sponsored plan almost invariably won out.286

The compromise over service to Saclay, the so-called “Silicon Valley” of France, is the most blatant demonstration of how consensus is a capitulation to state authorities. The fierce battles over this extension were mainly over the enterprises and institutions who chose to install themselves in Saclay and their opponents who conceive of the future of Saclay as a natural space in need of conservation. The local collectivities were more nuanced in their opinions here, but did not want to interfere with the development operation or risk being denied the future revenue from new enterprises in the area. When the extension was in question, a number of local business interests expressed concern for the state failing to facilitate the “destiny of the region” in the global

economy by allowing for a lack of service to intervene with worker and visitor access.287

The Chamber of Commerce for Paris states this in even stronger terms, claiming that because of the future growth of the technological industry, “the service to the Saclay Plateau is indissociable to Grand Paris.”288 An agreement on the line to Saclay was reached with eleven stations on a light rail system that will be aboveground to preserve the agricultural lands which it passes through. It will transport 10,000 passengers per hour, half the estimate originally desired by Christian Blanc. Yet this does little to address the demands of environmentalists and supports the ideas that the transportation network is necessary and imperative for the success of the scientific and technological cluster.

While this debate over the site had been waged before on a local level, in widening the scope of the conflict, environmental groups lose out. Inhabitants also oppose the hostile takeover of the plateau and the orientation of development toward a single industry at the cost of a more robust social ecology and local autonomy. A citizen in opposition to the extension, for example, makes the following claim:

We are part of a competitive pole and it is for that reason that a station is planned for Saclay. The ambition is to create here a Silicon Valley. What does that mean? It means a profoundly ideological project which resets on pillage, the placement in total trusteeship and the destructuration of our public services, higher education, training and research.289

The inclusion of local municipal leaders in the GPE plan does not result in policies that are necessarily oriented to the needs of local communities.
Les contours d’un grand métro circulaire font l’objet de nombreuses tractions politiques entre la région Île-de-France et le gouvernement. La volonté d’aboutir à un projet concrète avant 2015 a permis de déminer les querelles partisanes.

La carte est issue du cahier des charges devant arrêter le schéma du futur Grand Paris Express.

Figure 10: The future tracks of Grand Paris Express.
In what has come to be called an “unprecedented compromise” between the state and the region of Île-de-France, Maurice Leroy, Minister of Cities charged with Grand Paris, and Jean-Paul Huchon, president of Île-de-France, announced in January 2011 the blueprint for the Grand Paris Express network that would finally realize a “Paris for all Parisians.” Representing a vast investment in transportation infrastructure, the GPE network has a projected cost of €32 billion (€9 billion from the state and region respectively, €7 billion from new taxes and €7 billion from debt) and is set to be operable by 2025. On May 26 2011, Huchon and Leroy were joined by Departmental Presidents, the Île-de-France Mayoral Association, Paris Métropole and the Société Grand Paris (SGP) for the official unveiling of the GPE masterplan, act two of the Law of Grand Paris. Emphasizing the massive breadth of the project, Marc Véron, the current president of SGP described the GPE as “probably the largest [plus grand] metro project in the world.” The “super-Métro” will consist of 57 stations, 160 km and priorities of the Grand Paris Express are to renovate RER C and D, prolong the 14 metro line (north to Pleyel and South to Orly airport) and the RER E, increase service on the existing tramlines, and to build a new automatic and 24 hour ring metro at a length of 150 km and consisting of over 50 stations (see Figure 10).

To a city whose infrastructures have not matched patterns of urban growth, the plan provides new circulatory systems, especially to the periphery. The new transit lines, however, are designed to prioritize outer-ring suburbs, and to provide rapid links between international airports and major financial and business centers. While particular areas of the metropolis will certainly benefit from the new and overdue transit lines, the length between stations on the automatic metro will remain quite large and vast areas of
the metropolitan region will remain inaccessible. Furthermore, this movement remains yoked to market values. This is not an extension of inner-city patterns of accessibility and ease of movement to the banlieue, but is an extension of the pattern of unequal territorial service that prompted the need for a transit overhaul in the first place.

What is important to note about the debate over regional transit is that beyond the ideological and stakeholder differences of the two plans, both sides agree that transportation networks must be built to ensure development in the region on the premise that circulation is good for economic and social life. And both agree that speculative development, focused around the new stations will be good for the region. Not only do they fail to interrogate for what reasons people are moving (ie. so employed workers can go to work), but they also fail to fully articulate the ways in which transportation is tied to other material conditions of life such as housing, poverty, employment, racism, and production. What the discourse over competing plans leading to GPE revealed more than anything, was the extremely limited scope of thinking around what transportation can mean and how infrastructure should be created.

There was remarkable approval of the plan across the political spectrum and most conservative, socialists and green party members for example, found it satisfactory. Despite its quite broad approval, the plan still carries with it a very particular political and economic logic that ultimately services the interests of capital against the interests of inhabiting. It also cements a fragmentary logic of local bargaining for new development projects which increases competition between communities while undermining class and regional solidarities. While purporting to equalize and unify the Île-de-France region through new investments, Grand Paris Express is more than anything about economic
growth, and as a result, it may very likely worsen the existing territorial and social disparities, crystallizing the existing contours of social power into remade landscapes.

Mobilizing Myths

This landscape will primarily be achieved by managing growth and shifts in economic production through the creation of specialized “nodes” or “hubs” of business, economics and technology located outside of Paris proper (the polycentric city “dream” of Chapter One). The assertion of the necessity of the GPE transportation plan to this new polycentric city is facilitated by four main “mobilizing myths,” a term Mark Weil uses to describe the formative assumptions about transit that are discursively utilized in order to legitimize political projects. Enabling and framing our conception of urban affairs, myths are present in any society and act similarly to ideologies insofar as they create policy problems and solutions in line with the epistemologies, organizational frameworks and institutions of particular productive systems. According to Henri Lefebvre who also uses the notion of urban myths to explain urban policy, a myth “always fills a void” in discourse by recontextualizing dominant tropes and supporting “knowledge that is oriented toward and by practice.” Myths of mobility, circulation and speed abound in the literature on cities and are thus key to urban planning knowledge regimes of the academy, technocracy and political parties.

292 Henri Lefebvre, The Urban Revolution (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 105.
293 Ibid., 114.
Mobilizing myths today are some of the most prevalent ways of thinking through the relationship of movement to the urban and emerging urbanization processes. These myths represent the limited precepts of acceptable social policy, and as such, help to reinforce neoliberalism as the dominant “political rationality” of contemporary France. Beyond the differences of the transportation debates lies a common set of ideas and justifications that organizes transportation policy, and by extension, the behaviors and interactions of inhabitants in metropolitan Paris. The dominant myths of transportation demonstrate effectively how global city norms and the values of neoliberalism are actively and continuously created, disseminated and learned through institutions, laws, policies, and languages that entrench the primacy of the market and encourage competition in all aspects of social, economic and political life.

The mobilizing myths of transit used in GPE have the characteristics of institutionalizing competition, heightening social inequalities and increasing policing and surveillance. They achieve this while maintaining a focus on state productivity and large-scale spatial planning. In this view transit-oriented growth is the pillar of the economic system, providing a means of restructuring territorial arrangements in pursuit of strategic development goals.

In specific, the main “myths” mobilized in the Grand Paris Express transit plan include: the assumption that infrastructure is unilaterally good for economic and social

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294 Wendy Brown, “Neo-liberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy,” *Theory & Event* 7, no. 1 (2003). For Brown, neoliberalism is “a rationality that exceeds particular positions on particular issues” and she aims “to consider the way that this rationality is emerging as governmentality—a mode of governance encompassing but not limited to the state, and one which produces subjects, forms of citizenship and behavior, and a new organization of the social.”

development, the necessity of speculative investment to urbanization, the equivocation of different types of mobility especially the false substitution of daily mobility to and from work for residential mobility, the notion that mass transportation is also public or communal transportation, and lastly, the presumed incontrovertibility of sustainability. Each of these will be considered in more detail.

*Infrastructure is Good for Development*

The Grand Paris Express network represents unparalleled public sector spending. Grand Paris Express is a redesign of the city of Paris itself through one of the largest new rapid transit network in the global north. The ostentatious state involvement and the enormous cost of the project, especially in a time of crisis and recession, however, are remarkable, and the purposes of such investments demand judicious consideration. Somewhat counterintuitively however, Grand Paris Express must be understood not as an aberration of social welfare spending in an entrepreneurial economy, but as a new form of neoliberal restructuring involving massive investments in territory and infrastructure for the purpose of private growth and increased competition.

Massive investment in new networks may seem to be at odds with the current European atmosphere of recession and austerity, but in effect, this investment actually works to cement the goals of urban rent production, a privatization of communal surplus and a strengthening of state control, elements usually associated with a *laissez-faire* regulationist approach. Through new accommodations between planning and growth, as well as compromises of debt and public finance, the *Grand Paris* project restructures the economic and political processes of metropolitan space. While the institutional logic of
Grand Paris Express undoubtedly has a particular French flair to it, the underlying support of public investment for the benefit of private enterprise also represents a case of how cities increasingly operate today.296

The main rationale of the Grand Paris project is that infrastructure is good for development. This rationale holds that changing the physical distributions of people, places and functions can improve society and investment in large-scale projects will resonate across a variety of political, economic and social terrains. On one level, infrastructural projects have long been the means through which the state legitimizes its power, displays its prowess and expands its control. As Lefebvre writes in *Urban Revolution*, “Ever since its origins, the State expressed itself through the void: the empty space broad avenues, plazas of gigantic proportions, open to spectacular processions. Bonapartism simply carried on the tradition by applying it to a historic city, to a highly complex urban space.”297 The modern state has the function of territorializing its power and particular ideologies through the built environment, but public investment is never just about the self-aggrandizement of the state alone. The reliance on infrastructure as a

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296 This form of state capitalism based on the mobilization of space as a productive force is described by Lefebvre as the mode of governance that accompanies the urbanization of society in the latter half of the twentieth century. Rather than disappear with the advent of neoliberalism, this “state mode of production” merely changes form. See Lefebvre, *De L’État tome III: Le Mode de production étatique*, 3. The continued presence of the national state in coordinating production through spatial planning is seen across Europe. Guy Baeten, speaking of new transit and development initiatives in the Malmö area of Sweden refers to this as an “elite Keynesianism” or “Keynesianism for the rich.” Guy Baeten, “Resilient Neoliberal Practices: Continuation, Restoration, Appropriation” (Paper presented at the American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting, New York, February 26, 2012).

tool of economic development also concerns a particular relation of the state to the market and to the globalized economic order.

In order to understand why and under what circumstance the state will invest in infrastructural projects, it is useful to situate the role of the state in shifting global political economic configurations. Metropolitan regional development will have different structures and aims under different regimes of accumulation. The scaffolding underpinning the accumulation regime—the construction of the labor force, the form of intercapitalist competition, monetary and financial regulation, international configuration of the state and the regulation of uneven spatial development—has been systematically transformed over the past 40 years. These changes occur through struggle between forces over (primarily urban) spaces of which transportation facilities are a crucial part.

Under Fordism, governments invest in infrastructure in hopes of a generalized return through broad social application, what economists call the “multiplier effect.” If market conditions are protected and the populace can benefit in terms of income or time, then government expenditures can generate economic value greater than the initial investment. In an era of Keynesian welfare policies, intervention is necessary to prevent market failure and to deal with those things the market could not take care of “naturally”

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299 Ibid. See also Neil Brenner, New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). Rather than uniformly coherent strategies, however, the underpinnings of neoliberal accumulation since the 1970s are contradictory and built upon and out of early models. They only come about through conflict with existing spaces and policies and the state is a powerful arbitrator of how this occurs. Tracing the changes that make large-scale investments important as scalarization processes for global metropolitan cities is important and as Neil Brenner notes, the changes in Western Europe are actually understudied in the neoliberal literature.
(monopolies, social welfare, redistribution, externalities). This state managerialism of the market at the municipal level leads to rigid zoning, high property taxes, building codes, and robust social service provisions. These tools aim to equalize living standards of the population through redistributing wealth, and to equalize the attractiveness of territories for investment by ensure that industry is spread uniformly through space. In France, these strategies were cemented in post-war policies and in the narratives of the *trente glorieuses*.

One of the main material ways this worked out in France in the 1950s and 1960s was through public investment in automobile culture and roadway and highway infrastructures, in order to meet the needs changing demographics and mass industry in the Paris region. These channels of circulation were necessary to support the single family dwellings located at ever greater distances from the urban core, and to link heavy industry on the outskirts of Paris with a global market. With its emphasis on mass consumption, individualism and middle-class suburbanization, the booming automobile industry was therefore favored over collective transportation. This largely followed an American style urbanization effort and though the rich and wealthy benefitted, so too did the Red Belt of industry of the *banlieue* and the nearby housing projects which serviced industry with a labor supply. The new roadways provided a uniformly accessible network for individualized progress and territorial cohesion and balance of opportunities for economic and social development. And from new single family homes in the suburbs
to massive parking lots and grocery stores, the automobile drastically altered the landscape of the Paris region.\textsuperscript{300}

Unlike the redistributive policies of the early and mid-20\textsuperscript{th} century, however, investment in the Grand Paris Express network is directed toward decreasing the distance between the public and private spheres and heightening, not equalizing competition and polarity. \textit{Grand Paris} enforces this rationality and naturalizes it through the ambiguous reconciliation of free competition with the paternalism and central authority of the Republican state. The central state favors public expenditures for private growth. Whereas under the “roll-back” neoliberal strategies of the 1970s, often attributed to Regan and Thatcher, the state must withdraw from the market, privatize services, deregulate and pursue “free market” movements, contemporary French “roll-out” policies stress the creation of institutions and extended governance as well as new infrastructure, often of new modes of social and penal rule.\textsuperscript{301} Here deregulation, de-zoning and the promotion of real estate development is central.

\textit{Grand Paris} is seen by some as an entrenchment of Jacobin principles and a return “back to the days of the omniscient state,” but it is important to note that that the

\textsuperscript{300} For a thoughtful account of these changes and their cultural implications, see Ross, \textit{Fast Cars, Clean Bodies}. Saskia Sassen claims that “the global city has replaced the industrial regional complex centered on the auto industry as the key engine or economic growth and spatial patterning.” I argue, however, that despite this movement away from the automobile sector, transportation remains a leading economic force in the global city. Sassen, \textit{The Global City}, 344.

\textsuperscript{301} Neil Brenner, \textit{Spaces of Neoliberalism: Urban Restructuring in North America and Western Europe} (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002), 42. Jaime Peck and Adam Tickell, “Neoliberalizing Space,” \textit{Antipode} 34, no. 3 (2002): 380–404, make the distinction between “roll-back” and “roll-out” neoliberalism. Whereas roll-back policies emerge in the 1970s as free market thinking, austerity and withdrawal of the state (roughly the destructive phase of the welfare state), roll-out policies refer to the way this changes as it reaches a limit point.
particular form of centralized state involvement is here directed toward privatizing functions.\textsuperscript{302} This form of Republican intervention is what has been called “\textit{neoliberalism à la française}.”\textsuperscript{303} Under this regime, the state maintains a high level of involvement in leading capital accumulation, but does so not to correct the failures of the naturally functioning market, but to actively intervene and marketize those social and political forms that would not otherwise conform to a market logic. Territorial reform and spatial planning are primary tools to achieve these ends. Transportation receives funding to encourage private production and real estate development around new stations, at the same time that other social services like public housing and public pensions are ruthlessly dismantled. The somewhat atypical characteristic of the \textit{Grand Paris} project indicate how neoliberalism works in “actually existing spaces” and is not defined once and for all by a set of policy protocols, but is a process of class and spatial recomposition based on locally and historically contingent conditions.\textsuperscript{304} They also indicate that neoliberal reforms in urban policy, previously incomplete and partial, have become normalized and are now priorities for development.\textsuperscript{305}


\textsuperscript{303} Jobert and Théret, “France.”

\textsuperscript{304} This phrase is popularized by Brenner and Theodore, “Cities and the Geographies of ‘Actually Existing Neoliberalism’.”

\textsuperscript{305} The \textit{Grand Paris} reforms contrast starkly with the situation in France less than a decade ago. In 2006, Dikeç writes: “although the French State is committed to some form of moderate neoliberalism in contemporary restructurings, the effects of this commitment to urban policy have been only partial. Despite brief periods of experimentation with neoliberal ideas, French urban policy has not sought to institutionalize inter-urban competition and to encourage a growth-first competitive logic as an overriding goal. Economic growth and competition have not replaced social issues as primary objectives; urban policy is a social not an economic development policy.” See Mustafa Dikeç, “Two Decades of French Urban Policy: From Social
In *Grand Paris* for example, the central state actually defied European Union directives to privatize the transit industry, preferring instead to use state powers of investment and management as tools of rescaling the urban to meet the economic conditions of a globalized world. Maintaining control ensures the public face of development and allows the state to bolster the national economy in ways they see fit and while retaining an outlet for efforts to organize accumulation. As explained in Chapter Three, this state involvement is also tied to failures of the decentralization efforts of the 1970s and 1980s which were originally designed to give more power to local industry under a logic of entrepreneurialism. By maintaining control over transportation, the state can continue to propound policies of “social cohesion” and “equalization” of the territory, while in effect, surrendering to the market the path of urban growth, thus willfully undermining these stated goals.

This explains the contemporary phase of neoliberal accumulation that is more often than not, driven by large public expenditures in infrastructure and the built environment, but still in order to privatize surplus value in the hands of investors and developers. It is not a radical break with the past, but a new mode of adjusting governance to a post-industrial urban landscape, one that works through contested


307 Frédéric Léonhardt links the model of development based on astronomical spending and fantastical projects to the *trente glorieuses* where the slogan was “all’s well when construction’s well,” but that this faces an economic impasse today. In Frédéric Léonhardt, “Les Comptes fantastiques du Grand Paris,” *Métropolitiques*, May 2011, http://www.metropolitiques.eu/Les-comptes-fantastiques-du-grand.html.
meanings of the state and the market and through entrenched ideologies of Republicanism.

Beyond the particularities of the French case, Jason Hackworth notes that the boundaries of urban governance around the world have shifted dramatically in the past 30 years and that there have been both structural constraints on government action and ideological shifts whereby market failures are seen as government failures. The very idea of “good governance,” which has become omnipresent, is to ensure that municipalities function like corporate enterprise with maximal efficiency, profit and goal attainment. For Hackworth, the American inner-cities, because of their thorough attachment to the welfare state are now undergoing severe changes as the logic of accumulation shifts toward municipal good governance. The banlieue in France play the same role here, they are the sites of the city most targeted by zoning, welfare policies and redistributive investments, and therefore are today subject to new intervention schemes that will cement this new logic.

Furthermore, because cities were given new responsibilities in the 1980s but not the means to carry through on these, there has been an increasing reliance on debt for municipal social service provisions and capital infrastructure. Hackworth notes that the “inertia of economic growth” limits the choice of possible futures through disciplining localities to the rigid constraints of finance capital. This actually facilitates and in some cases, requires massive ventures and large scale construction efforts as the primary forms

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309 Ibid., 18.
of urban governance. And when cities fail to adequately update infrastructures and facilities, there is an easy justification for state to take back power from local control, as we see in *Grand Paris*.

The prevalence of large scale urban development projects (UDPs) across Western Europe illustrates how the shifts in state intervention in the economy dovetail with recentralized modes of governance. In their study of thirteen large-scale urban development projects in Europe, Swyngedouw et al. find that large scale UDPs are increasingly being used to implement “New Urban Policy” as a “new scalar gestalt of governing” that privileges “middle and upper class democracy.” They conclude, among other things, that UDPs are often ways to establish exceptionality measures to

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310 Ibid., 22. Hackworth argues that bond rating agencies are one of the most directly influential “police officers” of neoliberal urban governance. The rating is the “single most influential institution force in altering the quantity, quality and geography of local investment in the developed world.” The tax base of cities functions as collateral and quasi public entities (housing authorities etc) are created to take on debt. The creation of these bond-issuing spatial districts is organized around a particular revenue stream (transportations) such that “city managers are compelled to keep expenses low and revenues high to maintain a positive rating.” While there is not a lot of literature on bond-funded urbanization in France, the broader Western European context supports this thesis with adjustments made to accommodate the local contexts. In general, France retains more centralized control over cities (see Chapter Three) than in the U.S. case and has not fully embraced an entrepreneurial municipal regime. The Grand Paris Express, for example, is both tax and bond financed. On this phenomenon see also Gilles Pinson, “Gouverner la ville par projet: Urbanisme et gouvernance des villes européennes,” (2009); Fainstein, “Mega-projects in New York, London and Amsterdam.”

311 Erik Swyngedouw, Frank Moulaert, and Arantxa Rodriguez, “Neoliberal Urbanization in Europe: Large–Scale Urban Development Projects and the New Urban Policy,” *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (2002): 542–577. They write that “While economic processes were rapidly globalizing and cities were trying to carve out their niche within the emerging new divisions of labor, of production, and of consumption, political transformations—pursued by local, regional, and national governments of all ideological stripes and colors—were initiated in an attempt to align local dynamics with the imagined, assumed, or real requirements of a deregulated international economic system, whose political elites were vigorously pursuing neoliberal dogma.”
push through policy in undemocratic and sometimes extra legal ways, that they are poorly integrated into the wider urban processes and that more often than not, the large scale projects “accentuate socioeconomic polarization through the working of real estate markets.” Large scale projects are undertaken to reinforce and reestablish the competitive position of metropolitan economies and are “emblematic examples of neoliberal forms of urban governance.” These UDPs then become the catalyst of political and spatial change. Unlike the developments that are the focus of Swyngedouw’s study, however (Olympic villages, waterfront developments, site-specific art projects), the Grand Paris Express is a wholesale redesign of the metropolitan region and may be a paradigmatic case of this type of project.

Swyngedouw argues that UDPs are sought out not in conjunction with purely Keynesian policies, but with what he terms New Economic Policy which has always maintained a close relationship with the state and with state intervention. The key features of deregulation, flexibilization and spatial decentralization align with the New Urban Policy to emphasize new urban coalitions, shift from social to economic policies, enhance city marketing, strengthen territorially targeted social policy, and the production of urban rent.\footnote{Ibid.} This conjuncture of state plans, institution, laws and norms “squarely revolve[s] around re-centering the city,” and in the case of Grand Paris, according to physical, economic and political agendas.\footnote{Ibid.}

Against the entrepreneurial ethos of the roll-back era, it is important to note that UDPs are usually state financed and directed and are framed in terms of state functions.

\footnote{Ibid.}
\footnote{Ibid.}
The Grand Paris transport initiative is part of a larger social strategy and is tied to the State-Region Projects Contract (CPER) and the Banlieue Hope Plan (Plan Espoir Banlieue), but it also explicitly draw attention to the lack of direct investment in social issues. Instead, the Grand Paris initiative relies on the idea that transportation is tied together to issues of housing, employment, racism and other forms of social inequality, and that investment in one can satisfy all of the others. Whereas the economic aspects are clearly articulated and its goals are instrumentalized in policy provisions, the social dimensions are expressed only in vague generalities. This explicit focus on economics over other social welfare concerns indicates a further shift in policy toward a naturalization of privatized rationalities and generalized acceptance of the terms of competition, innovation, and economic growth as the baseline metrics of public policy.

The unquestionable regime that Roger Kiel has labeled “roll-with-it” neoliberalism is emerging in France today, not despite but through its republican translations.314

Grand Paris claims to fight inequality, revitalize the economy and attract coveted investment through changing land use and associated tax structures. Yet these goals are fundamentally in contradiction to each other. Moreover, the priorities of the GPE are not about mobility per se, but about channeling resources into a political program of real estate development while symbolically supporting the creation of a regional community.

Speculative Redevelopment: Lever for Transformation

A 2009 law regarding Grand Paris describes this transit-development relation as follows:

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The founding principle of the overall project development of Grand Paris rests in the valorization of its potential for the emergence of several economic engines of growth poles. Within these clusters, exchanges between disciplines and partners (researchers, designers, enterprises, etc.) will stimulate innovation. The economic, functional and spatial articulation of these major poles, territories of research knowledge and creativity will also have a multiplier effect. The complementarity of their objectives, with economic specialization and forward-looking technology, strengthens the resistance of the economy to cyclical and structural shocks. By connecting these clusters, the primary transportation network, a true central nervous system, provides consistency and efficacy to the entire project of development and management.\textsuperscript{315}

The prospective clusters so crucial to the innovation and growth of the region are predicated upon a system of mass transit. The law also explicitly states that the currently regulatory framework does not allow for the kind of construction and development that will see the project to fruition and that this new link between transport infrastructure and urban and economic development needs to be enshrined through changing the zoning and property regime of the region.

Direct state intervention is required to support information and service industries presumed to be the only bases for growth under a so-called “knowledge economy,” and these industries are necessarily located at the urban scale.\textsuperscript{316} In contemporary Paris, the urban landscape does not yet reflect the dispersed centrality emblematic of global cities and the official means of agglomeration are thus dictated by the gap between production needs and given spatial distributions, or, in other words, between declining and arising modes of production. The 2009 Carrez Report on transportation finance reiterates the


\textsuperscript{316} See Sassen, \textit{The Global City}. These units often do not need to be located in historic cores of cities, and though they remain concentrated in national capitals, for example, they are increasingly dissipated across space.
claim that transportation is essential to regional development stating, that “In linking the future clusters of the capital region and in improving access to metropolitan facilities and to the high speed transit system, [the project] concretizes the changed scale of Grand Paris.”

Grand Paris is cements a new scale of the urban while servicing the national economy and increasing the global power of the Paris metropole.

The multipolar urban model founded on the transit system aims to transform land values and produce profit based on real estate development. The rent-extraction based nature of the project means that the main objective is to obtain a higher return on land, to revalue prime urban land, and thus to manufacture urban rent. The viability of Grand Paris depends on the future realization of urban rents which is not guaranteed to happen but is in fact a great pari (bet). The project also entails the dependence on rent returns which invariably targets the high-income segments of the population and high-productivity economic activities and “makes the success of the project dependent the dynamics of the real-estate sector”

A fundamentally undemocratic national policy, public funding is transferred to the private sector through the built environment based on socialization of costs and privatization of benefits.

Capitalist development is premised upon the production of relatively fixed spatial configurations, but growth also requires continually new configurations and the rupture of old order. Space and scale are constantly in flux, reworked and overturned according

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318 Smith, “New Globalism, New Urbanism,” writes, “The new concatenation of urban functions and activities vis-à-vis the national and the global changes not only the make-up of the city but the very definition of what constitutes—literally—the urban scale.”
319 Swyngedouw, Moulaert, and Rodriguez, “Neoliberal Urbanization in Europe.”
to the needs of capital and its attendant crises.\textsuperscript{320} The stability of fixed capital, like land, is necessary to stabilize value, but when such fixity becomes an obstacle, transformations are necessary and surplus must be invested in a new territorial form. In speculative development, government and investors coordinate economic activity through urban construction in order to increase the potential for prospective, future profits or rent on undervalued land.

This process of valuing land, however, is not simple and real estate markets are always bound up with zoning, discursive constructions of places, imaginary representations, operations of enterprise and behaviors of living inhabitants.\textsuperscript{321} Rent is always communally produced through socially defined spaces, but the spatial and temporal distributions of value in the city are complex and unpredictable. As Maroš Krivý notes “The calculus employed by capitalists to identify value in the built environment is neither standardized nor unchanging.” But he warns, “It would also be a mistake to view the creative destruction of the built environment as purely market-determined, a disembodied and overdetermined process that progresses in a linear fashion and is catalyzed by every withdrawal and subsequent injection of capital.”\textsuperscript{322}

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\textsuperscript{320} Smith, Uneven Development; David Harvey, The Limits to Capital (New York: Verso, 1999).
\textsuperscript{321} See especially Hardt and Negri, Commonwealth, 154–158. Hardt and Negri note that under the biopolitical production of late capitalism, marked by informational and service economies, the surplus created is one of collective interaction and communication. In the metropolis, this surplus wealth is privatized in the form of rent through real estate. According to Hardt and Negri, real estate “can only be understood by external factors” such as local pollution, neighbors, levels of crime, nearby playgrounds, cultural centers art scenes, schools, transit stations etc. They claim that “Rent operates through a desocialization of the common, privatizing in the hands of the rich the commonwealth produced and consolidated in the metropolis.”
\textsuperscript{322} Rachel Weber, “Extracting Value from the City: Neoliberalism and Urban
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Though governments try to influence the valuation process, and through large investments, can predict particular outcomes, speculation in an urban context is always imprecise. Megaprojects involve enormous resources to offset the risks of this endeavor and to socialize them.

One way that speculative development works is through the dialectics of dystopia and utopia, whereby certain spaces are depicted as deteriorated and useless, ready for redevelopment into a profitable livable space “once again.” Decay and obsolescence are thus required to inflate the “rent-gap” between a space’s current use and its potential futures. No longer working with the presumed tabula rasa of modernist design, this relationship is the essence of contemporary redevelopment efforts. Krivý writes that “Redevelopment is the development of a site that had already been developed in the past and was subsequently devalued. When redeveloped, the relative amount of fixed capital on the site increases and the previously built urban land is transformed. Hence, as a rule, it is an obsolete built environment that is redeveloped.” In many ways, the banlieue as a space of disorder, marked in the popular imaginary, by crumbling grand ensemble housing projects and rampant delinquency, illustrates the condition that must be overcome through new developments.

Even more telling, however is the fact that these well-worn images are not mentioned in the Grand Paris Express project (nor very often in Grand Paris generally). When a particular building or a spatial arrangement becomes a barrier to capital accumulation, it becomes ipso facto obsolete according to neoliberalism. But this


323 Krivý, “Speculative Redevelopment and Conservation.”
obsolescence is always relative to overall economic system and its dominant spatial formations. Now, the stable structures of Fordist production have given way to a regime of extreme flexibility which necessitates those uniform and long-standing institutions of industrial factories and housing projects to be destroyed and the land given over to new developments where the pace of renovation is quickened. The more malleable spaces are, the more attractive they are to investors.324

Both functional and economic obsolescence (those aspects of structure itself, and factors outside the property that negate its value) thus act as alibis for restructuring.325 This language of obsolescence prioritizes exchange value of urban spaces over their use value and both reflects and entrenches a marketized logic of investment and growth. Furthermore, as Rachel Weber notes, “Couching justifications for redevelopment in the language of obsolescence allows entrepreneurial cities to evade responsibilities for the less commoditized components of welfare, such as health, safety and morals, previously assumed (at least discursively) by the early managerialist state.”326

Transportation networks here become important not necessarily for their use value (as means of circulation and vehicles for movement), but for their ability to manufacture and identify new sites for redevelopment.

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324 Recall the dictum of Portzamparc that “the durable city is the transformable city.”
325 Weber, “Extracting Value from the City,” 177. Weber notes that the stigmatization of space according to agricultural and medical metaphors—ubiquitous in the 20th century—is no longer necessary because of the “overarching narrative of municipal entrepreneurialism” that only requires spaces to be marginalized in market terms.
326 Ibid., 185.
Transit stations are chosen in “soft sites” territories where the land is not yet developed to its limits, and therefore “ripe for change and development.” These include central business districts, waterfronts, social housing districts, suburbs and ethnic enclaves. In the Grand Paris Express project, many depressed localities are excited to bring investment to the area and celebrate the creation of new development and revitalization to accompany proposed stations. Some representatives even go so far as to hold public festivals and parties when new transit stations are built in their commune. For not only does a new station mean easier accessibility for residents to the broader transit network, but it means an influx of money and the creation of new enterprise where there had been none, or where only unprofitable operations existed. The proposed stations in the currently underserviced area of Seine-Saint-Denis are hoped to conform to this logic, as do many of the proposed stations in Val-de-Marne.

A second strategy is to focus on existing hubs and to further specialize existing geographies of industry in order to increase competitive advantage. Frédéric Gilli argues that though there has been a concentration of jobs at particular areas around the city, this is not accompanied by a clear specialization and that each sector taken individually has the tendency to delocalize and de concentrate. Yet if specialized industries are linked to particular locations there is an increased advantage through proximity and increased inter-industry competition that now becomes tied to inter-territorial

competition and cooperation. As there is no functional necessity between the form of
the city and the kind of social organization therein, the desired functions must be
brought about through a complex of political, economic and legal institutions.

For his part Blanc focuses on six “sites for intervention” to be singled out in the
“first wave” of the broader Grand Paris project, almost all of which are highlighted as key
terminals in the transit network (see Figure 11). Redefining urban form and function,
Blanc reifies these sites as important and worthy of attention according to a narrow
script of capital investment and growth and specifies a specific industry to be developed
in each region.

These territories and their signature industries—La Défense (finance), la cité
Descartes (construction and services for green economy), Roissy-Villepoin
te (air travel
and international connection), Le Bourget, (aeronautical research), the Saclay plateau
(nano and biomedical technology), and the Seine Valley (biotechnology) along with Paris
(tourism and international relations) form the polarized fabric of the new metropolis.

Territorial Development Contracts (CDTs) establish the conditions for growth
around new stations. CDTs are agreements reached between the state representative in
the region (the prefect), local communes and third parties (optional) to oversee
construction and territorial development in strategic sites. They are the main
mechanisms to accelerate the construction of the transit network, and ensure
densification around new stations.

330 Observatoire régional du foncier en Île-de-France, “Les Enjeux de la valorisation
foncière autour des pôles de transport.”

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Figure 11: The priority territories of Grand Paris. These are mapped onto the proposed transit systems. Areas outlined in solid lines are designated zones of “national interest,” while the shaded territory surrounding the proposed stations represents the 800m of territory in which the state can intervene under a legally enshrined Right of Preemption.
According to Article 21 of the Law on Grand Paris, CDT agreements must define territorial development according to “goals and priorities for urban planning, housing, transport, travel, and the fight against urban sprawl, commercial facilities, economic development, sports and cultural development, protection of natural, agricultural and forest landscapes and natural resources.” The nature of these goals however is slippery. The existing contracts demonstrate the priority on exchange value and productive industries such as high technology, finance, real estate, management, tourism and sport and leisure.

In the northeastern commune of Sevran, for example, Grand Paris development is proposed in order to address “urban blight.” Like many of the stigmatized suburbs, especially those in the eastern part of Paris, Sevran is a post-industrial community of decaying housing projects, high poverty and unemployment and few industries. Yet Sevran is set to host two new stations on the GPE, making it prime real estate for developers. CDTs in the area plan for new retail spaces, an extensive waterfront development project, a cultural center to highlight French cinema, a new football training facility and an 80 000 seat rugby stadium.

Another northeastern municipality, La Gonesse is in a similar position. Situated between the Le Bourget and Charles de Gaulle airports, La Gonesse is the site of a

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331 République Française, “LOI N° 2010-597 du 3 juin 2010 relative au Grand Paris (1).”
332 The CDT also requires that public consultations be held before the contract is finalized, though at a stage after the contract has been negotiated. As of February 2012, six contracts have been signed and 17 are under negotiation, concerning some 140 communes.
proposed massive entertainment villa, Europa City, designed as a signature “gateway to Paris.” French retailer Auchan has outlined plans for a vast €1.7bn retail and leisure complex aimed primarily at tourists to be built on an 80 hectare site in the Gonesse triangle development zone to the north east of Paris, near Charles-de-Gaulle airport. The complex is set to include 500 shops, a dozen hotels, an auditorium as well as a ski slope, water park and circus. An estimated 30,000 visitors a year are expected to visit. This complex is premised upon and requires the construction of the Grand Paris Express. Privileging investors and tourists over inhabitants of the area, the initiative demonstrates how the transit system is a catalyst of territorial commodification.

In studies on the potential investment in the southern commune of Saclay, the means of development are different, but the aim is the same. Building on an existing cluster of high technology businesses and research institutions, the state in this instance has aggressively courted ambitious science industries. A site in the immediate vicinity of one of the proposed GPE stations is slated to host three new entities, Horiba, a Japanese firm specializing in optics, a large nanoscience center operated by the University of Paris Sud, and a third firm, Nano-Innov, also specializing in nanotechnology. The Secretary of State for the Capital Region institutes building leases to maintain control over the land for 70 years, and as lessee, retains a right of non-approval for any proposed sales. The entities were chosen because they are considered to be highly profitable in the near

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335 Observatoire régional du foncier en Île-de-France, “Les Enjeux de la valorisation foncière autour des pôles de transport,” 32.
336 Ibid.
future, thus ensuring high taxes to local and state authorities and the increased valuation of surrounding real estate.

Together, the strategies of transforming obsolete sites and nascent poles work to create what Hackworth calls a “regionally differentiated profit landscape” that will eliminate barriers to investment while ensuring a specialization of functions across the territory for maximum value creation. The strategies equalize the territory by opening everywhere up to investment but must also differentiate districts as a means of facilitating particular types of growth. Some territories are made to be more attractive for coveted investments and when they are no longer profitable, new venues are sought. This is what Hackworth describes as the “expansion-exclusion dialectic” whereby real estate becomes a vehicle for economic development. The spatial fix of today is therefore unlike those that David Harvey describes in the 1930s depression, however. Following the depression the fix was centrifugal—pushing constantly outwards but today this redevelopment reaches within the already developed Grand Paris region, transforming the low value landscape of public housing estates and residential neighborhoods into a silicon landscape filled with towers of industry.

High value occupancy is ensured by targeted state intervention in the name of security, and by more subtle changes in the tax structure. Wielding discourses of securitization and anti-terrorism, the state has threatened to uses its powers of eminent domain through a Right of Preemption to ensure that this development occurs according to plan, that is, to ensure the stations are surrounded by bourgeois enclaves. To put it in slightly different terms, in the name of public good and universal economic

337 Hackworth, The Neoliberal City, 69.
development, the state intervenes to ensure that land is held by private enterprise. An earlier version of the transit plan, had for example, the stipulation that the state could control within one km of any new station, the types of activities and development. This was reduced to 400 m when brought to Parliament, but the principle of directed growth remains. Widespread racism and Islamophobia in many parts of the banlieue provide easy excuses for the state to perform this function.

Where the state cannot directly intervene it can change land use patterns through structuring taxes in a manner incentivized toward large businesses and those with high profit rates. The Carrez Report, for example, squarely locates new profits in land value changes and in increased tax revenues from business and not from the operation of the transit system itself. For each new development, the state is guaranteed flat taxes in the amount of 30% (15% to the national state, 15% to the region) of up to 80% of the increase in land values. Of the three main revenues identified as funding options for the plan—modernization of transport tax on local businesses (VT); changes in tariff revenue; productivity gains of the operators—the first is seen as the largest stream and between 2010 and 2025, income from tariffs is estimated at €11.9 billion. In addition to new taxes, the Grand Paris Express itself is to be funded by debt, which can be leveraged against the future growth of the development sites it is poised to bring about.

Speculative development cannot be fully or directly calculated into the financing of the GPE, but it is a stated priority of the network proposal. The Carrez Report clearly indicates the goal of the transportation initiative in financial terms. It sates,

Income from the valuation of land and property should not be an illusion…Local authorities responsible for urban planning, should be closely associated with planning policy and land development related to the construction of new transport infrastructure. For this, the implementation of development contracts is a solution that seems appropriate… Finally, the definition of influence around the perimeter stations must be carefully calibrated.\(^{339}\)

The structure of taxes on businesses in priority neighborhoods ensure only maximally profitable enterprises are able to buy the land, while a variety of zoning techniques will be employed in conjunction to direct the land usage around any new station.\(^{340}\)

The spatiotemporal conditions of the uneven development in the region and their equalization and differentiating functions of mass investment and creative destruction are crucial to understanding the GPE network and its implementation. It is true that new transportation infrastructure will facilitate daily commutes and will alter daily habits for millions across the region, but the reason for investment cannot be tied to this movement alone.\(^{341}\) The imperatives of real estate development and investment in profitable industries are absolutely central to this initiative.

\textit{Equivocal Mobilities}

Movement of people throughout the Île-de-France, may not be the primary reason for the massive state investment of GPE (for less costly investments would achieve this goal more effectively), but it is by no means incidental to the \textit{Grand Paris}

\(^{339}\) Ibid., 32.
\(^{340}\) The Carrez Report also details a widespread use of existing land policy instruments, the creation of ZADs (Deferred Development Zones) and the use of the Right of Preemption, in particular.
project. The dynamics of capital circulation and of real estate are in fact closely related to
the question of who is moving through the city, “delinquents” versus executives, for
example, and for what purposes. In the words of Doreen Massey,

The point concerns not merely the issue of who moves and who doesn’t
even if that is an important element of it; it is also about power in
relation to the flows of the movement. Different social groups have
distinct relationships to this anyway differentiated mobility: some people
are more in charge of it than other; some initiate flows and movement,
others don’t; some are more on the receiving-end of it than others; some
are effectively imprisoned by it. 342

Mobility does not entail freedom, nor does it automatically reduce economic disparities
or strengthen territorial cohesion as the GPE plan promises. Moving away from the
reductive equation of mobility with personal autonomy, it is necessary to consider the
complex configurations of how and why people move or not.

In particular, residential mobility can become limited when personal mobility
through infrastructures of transit grows. It is the very diffusion of jobs in space,
facilitated by transportation that accounts for the accumulation of wealth and capital in
cities today. The displacement of people, goods and information is one of the most
embedded ideologies of the market. People are expected to move in urban
environments, but in very specific ways. 343 The model concentrating growth and jobs in

342 Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press,
1994), 149.
343 Take, for example, two highly public figures of mobility in Franc: the banlieusard and
the gen qui voyage. If the banlieusard is a figure of incarceration, unable to escape and move
beyond the isolated territory in which he lives, then the gens qui voyage, or Travelers, are
equally problematic in their nomadic lifestyles. While the banlieusard lives in a realm of
what Wacquant calls “advanced marginality,” due to the stigmatization and inescapability
of the banlieue, the Traveler (Roma being the best example here) experiences the precarity
of being too mobile. Both figures are constructed as outcasts and others to the urban
environment and are targeted with often racist policies to expunge them from the body
“hubs” addresses these dual goals by attempting to substitute the daily mobility of inhabitants for residential mobility. Leaving aside the important question of unemployment (as high as 35% in some communes in the region) the assumption is that reliable public transit is needed in order to move labor power to the market. As sediment of patterns of post-war modernization driven by automobiles and automobile culture, there now exist large distances between residence and employment, or as architect Christian de Portzamparc labels it, there is a disconnection between Hestia and Hermes.344

Between 1975 and 1999, employment across metropolitan Paris was partially relocated. The city of Paris lost 300,000 jobs in the last 25 years, while the same number was gained in the poles. Across the region, Paris, suburbs, near poles and far poles each respectively represent ¼ of the region’s jobs, whereas previously Paris had plurality.345 What Gilli refers to a “triple evolution in geography of employment” derives from this equi-division. There is firstly a diffusion of jobs outside the Périphérique as the “center politic. Yet the attempt to regulate these populations is merely emblematic of the more general need of the state to regulate the citizenry in their place of work and employment. In both cases, the state acts to constrain residential mobility, often through changing patterns of work and employment. These specific figurations merely articulate two sides of the more general need for the urban to meet needs of both production and social reproduction.

Le Moniteur Architecture, Le Grand Pari(s): Consultation internationale sur l’avenir de la métropole parisienne. Whereas Hestia is the goddess of the hearth and home representing interior and private lives, Hermes is the external public realm of travel and communication. The modern era relies upon a strict separation of these two in order to maintain public/private relations and production and reproduction. Yet these two aspects of urban living cannot be extracted from one another so easily and disjuncture between these causes alienation, anomic and decreases the ability of an urban environment to celebrate collective living and labor. As the previous discussion has shown, both Arc Express and the RTPGP are guilty of this.

Gilli, “Les Nouveaux Contours de la métropole parisienne.”
of gravity shifts to the west.” This is accompanied by a sprawl of jobs and a lack of organic polarization.\textsuperscript{346} If the infrastructural network of roadways, trains, and Métro lines is static, this poses a problem.

Commuting today has increasingly become a concern. Recent National Statistical Agency (INSEE) data shows that the number of commutes of all kinds is rising across the Île-de-France and that three quarters of employed Franciliens (regional inhabitants of Île-de-France) leave their commune for their place of work, just under one half also leaving their department. On average they spend 82 minutes per day commuting and it is not uncommon to spend over 2 hours.\textsuperscript{347} Many of these commutes are between banlieues as the job market attractiveness of Paris has been partially ceded to the grand couronne (outer suburbs), and especially to the Western department, Hauts-de-Seine.\textsuperscript{348} The shift westward of the center of gravity in employment presents a problem for static infrastructures and the less mobile residential markets. Furthermore there is a clear contradiction between increased land values that accompany polarization (including multipolarization) and the marginal locations where workers are forced to live. In La Défense for example, there exist four times more employment offerings than employed residents, while in Saint Denis, there are fewer offerings than residents.\textsuperscript{349} Today, what Kristen Ross has labeled, “l’homme disponsible” (which she translates variously as “available” and “moveable man”) of modern production practices, expects to be

\textsuperscript{346} Ibid., 36.
\textsuperscript{347} INSEE, “No. 1129: Les Déplacements domicile-travail amplifiés par périurbanisation,” March 2007; INSEE, “No. 331: Les Franciliens consacrent 1 h 20 par jour à leur déplacements.”
\textsuperscript{349} Ibid.
displaced, and now under a regime of post-industrial flexibility, at ever greater distances from where he calls home.\footnote{INSEE, “No. 331: Les Franciliens consacrent 1 h 20 par jour à leur déplacements.” As we might expect, the gender of the Ross’s “movable man” is important here as well. The report claims that women across the region are far less mobile than men. While this no doubt has to do with the types of jobs available to women (higher paid management positions require a longer commute), the gender aspects of mobility in Paris go beyond this and deserve more consideration than the literature provides.}

Lengthy and time-consuming commutes between work, residence and leisure can be a problem for the quality of life of urban inhabitants, and also for urbanization more generally. As Neil Smith writes, “mis-scaled urbanism can seriously interfere with accumulation. The issue of daily commutes lies at the center of the crisis.”\footnote{Smith, “New Globalism, New Urbanism,” 435.} Smith contends that most generally, when the “social division of labor between production and reproduction become[s] simultaneously a spatial division, and whatever other functions the city performs and activities it embodies, the social and territorial organization of the social reproduction of labor—the provision and maintenance of a working-class population—come to play a pivotal role in the determination of the urban scale.”\footnote{Ibid., 431.} The territorial organizations of reproduction and contemporary forces of production today have reached a point where they are no longer sustainable and the infrastructures must be altered to broaden the scale of the urban.

The GPE works to solidify and consecrate poles by moving jobs and people around the city, but the project does not do enough to address the mobility of housing alongside the movement of enterprise or daily mobility. To quote Mark Wiel, “One
cannot substitute for the other[s]."³⁵³ For Wiel, the movement of bodies around the city must be thought in term of the deeper divide between home and work that underwrites bourgeois urban space. He writes,

The bigger the city grows by segregating more mobility needs are growing and are expensive to satisfy. It becomes necessary find a compromise between the financial capacity of communities to facilitate mobility and open to urbanization, avoid excessive spatial concentration of employment but their excessive dilution, avoid too great a difference between characteristics of dwellings and that of the employment structure.³⁵⁴

A polycentric city claims to temporarily overcome the tension between residence and work, reproduction and production, but if the material conditions of its generation have not changed, the tension only becomes re-entrenched and reconfigured. Even with the 70 000 new housing units/year promised under Grand Paris, rising property values pose limits to housing accessibility. The problems of polarity and inequality of populations and geographies remain as vulnerable populations are pushed further out to the peripheries where public transit does not reach.

Attempts to manage the negative effects of this suburbanization/urbanization dialectic may undermine the life and growth of the city. Agglomeration may in fact mean that now more people and more industries compete for the same property and the expansion and unification of the region may worsen the existing hierarchies in property and job markets.³⁵⁵ In this context, households and employment move away from one another. The facility of movement does not bring them closer together, but farther apart.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.
For Wiel the assumption that commuting can stand in for all types of mobility view rests on the assumption that transit infrastructure can stand in for the problems that planning has repeatedly failed to solve. The myth that circulation and mobility are absolute goods misses the factors that direct movement and the goals to which they are aimed.

Against this, we must consider the idea that accessibility to movement throughout the city must also be about stopping rising property prices.\textsuperscript{356} The myth that circulation and mobility are absolute goods misses the factors that direct movement and the goals to which they are aimed. Though the urban has long been defined by its vectors of movement and capacities for circulation and encounter, these do not unequivocally improve living conditions and prospects for all inhabitants equally. The reliance upon the equivocation of mobilities is a trope that supports the transportation network at all costs, but increased movement alone does not mean that inhabitants can direct their movements according to their desires.

\textit{Mass Transit = Public Transit}

Despite a generalized “annihilation of space by time” under globalization, factors such as race and gender are irreducible to the movements and relations of capital. As Doreen Massey explains, “most broadly, time-space compression needs differentiating socially. This is not just a moral or political point about inequality, although that would be sufficient reason to mention it; it is also a conceptual point” about the “power

\textsuperscript{356} Even the Carrez Report admits this much. “The best transportation system cannot overcome the shortcomings of a bad planning policy. It is therefore appropriate that the pattern of transit of Greater Paris is set alongside a project of coherent and balanced territorial organization, which must accompany and support its implementation.”\textsuperscript{Carrez, “Grand Paris: Financement du projet de transports,” 33.}
geometry” of time-space compression. While “mass transit” implies the availability to all in equal measure so long as speed and movement are based on the conditions of competition, not all people will gain the same time or in the same way from rapid transit. This calls into question the “public” prefix usually attached to any mass transit scheme despite their often being yoked to private initiatives.

In focusing on transportation above other concerns of living, the state places economic above social and political problems, and assumes that increases in production as a result of transit-oriented development will extend to other extra-economic areas. In addition to where people move and why, it is also important to consider that the experience of the transportation system will be differentiated according to different populations. It has been largely absent from any kind of public debates that mass transit as it currently exists is not experienced the same way by all inhabitants. In contrast to the rich affective space of memory and desire that the subway can be for a middle and upper class resident of Paris, for many, especially low income, racialized youth, the metro and RER are institutions of extreme violence and vehicles of exclusion. For these inhabitants, the Métro is both a symbol of exclusion and a very real tool of increased state surveillance and control.

Historically, with previous expansions of transit lines to the “dangerous” suburbs, there has been an increase in security and surveillance as well. In the 1980s, shortly following the completion of regional rail extensions, the SNCF rail authority produced a number of complaints about “losing control” over the lines outside of Paris.

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357 Massey, Space, Place, and Gender, 148.
358 For an account of the rich anthropological dimensions of the Métro available to wealthy, “fully-French” residents, see Auge, In The Metro.
and publicly decried problems of vandalism, graffiti and muggings, even going so far as to call themselves an “unwilling participant in the drug scene.” Depending on where the transit lines go, different rules of treatment for commuter populations are required. A myriad of examples in recent years demonstrate the differentiated regimes of governance and the involvement of the transit system in producing and reproducing racialized and criminalized subjects. In the 1989 “security plan” for the metro and RER, surveillance of the transit system was increased, but only on the lines outside of Paris, in the so-called “spaces of disorder.” In a similar fashion, in 2010 heightened security measures were ordered for regional buses, but in effect, only applied to those routes in Seine-Saint-Denis. Ongoing complaints about the non-viability of the Vélib public bicycle program to the unruly suburbs also echo this general discourse of the unsuitability of the banlieue and banlieue residents for modern city amenities.

The racial overtones of transit security are clear. Overall, since the initiation of the Vigipirate security Plan (or Vichypirate as it is colloquially known) of 1978 (heightened after Métro bombings of 1995 and again after 9/11), police have stopped in targeted attacks, nearly 3 million North African and Arab looking residents in stations and on transit networks. As Paul Silverstein reminds us, the transportation industry is “an important site in the ambivalent production of the banlieues as spaces of order and disorder, tribalism and modernity … [it] both delineates racialized compartments and violates them, enables mobility and delimits the possible avenues through such

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359 Silverstein, *Algeria in France*, 111.
360 Ibid. Silverstein’s data is from 2004 and it can be assumed that the numbers have increased since then.
movement can occur.” There is nothing in the Grand Paris plans or in the proposals for Grand Paris Express that would indicate that the industry will not continue to be involved in the invidious linking of race, space and violence. Indeed, expansions in the network increase the powers of the apparatus to serve as a tool of surveillance and control.

In order to address the unequal way in which the transit network services and harms populations, we must then think through transindividual characteristics of mobility (others have referred to this as “collective mobility, or as Randy Martin calls it “social kinesthetic”). This would recognize the way that mobility is tied to production of space and production of subjects through social and economic relationships of, for example, labor, gender and neighborhood. The organization of travel for the purposes of displacing people from one location to another without an expenditure of too much time or money hinges on an understanding of society as an ensemble of persons without links to one another. It is a paradigm of extreme individualism, where mobility is the indissociable right of each. But the conditions of transportation are linked fundamentally to broader social and economic concerns such that, to quote Weil, “mobility is the result not the choice of one who commutes each morning.” A truly “communal” “public” transit network must address the link between transit and housing markets as well as transit’s securitized racial circuitries. As mobility is an expression of social relations

361 Ibid., 109.
363 Wiel, Le Grand Paris, Premier Conflit né de la décentralisation, 78.
communal transit would be concerned with the complex interplay of circulation and the way that political economic and social relations are mediated by networks of movement.

The pilots of Grand Paris act as if questions of property, income, and social relations are on a stage beyond planning and unrelated to new transportation initiatives, instead allowing their vision to be dominated by market imperatives (which are themselves profoundly social, though this too is denied). Any truly radical changes, though, must be multifaceted and multimodal and recognize the way in which transit, mobility and agency are socially and politically integrated.

*Sustainability*

As mobility is an expression of social relations communal transit would also question the notion of “sustainability” and ecology upon which the transit network is premised. While the environmental benefits of mass transportation are discursively powerful, especially in a global-city regime that requires a model of green city growth, what sustainability means in the post-Kyoto paradigm of Grand Paris is not so clear.

Heralded as a sustainable and green model of urbanization, transit-oriented developments typically emphasize the creation of mixed use neighborhoods, easy and universal access to mass transit, lowered carbon emissions, reduction in traffic congestion, improved air quality, land conservation, and a rich pedestrian life. What GPE demonstrates quite explicitly, however, is that to the extent that these goals are achievable, they only are available to a select few.

Sustainability, as it is articulated in Grand Paris, suggests that problems of polarity can be solved, inequitable impacts of growth managed. It ties together the goals of social
equity and environmental responsibility with economic growth, but privileges the latter of the former two, representing a compromise between capitalism and communal and environmental well being. The false alignment of these goals precludes spatial justice. More often than not, sustainability often reduces to a means of “boosterism” for world city status. \[364\] The very fact that the Grad Paris Express consists of a primary new underground systems calls sustainability here into question. In addition to the social impacts, the ecological ramifications of this will be disastrous and many have criticized the plan for its wanton restructurings. Léonhardt, for example, criticizes the underground project as being impractical for the suburban network and singles out Paris as the only modern metropolis to continue to push for underground service outside of a historically dense core. \[365\]

Recent studies have also raised doubt on the assumption that a polycentric model is better for the environment and will reduce automobile travel. \[366\] In her writing on sustainability discourses, Judy Rogers concludes that there is no direct link between sustainability and form and each vision must be carefully examined to determine the sustainability of what. \[367\] Rogers argues that “[t]he form of the city may help to promote or discourage different types of social (and transport) integration, but it cannot assure it.

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367 Judy Rogers, “Sustainability and the ‘World Class’ City: What is being sustained and for who?,” in *World Cities and Urban Form*, ed. Michael Jenks, Daniel Kozak, and Pattaranan Takkanon (New York: Routledge, 2008), 87. Rogers argues that “[t]he form of the city may help to promote or discourage different types of social (and transport) integration, but it cannot assure it. Urban form cannot compensate for most types of socio-economic inequalities.”
Urban form cannot compensate for most types of socio-economic inequalities.” The dominant idea is that compact urban forms are sustainable, efficient for transport, socially beneficial and economically viable, but the new GPE is not ecological or sustainable from the vantage of “vivre ensemble” or living together. Indeed the extension to Saclay through vital agricultural territories demonstrates the limits where the only green interest is money. Equality and interdependence among territories is subservient to competition and growth. What is sustained in the transformations of Grand Paris is a system of social and spatial fragmentation.

Even plans that seem environmentally friendly usually rely upon the existing regime of property, and therefore more radical solutions to create more sustainable and mobile cities are rejected outright. Grand Pari team AUC argues that he city suffers from a disconnection of use and property and claims that for true sustainability we must get rid of vehicle property entirely. A number of the architects of Grand Pari support this idea and propose collective taxis, bicycles and carpool systems to augment the new rapid transit network. But this would not only require an overhaul in property relations, but the need to change socio-psychological and technical electrical system in order to overhaul conditions of mobility. Without a massive revolution in how property and labor are distributed, sustainability will have little more than symbolic force.

Conclusion

Architectural critic Nikolai Oussoroff describes the panorama of metropolitan Paris from atop the Tour Pleyel skyscraper in Saint-Denis as follows:

\[368\] Ibid., 71.
What struck me most about the view...was the sense of isolation. The road to the airport looked like a scar, dividing the anonymous housing block on one side from the green parkland on the other. To the south, industrial wastelands bordered on a dense knot of rust-colored tracks that led into the Gare du Nord. Another set of tracks, to the Gare de l'Est, cut through an industrial landscape of decrepit sheds and vacant lots. Even the Seine, from here, looked like an open wound. Framed by these brutal incisions, the city seemed like a series of dying, isolated pockets. 369

There are a number of things that this vista captures most evocatively. The first is the sense of bleakness perceptible across Paris. The physical decay, zones of lifelessness, infrastructural degradation and separated neighborhoods are melancholic reminders of the decline from the once luminous industrial past. Indeed, the discourses of decrepitude and fragmentation, of stagnancy, sleepiness and mediocrity, are frequent invoked to describe the metropolis today; tropes matched by job losses in the capital, a dismantling of the social welfare system, civil unrest and generalized precarity. In the early years of the 21st century, the lights of modern Paris have dimmed. This depiction of a fallen Paris, whatever it’s merit, is the foil required to justify the Haussmannesque renovations proposed in the Grand Paris redevelopment plan. 370

The second notable element is that the bleakness is actually accentuated by systems of circulation. The Seine, rail lines and highways, networked channels that are designed to enliven the city by facilitating flow and movement, also do violence (Ossouroff uses the language of incisions, scars and wounds) and work to impair and

369 Ousouroff, “Remaking Paris.”  
370 The poor neighborhood plays the role of neoliberalism’s other—a remnant of an old regime that badly needs neoliberal treatment. This is the dialectic of utopianism/dystopianism of 21st century urbanism. In the Darwinian climate of competition, these neighborhoods are naturalized as not having the attributes to survive in the harsh climate of the market. See Guy Baeten, “The Uses of Deprivation in the Neo-liberal City,” in Urban Politics Now: Re-imagining Democracy in the Neo-liberal City, ed. BAVO (Rotterdam: NAi Publishers, 2007).
divide the city. Through both their physical presence and their limited scopes of accessibility, these infrastructures of connectivity are paradoxically means of enclosure. Transportation through urban space is not infinite or unidirectional, but has inherent contradictions and limits such that mobility and immobility are two sides of the same coin in unstable relation to one another. Moreover, this relation is embedded in the socioeconomic system and can entrench, as much as it can relieve, existing inequalities.

Understood in this context, the Grand Paris Express promises to change the landscape of Paris, but these changes are unlikely to achieve the equality and cohesion through which the project is framed. Whereas the elite class labeled by John Urry as “the new mobiles” will continue to have easy access to movement through and around the city of Paris, for those in low-wage employment or unemployed, the conditions of movement are very different. If, as it has been suggested, “global cities are the winner cities in the increasing competition among cities,” they do not spread these winnings equally across space. Global city status, to which Grand Paris aims, is equally about domination and power domestically, as it is about the position of the city in an international context. Peripherality constitutes the global city at all scales.

The inequalities inherent in the mode of urbanization are further exacerbated by the risk entailed in GPE mode of speculative development. The Grand Paris Expressed is poised for potentially disastrous effects. Léonhardt predicts that the GPE brings together all of the ingredients—debt financed projects, speculative development and

public spending—of a public industry crash. Speaking of the “abyss” of Grand Paris spending without transparency and without adequate justifications, Léonhardt suggests that the fantastic costs of Grand Paris are misguided and destructive and refers to the GPE as a “financial Grand Canyon.”373 Grand Paris is based on what he calls an “obsolete prototype” of development, especially when the results are fragile, non-reversible and inherently risky.374 Moreover, “this urban strategy writes the metropole into a situation of complete dependence to the realization of the network.”375 Contestation of this provision of transportation becomes futile or suicidal.

The changes proposed in GPE and related projects are not about facilitating public mobility so much as they are about managing private “traffic.” As Paul Virilio poignantly suggests, movement in a city is a relationship of power, with the state directing mobilizing efforts, communication, circulation and displacement.376 This regulation and organization of independent movement is reduced in the discourse of GPE to a simplistic instrumentality that erases or obfuscates the complexities of the urban as a social space and reinforces habits in line with the marketized rationality that guides the project. It also decreases the meaning of transportation to the sole goal of the

374 Ibid.
375 Ibid.
376 Paul Virilio, Speed and Politics, (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2006), 16. Virilio argues that the city is ontologically defined by its “constancy of displacement” and rather than a dwelling place, the city is a stop in movement, for “there is only habitable circulation.” For him the state tries to exercise control through exploiting the forms of mass movement. While transportation can be a revolt against subjection and against the bonds of immobility and incarcerality, when there is an “obligation to mobility” the subject is not freely choosing and is not autonomous in motions. (31, 52-54) The freedom to travel three hours on a highly surveilled train to a low-paying job is no freedom, but a sign of exploitation and incarcerality.
profit motive, in lieu of more political philosophical concerns about facilitating desire, democratic encounter and “the good” of urban life.

The emerging regime of speculative development led by transit projects is set to recast the state-market relations in France and will undoubtedly have lasting implications for urban and regional development in Paris and as a model for urbanism in aspiring and existing global cities. Under the Grand Paris plan, the core-periphery model of urbanization will change, altering both the morphology and functionality of territories across the region. Grand Paris Express will create a new map of the Paris metropolis and while banlieues as they currently are imagined, will be supplanted by business zones and research hubs, what they represent—the vast inequalities and spatial others at the heart of the republic—will not disappear.

As Engels reminds us in the still timely epigraph that began this paper, when the organization of space is subservient to capital, social and political concerns merely shift locations. It is too soon to discern the shape that Grand Paris will eventually take and centers and peripheries that will define the new metropolis. As the internal colonies of France are once again shuffled and reordered, new spatial arrangements will come to replace the core and the banlieue. While some claim that the poor and unwanted will simply be pushed farther and farther afield from the historic district, the overlapping regimes of centrality and peripherality at play in the Grand Paris transformations suggest a more complex picture. The Grand Paris Express is an important lens through which to think these incipient urban forms. The new borders created by the GPE may be difficult to predict but because the logic of commodification of land upon which Grand Paris
development is based, uneven development will ensure that the benefits of transit infrastructure will not accrue to all places or inhabitants in the same way.
Chapter Three  
A Thousand Layers of Governance

Whether states or cities, the territorial base is constitutive of contemporary governments. This power structure is deeply upset by the arrival of powerful logics of mobility and by increasing entanglements at different scales (and legitimacies) in the resolution of localized problems. This is especially the case for the world’s major cities. Their perimeters are increasingly undecided, their contents and residents are moving, they are part of territorial and actor systems with highly variable temporalities and scales. Institutions and systems involved in recent decades have questioned their ability to project themselves into the new system: should we invent new ways of coordinating institutions or must we invent new institutions?

The Metropolitan Dynamic

In the 21st century, cities are said to bypass nations as the essential sites of organizing social and economic life and as the arenas in which civic empowerment and disempowerment operate. As a result, state policies, governmental institutions, and modes of political analysis are now becoming increasingly oriented to the urban scale. On the one hand, there have been global transformations in the sovereignty and territoriality of the state as a result of 20th and 21st century globalization. The rise of powerful and capital-dense multinational corporations, the expansion of transnational networks of finance and social resistance and the entrenchment of powerful supranational organizations—especially the European Union—have combined to alter the scope of the European nation state and its operations. With massive global flows, the nation state is incapable of fully regulating national markets and cannot control the terms of migration, culture or political struggle within its borders. Additionally, the privatization of previous state functions means that apparatuses of governance are

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increasingly being unloaded to the market and to civil society. These processes have led many to question the viability of the nation state, and academics and popular commentators alike have proclaimed the state “weakened,” “undercut” and “hollowed out.” While there is much literature debating the “hyperglobalist” and “transformationist” understandings of states at the dawn of the 21st century, it is clear the managerial state has disappeared.\textsuperscript{378} As Rose suggests, today the “idea of an omnicompetent social state that would shape, coordinate and manage the affairs of all sections of society has fallen into disrepute.”\textsuperscript{379}

At the same time, we are witnessing the emergence of new strengths for regional and local governments. Cities are pivotal sites in neoliberal restructurings and have adopted entrepreneurial policies to insert themselves into global markets and raise their profiles as international political players. They are increasingly important nodes of investment, regulation (especially with respect to the environment) and service provision (with the priorities on policing and transportation). Thus, local administrations are increasingly important interfaces of governance. According to Roger Kiel, “[d]espite its historical marginalization in real politics and political science, urban politics in its limited sovereignty has now become a salient site of the governance of globalization.”\textsuperscript{380}

The literature on global cities takes into account both of these trends and concerns the ways in which contemporary processes of globalization \textit{take place}, and become embedded within territorial and spatial arrangements. Inspired by the seminal

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{378} For a detailed account of these debates, see David Held, \textit{Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture} (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1999).
\end{itemize}
work of Saskia Sassen, global city theories trace the articulation of global capital markets within localized territories, and the spatial organizations of international divisions of labor.\(^{381}\) The narratives of world city invoke exceptional centers of command and control of the global economy and a new division of international labor as well as new productive mechanisms and spatial arrangements beyond the nation state. As Oleg Golubchicov notes, “the shift from Fordism to flexible accumulation with spatial deconcentration of production has been coupled with a global spatial reconcentration of finance and management in certain socio-technological hotspots.”\(^{382}\) In particular, large cities here become key sites in the coordination of capital flows as surplus value is realized within the virtual circuits of finance and embedded into the built environment. The global city concerns the struggle between production in an era of global finance and local territorial factors. Global cities thus call attention to the importance of the urban scale, the state’s role in creating this scale, and the type of economic production that accompanies these conditions.

The integration of cities more directly within the global economy has induced specific types of structural and economic changes. In global cities, according to Sassen, production no longer occurs in industrial or manufacturing zones, or even in central business districts, but is spread out in more diffuse spatial arrangements. This physical organization is accompanied by new modes of mobilizing space for productive purposes. Smith contends that we are witnessing a shift from “an urban scale defined according to


the conditions of social production to one in which investment of productive capital holds definitive precedence” resulting in the “generalization of gentrification as a global urban strategy.” 383 In the global city, the production of urban space itself through development and redevelopment efforts—supported by financial, tourist and service sectors—is now the central goal of urban policy. In the global city real estate becomes a centerpiece to planning producing surplus value through rent. 384

These changes do not occur in absence of the national state, but often require its participation if not initiation. The relationship of the city to the nation state is thus not one of progression or replacement, but one marked by overlap, interpenetration, collusion and contradiction. Not only were the post-Fordist restructurings largely undertaken by the national state, but the global city metropolis itself arises out of a continuous interplay between supranational, national and subnational scales. 385 Due to

383 Smith, “New Globalism, New Urbanism.” Though social reproduction continues to be a concern, it no longer is predominant in defining the urban scale. Thus Lefebvre’s notion of social reproduction or Castell’s notion of collective consumption is no longer fully applicable.
384 Ibid.
385 Globalization and the increasing rise in financial industries in particular, is taking shape in the global city. However, this should not be thought of as a homogeneous or unilinear process, but the articulation of specific places depends on local struggles and gives world city politics a place-specific nature. That is, world city formation is a globally induced but locally contingent process in and through which globalization manifests itself as a contradictory relationship of the local political sphere. Global cities not natural, but born of social agent and come into being through policies, practices and events. Local cultural factors, including the enduring force of nation states are crucial in these dynamics. Grand Paris is a global city, but one engineered with particular precedents and conditions. See Kevin Cox, Spaces of Globalization: Reasserting the Power of the Local (New York: The Guilford Press, 1997); Erik Swyngedouw, Frank Moulaert, and Arantxa Rodriguez, “Neoliberal Urbanization in Europe: Large–Scale Urban Development Projects and the New Urban Policy,” Antipode 34, no. 3 (2002): 542–577; Doreen Massey, World City (New York: Polity
their continued presence in these dynamics, particularly in the large-scale organization of territory, states may still be considered “protagonists of globalization,” actively involved in the turn to the urban scale.\textsuperscript{386}

States also have strategic reasons for promoting signature cities, especially national capitals. As Golubchicov argues, “today’s nation states seeking to establish themselves as dominant actors in the global economy are no longer concerned with expanding the size of the territory…nor with the balanced development of their territory…but with their cities being visible among the ‘truly global cities.’”\textsuperscript{387} The state here is not “withering away” but is being reconfigured through various spatial and social levels. Globalization does not eradicate the state, but rather changes its form, orienting it toward global city metropolises.

The relationship between the strong central French state and Paris as a global city provides a striking example of these dynamics. Not only might we understand Grand Paris reforms along the lines of Sassen’s claim that globalization is embedded within national borders and institutions, but as the Paris case demonstrates, the expanding planning apparatuses since the 1970s require attention to the continued presence of the state in coordinating and directing transformations in administration as well as transformations in territory.

In addition to the transformations of city and state under globalization, there are two main dimensions to the ensemble of relations of governance in the region that

\textsuperscript{386} Keil, “Globalization Makes States.”
\textsuperscript{387} Golubchikov, “World-city-entrepreneurialism.”
condition the changes proposed under *Grand Paris*. The first dimension concerns the political tension within Republicanism between a central and universal authority and more disparate “local” or direct democratic arrangements. Debates between Jacobin or Napoleonic authority with a highly ordered and powerful central command, and Girondin localism, where power is decentralized into diffuse factions, have existed since the time of the Revolution. France is known for its priority of the former, and the strong national government has traditionally had a very prominent role in organizing national affairs, coordinating everything from universal educational curricula to nativist cultural policy to territorial and industrial production. Yet despite this, since the 1970s there have been a series of devolutions of authority to subnational levels of government. Decentralization has created numerous levels of governmental authorities that divide functions share responsibilities. More often than not, this has resulted not in seamless cooperation, but in redundancy, institutional disagreement and complexification. The central state can no longer exert unilateral influence over policy. The state-regional debate over mass transit outlined in Chapter Two is one example of the difficulties of policy provision in this climate. In fact in many sectors—from healthcare and education to welfare, policing and basic infrastructural services (water, sewage)—there are ongoing conflicts over the proper combinations of intergovernmental intervention and capacity.

This is further compounded by the second aspect of the reforms: the fact that Paris is the national capital and the administrative region in which it rests, Île-de-France, is the most populist and wealthiest in France. There is a disproportionate influence of

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388 Both of these, it is important to note, see a deep penetration of the state into and throughout society.
the Île-de-France over the rest of France and a disproportionate influence of Paris within the region itself. The weight of the city with respect to the rest of the country has meant that Paris is subject to more state involvement and more targeted measures than other parts of the country. From 1775-1995, for example, Paris had never been governed by a representative city government. The capital city was held in the tight grip of the prefect of the Seine department. Moreover, despite the constitutional principle of non-hierarchization among local collectivities, traditionally most of this wealth has been centered in the department and commune of Paris.

The capital region as seat of the government and symbolic center of the nation means that the state has a special interest in the territories of the Île-de-France and its social and economic functions, but other consequences flow from this as well. The capital region is also the site of international organizations and national and international headquarters of business and finance which today are altering the power arrangements of who represents and who manages the metropolis. This is at once a concern for local inhabitants and politicians and for the residents and officials of France more generally. Recent dynamics of decentralization and the priority of Paris as the national capital further define the particular relationship between the global city of Paris and the French state.

In order to enable the metropolitanization of Paris, a new administrative landscape that will regulate, manage, and direct this change is being forged from above and below. In order to address the overall question of the meaning of 21st century Paris and how it is being built, it is essential to recognize the emergence of the Parisian Metropolis as an object of analysis and deliberation. It is important to determine both
how this metropolitan scale is being produced at the level of politics and the economy, and how and by what mechanisms and institutions it is being governed.

As evidenced by the *Grand Paris* architectural exhibition and the Grand Paris Express transit initiative, urban policy in Paris is oriented toward expanding the scale or the city and creating a Grand polity that encompasses much of the region, while also serving as a showcase for the national government. *Grand Paris* attempts to mitigate transformations in the nation state and in the city of Paris, paradoxically, by reconcentrating power in the hands of the central government while simultaneously rescaling the territoriality of the state from a national level to an urban-regional level.

As Chapter One and Chapter Two demonstrate, *Grand Paris* remaps the territory imaginatively and economically to achieve the end of the global city metropolis. This is also done through politico-juridical means by changing administrative borders, creating new tools for regional governance and offloading aspects of territorial management to private institutions. While the preceding chapters have sketched out important elements of the political rationality of *Grand Paris*, this chapter turns more directly to the landscape of regional governance and to the emerging configurations of the French state as articulated through the *Grand Paris* mega-project. It argues that the emergent state and city forms are a result of competing modes of production and systems of managing spaces. Just as the limits of Fordism caused a rescaling of the state beginning in the 1970s toward the central districts of Paris, new forms of restructurings are attempting to overcome the limits of this model by diffusing in space the productive capacities of the Parisian metropolis. Parallel to this is a partial shift from national steering of spatial policies to subnational and supranational influence over urban affairs. Starting from the
inchoate “metropolitan fact,” this chapter traces a genealogy of metropolitan governance in order to understand more fully the contemporary constellations of power and authority in the region today.

In what follows, the chapter will trace shifts in the territoriality of governance over the past forty years, especially with respect to urban policy and planning, leading up to the implementation of Grand Paris. In particular, it focuses on the relationship between geographies of production and the scalar division of the state. It then examines four political institutions of Grand Paris as emblematic of unsettled state-market relations: territorial administrative unites of the Île-de-France, intercommunal agglomerations (including Paris Métropole), the Society of Grand Paris (SGP), and public private networks. Thus it demonstrates how metropolitan projects are engineered and governed by multiple forces. The chapter ends by considering the nature of the contemporary metropolis and its role within the French state today, as well as the implications of such a metropolis for democracy. It argues that metropolitanization through Grand Paris and through mega-project development coalesces around a financialized urban regime that relies on plural actors in pursuit of revenue production over service provision removing the ability to manage spatial changes out of the hands of the citoyen, (urban dweller).

The Pluralization of Governance

Governance in modern democracies is typically seen as a matter of representation, of the constitution of an authority that speaks for a legitimate territorial base, but this governance is, as the epigraph suggests, also very much a mode of invention. The Parisian metropole is not the telos of an organic and inevitable process of
political calibration, but is a moment in the dynamic of metropolitanization—the creation of an imagined community, a set of social relations, an economy and an institutional framework that operates in and through a particular scalar arrangement. Spaces like the “nation” and the “urban” are not preexisting containers filled with different material and ideological contents, but they are actively produced through struggles as scales of activity, governance and life. This happens in a path-dependent way that always build upon earlier conditions—possibilities for future transformations being predicated upon the inherited conditions of the present. For there to be institutions designed to solve the problems of the contemporary metropolis, *Grand Paris* must first conceptualize such a metropolis to be managed.

Nikolas Rose’s work on contemporary governing elucidates the dialectical movement of scalar arrangements and the institutions to oversee them. He writes on the origins of the national economy in the 19th century, that “[t]he birth of a language of national economy as a domain with its own characteristics, laws, and process that could be spoken about and about which knowledge could be gained enabled it to become an element in programs which could seek to evaluate and increase the power of nations by governing and managing ‘the economy.’”389 A similar dynamic is underway today in the creation of the metropolis and the metropolitan scale. Just as the national accounting work of Jean Monnet, for example opens a new domain of knowledge—of calculation, transcription and action—that shifted the principles and practices of government to enable post-war reconstruction, so too do the initiatives of *Grand Paris*—the pluralization of policy-making, the establishment of intercommunal entities, and the creation of new

389 Rose and Miller, *Governing the Present*, 31.
zoning and tax tools—indicate an attempt to create a new global city region. A dedicated program such as *Grand Paris* works to create a new commonsensical notion of the metropole around which new policies will rotate, and then to formulate the policies which strengthen and reify this fact.

The creation of the metropole, however, is hampered by contradictory political and economic conditions, particularly in the administrative landscape governing cities in France today. The matrix of relations that constitute the modern French state are nowhere more pronounced than in large urban areas, and especially in the capital region. Île-de-France is notorious for its complex administrative landscape and for the multitudinous competing and overlapping governmental and non-governmental structures that collectively organize and manage metropolitan Paris.

In terms of traditional administrative organization, there are three official tiers of subnational government in France. From the most specific to the most broad these are: communes, departments and regions. Traditionally the communes were arranged as extensions of local church parishes, and are organized around services including public security, health, water and waste (though they now retain more control over urban planning). Departments are mainly administrative units whose elected assemblies, the “conseils généraux” (“general councils”) deal with issues such as public welfare, highways, public facilities. The system of regions was established to provide a base for national economic planning. While this remains their primary function, they are also responsible for public housing, education and training and economic development.

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390 Ibid., 36–39.
391 Lynne Louise Bernier, “Decentralizing the French State: Implications For Policy,”
Beyond these official tiers, other institutions ranging from intergovernmental contracts and intercommunal partnerships to private enterprise and civil society groups are also increasingly involved in the governance of the Republic and its spatial distributions. However, the official and unofficial configuration of the French state is undergoing profound shifts and nowhere is this more evident than in the Île-de-France. Since 2005 in particular, there have been a series of movements to restructure the boundaries of administrative territories, streamline services such as police across the region, implement regulatory policies (especially with respect to the environment) across departments, and promote formal and informal interterritorial cooperation to the end of metropolitanization.

Described colloquially as a “mille feuille,” a pastry consisting of a supposed “thousand layers” of dough, governance in the capital region of France is complicated, seemingly impenetrable, yet threateningly fragile. This configuration has been criticized for impeding policy formation and implementation and making the functions of regional governance—organization of production, provision of social services, regulation of activity—inefficient, ineffective, and undemocratic, not to mention difficult to analyze. Political commentators on all sides of the political spectrum have criticized this landscape for the social and economic problems that plague the region and suggest that breaking down these institutional obstacles is necessary in order to bring Paris into the 21st century.392

Indeed, in their appraisal of contemporary Paris, the ten architectural teams of *Grand Paris* almost universally agree that the regional configuration of the French state is confusing, inefficient, counterproductive, asymmetrical and undemocratic. More than one team referred to the multiple overlapping governing bodies of the region as “vertiginous,” while Richard Rogers listed the task “Restructure metropolitan governance in the Île-de-France” in the first position in his *10 Principles for Metropolitan Paris.* In line with this diagnosis, one of the driving forces of *Grand Paris* more generally is to agglomerate the city politically and to streamline governance of the over twelve hundred communes, as well as seven departments and dozens of intercommunal establishments that make up the institutional landscape of the Île-de-France region. This will entail a new configuration of the state and a new frame of governance.

The institutional prong of *Grand Paris* alone involves a number of task forces to reorder territorial relations, most notably the 2007 Interministerial Committee for the Development of Territory (CIADT) and the 2009 Committee for the Reform of Local Collectivities, presided over in March 2009 by Edouard Balladur, giving rise to the


393 L’AUC et al., “Le Grand Pari(s) de l’agglomération parisienne” (Museum Exhibition, Musée De L’architecture et du Patrimoine, September 10, 2009).

394 *Grand Paris* also claims to foster cooperation across this fractured landscape. “This project is built on a logic of accountability and partnership between institutional, social and economic capital of the Region. Around a shared and ambitious vision, beyond geographical boundaries, administrative and social dialogue nourished by and moderated by new institutional players with a metropolitan look on questions of general interest, a joint project was born in identifying contributions everyone can make and providing the means to implement them.” Ministre de la Ville “Le Grand Paris: Description générale,” http://www.mon-grandparis.fr/le-grand-paris/description-generale.
infamous “Balladur Report.” The meaning of metropolitan Paris is deeply in question today, not only at the level or representation as witness in Chapter One, but also in terms of the reach of the state, its constitution and its functions. Undoubtedly, with these shifts, come changing meanings of governance, citizenship and control over the future of Paris and its surroundings. The changes in the administration of the state cannot be understood merely as institutional adjustments however, but indicate new spatial arrangements of governance, and a new territoriality of the state itself. This is both a political and an economic process that is embedded within changing material conditions of global capital, as well as the dynamics of rule and management on a more local scale.

We now turn to a recent history of regional planning in Paris and to some of the political institutions that mark the Grand Paris global city statist mode, as well the systems of legitimation that support them. As Grand Paris is an emerging form, this analysis is not complete or coherent, and what the map of institutions indicates more than anything, is a tension between old and new forms of production and old and new modes of governance for control over metropolitan Paris.

From a National Republic to a Global City

Georges Vedel once summed up the Republican ethos of government in France by stating, “In France, the decentralization process is so natural that we organize it in a centralized way.” Though the legacy of a centralized Napoleonic state has been very influential in shaping state power in France, the state has undergone profound changes such that this centrality is no longer located solely in a national sovereign, but has

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395 Anecdotal. Source unknown.
become diffused throughout administrative levels of government, institutional apparatuses, private enterprises, as well as the broader social norms, discourses and habits that continually manage and coordinate collective life. The ironic paradox Vedel invokes speaks to the fundamental problem with the language of centralization and decentralization to describe the complex workings of policy, services and regulation. The two terms are often not opposite processes, but mutually reinforcing trends, and what we mean by “centralization” or “centrality” when speaking of a shifting organization of power, territory, inhabitation and economy is by no means clear. On their own, neither centralization nor decentralization satisfactorily describes the changes in governance, spatial planning and urban intervention over the past forty years.

The language of “state space,” however, and analysis of the central state in terms of spaces of economics, intervention, representation and policy, avoids the conceptual trappings of the decentralization literature. 396 In analyzing the reorganization of

396 Brenner describes how different types of state spaces are produced through the organization of social life and production. These spaces are formed through state strategies and policies when social and economic relations must be organized to meet competing needs. Nations in this sense, are formed out of the need to balance the requirements of an organized and regularized market (provided by the structures of a unified state) with that of competition (between national markets). Similarly, “regions” are temporarily stable geographic configurations that demonstrate a structured coherence in production, distribution, exchange, and consumption for a time in order to balance local concerns and global imperatives. Here metropolises are organized to manage the contradictions in space brought about through the core-periphery model of urbanization. The organization of social and economic relations involves relations of force that distribute functions and populations. These relations are therefore political as well. Establishing who has the right or authority to organize space is in fact, one of the most fundamental political questions. As Brenner argues, “Different figurations of state sociospatial organization can manage the contradictions of capitalism more or less effectively.” The organization of space is never fixed but is subject to restructurings and ongoing struggles. Neil Brenner, “Global, Fragmented, Hierarchical: Henri Lefebvre’s Geographies of Globalization,” *Public Culture* 10, no. 1 (1997): 135. See also Neil Smith,
established relations between the city and other types of spaces we are able to arrive at a more complex and dynamic socially produced ordering of political, economic and social interactions. Giving a broad context to the devolution or concentration of state capacities and responsibilities, an analysis on the changing territoriality of the state enables us to see the multiform and often incoherent ways in which the state divides and spatializes its functions in a non binary manner. Through this, we can illustrate the state’s changing role in production, and how the state productive complex interacts with dynamic political, economic and social systems.

The following section traces a genealogy of spatial governance leading up to the metropolitan project of Grand Paris. This history is decidedly non-chronological as often contradictory and conflictual modes of spatial organization exist in the same eras. The thematic categories of “Steering from the Center,” “Scaling the Urban” and “A City Seized by Finance” are thus not unique and self-contained historical eras, but approximate “moments” that crystallize certain processes of state spatiality. While defining elements accede or recede over time, these moments often coexist, and indeed, the restructuring of Grand Paris is in many ways, an attempt to make sense of their uneasy simultaneity. Across each of these loosely arranged eras, there is an underlying aspect of the state mobilizing space as a productive force through planning and policy

initiatives, and a concurrent hierarchization of social and spatial relations through the
differentiation of space.

Steering from the Center (1960-1986)

Centrality has built itself against local autonomy in royal, imperial and republican
guises. The dependent relationship between local and national bodies has a long history
and is consolidated with the emergence of the modern state throughout the 19th century,
where the national became the dominant organizing force—creating a new unified public
space around the ideals of Frenchness and strengthening the sovereign power of military
and civilian infrastructures. Both of these factors tended to forestall a deepening of any
uniquely urban power.397

Under the Fourth Republic (1946-1958), the national-local relationship came to the fore. There was a great distrust of the political elite and the central government,
suffering the fallout from the Vichy regime, was highly unstable and largely ineffective.
This political and institutional trouble at the center contrasted with the continuity and
stability at the local level. Local governments which had provided services through times
of transition gained popular support and began to take on new administrative tasks of
economic and social rebuilding. The stability afforded to the center with the advent of
the Fifth Republic began a series of intergovernmental disputes between the state and
subnational bodies. Combined with failures of decolonization and the integration of
France into the European Economic Community, the central national authority was in

397 Gilles Pinson, “The Governance of French Towns. From the Centre-periphery
doubt despite its seeming success in directing vast post-war rebuilding and
redevelopment efforts.

Scholars have typically analyzed local administration in the Fifth Republic
according to Michael Crozier’s framework of a “local political administrative system.”
This account sees local actors being “steered by the center” and “conceives of local
political life, urban politics, and local actors only through the issue of their relationships
of dependence and submission to central state representatives and their attempts to skirt
the rules imposed by the center.” Under this form of state *dirigisme*, or managerialism,
the main purpose of local authorities is to maintain a consensus for centralized state
policies. French *dirigisme* post-reconstruction consists of a number of fronts, notably in
economic planning, statist policies and in a state-led credit system to finance industry.

It is under this rubric that the first social democratic Keynesian regional
development policies were enacted, creating national unity through large scale planning
of industry. Under Keynesianism, most economic strategies were national and were
redistributive and compensatory relying upon priorities such as equity and
redistribution. The urban was an important site of industry and of modernization, but
the organization of political economy remained focused on national priorities. The state
here aimed to reproduce the labor force at the urban scale through provision of social
services across national territory and in order to standardize the provision of welfare

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398 Michel Crozier and Jean-Claude Thoenig, “La Régulation des systèmes organisés
complexes: Le Cas du système de décision politico-administratif local en France,” *Revue
399 Pinson, “The Governance of French Towns. From the Centre-periphery Scheme to
Urban Regimes.”
400 See especially Brenner, *New State Spaces.*
services and coordinate economic policies, urban development instruments were centralized. In several states across Europe in the 1960s, the region emerged as a key level of action for the state. The region was the most appropriate level at which to address these problems through industrial policy, urban planning and coordination. These remained, however, arms of the central state. In France as in Italy, existing territorial elites tied to the central state were effectively given control of the regionalization processes. Under the framework of *amenagement du territoires* in France, the state used the newly created regions as a framework for central policies. The DATAR (Delegation for Regional Development and Territorial Planning), established in 1963, was the primary engine of regional planning and economic development. DATAR led the state strategies to organize the geographies of population settlement, infrastructural investment and capitalist expansion and ushered in the golden age of Fordist Keynesian capitalism. Through DATAR, for example, the centralized state planning agencies instituted the development of the region around Paris through zoning territories for industry and residence and ensuring a balanced distribution of manufacturing activities.

The plans of DATAR and other agencies were contracted through all four levels of government and with private sector interests. This left some room for disagreement and the pursuit of competing interests, but in practice governments below the state level

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401 “Regions” were officially established as administrative units in 1982 but they were weakly institutionalized and did not become full directly-elected governments until 1986. From the 1980s onward, the new wave of regionalism was linked to economic restructuring and globalization and by European integration.
were not allowed to adopt policies that contravened those of the regional plan.\textsuperscript{402} The centrality of the national in these arrangements was assured through institutional mechanisms such as the regional prefect who was appointed by the national state to run local affairs and oversee the regional master plan, the primary means of negotiating between local and national interests. Moreover, the cumul des mandats allowed elected and appointed officials to maintain positions at several different government levels simultaneously. The role of urban governance was indeed important in this managerial approach, but the urban scale was seen mainly as one of social reproduction—of providing the necessities of life to enable day-to-day existence. Thus public investments, especially in roads, but also in hospitals, schools, transportation and housing were enacted so as to serve the broader state policy.\textsuperscript{403} Individual urban plans for urban unity, solidarity identity or direct democracy were absent.

However, as an outgrowth of Fordist accumulation, the spatial organization of urban, suburban and rural habitats began to change, and along with it, appropriate types of state intervention. Brenner writes,

As the Fordist accumulation regime reached maturity, a sustained decentralization of capital investment unfolded as large firms began to relocate branch plants from core regions into peripheral spaces. Under these conditions, urban governance acquired a key role in a variety of nationalizing scale-making projects in which western European states


\textsuperscript{403} In the postwar era, reconstruction at the national level used regulations, subsidies and state-controlled credit for industrial development. Most of the access to funds came through the central state in a highly bureaucratized and technocratic process of grants. Though taxes were collected at the local level, development and social service provision came from state-controlled credit. Even private investors relied on a financial system that was heavily bound to the state, with foreign integration into the economy low and the Paris \textit{Bourse} (stock exchange) run by a small elite class and antiquated norms.
attempted to construct centralized bureaucratic hierarchies, to establish nationally standardized frameworks for capitalist production and collective consumption, to underwrite urban and regional growth, and to alleviate uneven spatial development throughout their national territories.\textsuperscript{404}

There was a national incentive to orient policy and production toward the urban scale following capital investment, even if this required ceding some power in order to do so.

The move toward more local control, however, was not just a result of an economistic logic as Brenner suggests, but it was also imbued with intense political and ideological struggles over control over spatializing functions. Decentralization and the institutional strengthening was a particular priority of the Socialist Party (PS) who had been the opposition party in the parliament and had little commitment to the prevailing institutions of the Fifth Republic. The PS of the time had built up strength in localities and the ideological support for more democratic ideas of “autogestion” and self-management against the authoritarianism of a central state. Indeed, decentralization was presented by the PS of 1980 as “one of the most powerful levers of the rupture with capitalism, which will permit citizens to take the most direct path on the immense enterprise of social transformation which will be undertaken when the state has been conquered by the left.”\textsuperscript{405} Both economic and industrial management were important


\textsuperscript{405} Keating, “Decentralization in Mitterrand’s France.” In fact, it was in this context that Lefebvre published his treatise \textit{De L’État} just two years before Mitterrand and the Parti socialiste (PS) won the general election of 1981. His analysis of the SMP arose out of the material and institutional conditions of his day, as well as the ideological disputes within the French Left about the future of governance, the meaning of the state and the nature of self-managed grassroots organizing. These debates became even more relevant after the PS victory and with the reforms to government under the laws of 1981 and 1982.
elements of decentralization and were techniques meant to counter the disproportionate weight of the central state in production policies. The dissatisfaction with the centralized policy schemes and the failure of communal democratic procedures were prominent concerns within partisan debates. 406

The Defferre Laws of 1982 began the far-reaching transformations of intergovernmental relations and the movement of substantial decision making power and policy responsibilities to subnational levels of government. Touted by some as François Mitterrand’s “greatest domestic policy accomplishment” the laws dramatically shifted relationships of the centralized state system.407 The first law of decentralization stated, for example, that regions, departments and communes could respectively “take measures necessary for the protection of the social and economic interests of the population” as long as the measures did not contravene the master plans for development. 408 This relied on a principle of “shared functions” means that each level has lead responsibility over broad areas, but there is no domination exercised by one level over those under it. Both principles have continued to be underlying tenets of the institutional web of French governance.

As part of the decentralization process put in place by Mitterrand’s government, local governments were also allotted tax-raising capabilities and more responsibility for service provision. While the 1981-83 laws saw a series of radical decentralizations—the

While the ideas of decentralization had radical orientations, their implementation more often than not, strengthened both the role of the centralized state, and the capitalist class it tacitly supported.

406 Ibid.
408 In Keating, “Decentralization in Mitterrand’s France.”
right of decision making to local collectives, the repartition of competences between communes, departments and regions, refinancing initiatives—these early forms of *autogestion* were for the most part subsequently revoked. Therefore, while the geography of economic intervention would remain at this new more local scale, welfare-oriented measures and those focused on self-determination were quickly overturned in favor of national priorities.

By spreading out its powers, the state did not fundamentally change the access to control over production, but became more aligned with the economic and social realities of the day. Indeed the state could no longer assume the direct management of the complexity of contemporary governance functions as Fordist-Keynesianism developed and decentralization enabled the state to maintain a degree of control while surrendering tasks to subnational administrative bodies and bureaucracies. This is said to free the entrepreneurial energies and capacities of regional players, while simultaneously increasing “capacity building” of the state.\(^409\)

Decentralization benefited the central state in a variety of ways. Once decentralization had been implemented in the early 1980s, for instance, central government changed its mode of intervention into regions and communes. The second 1982 decentralization law saw for example, the establishment of the State-Region plans for roads, highways, bridges, educational facilities and other infrastructures of development. These plans would emerge from regional councils, but would then have to be negotiated through the prefect as a state representative. For many, this amounted to a

new form of central steering whereby the regional prefectures were used to direct policies that had originated at a local level.\textsuperscript{410}

Similarly, the attack on \textit{dirigisme} through opening barriers to international markets also had the surprising effect of strengthening centrality. The financial reforms of the PS to deregulate markets and undo the hegemony of domestic investors had the effect of strengthening the power of the national state and market. Financial deregulation would seem to undermine the \textit{dirigist} system by opening up the economy to extra-state forces, yet was an important strategy to spur on markets and create a new pseudo-\textit{dirigist} system.\textsuperscript{411}

While some saw the laws of 1981 and 1982 were seen as threats to the state and the nation, others were thus skeptical of their supported radical nature. Many critics claim that the Defferre Laws while purporting to create more direct democracy, amounted to little more than to “decentralize the recession” enabling the state to “divest itself of certain expenditures” in an effort to save money. There was consensus on the far left that this broader program of state reform was driven by the central government’s desire to shed unwanted or inflationary functions, while maintaining the function of

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\textsuperscript{410} Ibid. See also Michael Keating, “The Invention of Regions: Political Restructuring and Territorial Government in Western Europe,” \textit{State/Space: A Reader}, ed. Neil Brenner, Bob Jessop, Martin Jones, and Gordon Macleod (Malden: Blackwell, 2003), 268. Keating states that “In line with French administrative tradition, public policies are contractualized between the state and the region, with the result that regions often end up not only adopting national priorities, but even subsidizing activities which are officially the responsibility of the national government, like universities and railways. The interlinking of state and regional actions continues all through the implementation process, and only a personalized power focused on the territorial notables can overcome this institutional weakness.”

“steering at a distance.” According to Henri Lefebvre, the 1980s reforms are merely a continuation of the established pattern of the Fifth Republic. “Since DeGaulle,” he writes, “political elites have attempted a simulacrum of decentralization; this consists, in fact, of transferring the problems, but not the privileges of the central power to grassroots organizations and associations. All the important decisions remain with the State.” What appeared to be democratic movements to a more local base of power and mode of conditioning daily life was in fact undertaken to strengthen the state and especially, to enable the state to perform the kinds of territorial management necessary for post-war reforms.

Despite new orientations and interventions, policy remained through this moment highly controlled by the central state. The degree to which policy stemmed from local initiatives and concerns is questionable, as local (regional or urban) concerns were mainly pursued for the ends of a stable and steadily growing national economy. The state continued to direct industrial policy through nationally-oriented spatial distributions. This resulted in an extreme centralization of control of the conditions over spatial production and use such that individuals and local communities were largely impotent in conditioning urban change. The dirigist system began to change however, under pressures form an increasingly global market, international neoliberal consensus, interterritorial competition, demographic changes and class struggle.

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412 Cole, “Decentralization in France.”
413 Lefebvre, State, Space, World, 129.
Scaling the Urban through Politique de la Ville (1970-2000)

If May ’68 signaled the end of the “glorious” era of Fordist-Keynesian growth, mass consumption and industrial labor, then in the early 1970s a new system of state regulation and management began to form in and against this backdrop. The privileged target remained the national economy but some policies targeting particular urban areas were introduced that moved away from this universal and generalized objective and the urban became a scale of intervention and organization in its own right.

On the one hand, it became evident in the 1970s and 1980s that Fordism was in crisis. Broadly the national economic gains made in the first decades after WWII were beginning to diminish and increasing inequality between classes as well as territories signaled that even with mean incomes rising nationally, wealth did not accrue to all in the same way. Europe-wide, large scale projects of reform were downsized under conditions of austerity, national welfare systems were dismantled and restricted, local governments faced budgetary shortages and competition, growth and global finance came to orient policy at the scale of both the urban and the national. Territorial inequalities caused by industrial competition and collapse led to new metropolitan nodes that were disproportionately powerful while others were marginalized. According to Keating, “The theory of equal status of all communes has been reduced to a myth, and division between cities and the surrounding departments have been exacerbated in France.”

Equality here no longer referred to universalized distribution, but equality of the market, achieved through the targeted establishment of “differentiated rule regimes” whereby reconcentrations of populations and industry were tied to strategic economies and

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414 Keating, “Decentralization in Mitterrand’s France.”
customized territorial administration.\textsuperscript{415} The view of individual cities as national economic assets became widely accepted and urban locational policies which targeted cities for the enhancement of national competitiveness became widespread. Specific development strategies for cities and regions came to be seen as the answer for both political and economic woes.

This began the first stage of the development of what Brenner calls “rescaled competition state regimes” or RCSRs. The RCSC emerges in contrast to the earlier managerialist models of national government and consists in a number of important features:

- \textit{Rescaled}, because it rests upon scale-sensitive political strategies intended to position key subnational spaces within supranational circuits of capital accumulation; a \textit{competition state}, because it privileges the goal of economic competitiveness over traditional welfarist priorities such as equity and redistribution; and a \textit{regime}, because it represents an unstable, evolving institutional-geographical mosaic rather than a fully consolidated framework of statehood.\textsuperscript{416}

Urban regions would now compete for investment on the global market and with the “unstable evolving institution-geographic mosaic” unable to provide services in a coherent way, the promise of the modern social democratic state faded.

Not only were the economic conditions deteriorating between and within territories, but this was combined with social concerns caused by (de-)industrialization and its particular impact on race and class. Of the large number of immigrants from North and West Africa who were brought to France as laborers in the post-war construction and manufacturing boom, most had settled in urban areas, and a generation

\textsuperscript{416} Brenner, \textit{New State Spaces}, 260.
on (often as full legal citizens), continued to live in abhorrent conditions, and violently discriminated against in civic life. They had been denied the dream of modern France that they had by and large built with their own labor. A number of organized marches and protests as well as more spontaneous riots in suburban areas signaled a problem with both the national rhetoric of French universality, and the blanket application of social policies, which structurally discriminated against urban inhabitants. There were violent outbursts from the banlieues against the state as a response to exclusion, economic deterioration and the racialized division of labor upon which the post-war state had been founded. No small part of the increased attention to the urban scale, especially aimed at the peripheries, was due to fear of spreading resentment.

As a result of the combined focus on urban competition and urban fragmentation, a series of particular policies were developed as instruments to raise the status of cities and improve the conditions for competition and investment. The Développement social des quartiers (DSQ) approach of the socialist government of the early 1980s is often seen as the first stage of the infamous politique de la ville. The politique de la ville renewed discourses of social participation in urbanization and urban planning, (though the experiments of self-management were severely limited in scope and duration) and it was first instituted by left-wing governments as a kind of spatially defined affirmative action targeting impoverished areas. 417 This policy was managed by a

417 Affirmative action could not target populations themselves because recognizing the existence of identified groups would challenge the universality of the Republic. Space, however, was seen as being both neutral and universal enough to then be parcelled into distinguishable “problem neighborhoods.” The urban territory that these policies created was an outlaw one—a challenge to Republican values, a hotbed for crime and delinquency and a place of poverty, foreignness and danger.
national commission that focused on a targeted and multi-sector approach to urban phenomena involving many ministries and associations including the Ministry of Work and Solidarity the Interdepartmental Committee for Cities and the Interministerial delegation for the City.\textsuperscript{418} The \emph{politique de la ville} makes use of many authorities created for specific policy areas (DATAR etc.) but uses a much more integrated and targeted approach than is seen in the managerial models of development. The priorities of the plan included contracts, public deliberation, global approach and citizen’s participation for the purpose of public governance. While it employed a “Marshall Plan” rhetoric of vast public spending for redevelopment, the actually dispensations of funds were limited and estimated budget of €4.5 billion/year.\textsuperscript{419}

From its initial phases, it was based in ideas of “partnerships” with civil society actors and local non-governmental organizations. In many poor neighborhoods, local managers and leaders were contracted to become local facilitators for social work through a delegation of public action to NGOs.\textsuperscript{420} The plan relied upon a series of

\begin{itemize}
\item While it emerges out of local governance initiatives of self management that followed May ’68, these grassroots concerns were soon swept up into the national bureaucratic system.
\item When urban policy first emerged in the 1980s, the approach was aimed at neighborhoods. It was local, contractual and statist. Priority boroughs were selected and the national strategies were implemented under the representative of the mayor and the central government representative, the \textit{Préfet}. In 1982, \textit{Zones d'éducation prioritaire}, (ZEPs) were established in response to this flaw and to improve education in particular. These peripheral areas saw supplementary educational posts, pedagogical credits, and academic and administrative funds. In keeping with a crackdown on the outlaw areas of the Republic, 1982 saw the establishment of a permanent committee to prevent and battle drug addiction, as well as one for delinquency and the establishment of local youth association.
\end{itemize}
“contrats de ville,” “urban contracts,” between the state and local governments and “contrats d’insertion,” “insertion contacts,” between the state and individuals. Neighborhood councils and associations were also formally linked to the politique de la ville, and served on policy-making committees. Between 1994 and 2000, over 15 000 associations took part in the plan and 73% of funding (aside from investments) was directed to projects conducted by these associations.\(^{421}\) While the politique de la ville holds the promise of a more direct access to spatial production, the “deliberative politics” however, was little differentiated from bargaining for funds and the “contractual politics” supported the corporatist “facilitator state.”\(^ {422}\)

Many claim that the deliberative process of politique de la ville was severely limited. An important aspect of this is that discussions were largely confined to micro-local topics, and were decontextualized from wider social and economic concerns. As such, individual projects were undertaken without an overarching goal or social purpose, and issues such as labor and class were ignored as non-local concerns. Even though most of the projects took place within areas defined as “priority zones” due to their socioeconomic make-up and indicators of poverty and disservice, in terms of the rearrangements of space preformed through theses initiatives, changes were accumulative, fragmentary and disorganized and not tied to any underlying understanding of urbanization as productive of territorial and social inequality.

missions aimed at improving employment, health and shelter concerns. These measures are tied to the unity of the Republic which is questioned by these zones.\(^ {421}\) Sintomer and De Maillard, “The Limits to Local Participation and Deliberation in the French ‘Politique De La Ville’.”\(^ {422}\) Ibid.
Compensation and partnerships were also based on strict rules and procedures that create an “institutional cage” within which communities and organizations were forced to operate. This bureaucratic and technocratic regime enabled political parties to entrench and deepen patronage networks.\textsuperscript{423} The local associations in \textit{banlieues} especially have had little success in voicing their demands and in influencing the rules whereby policy gets made.\textsuperscript{424} The cooptation of associations into policy-making resulted in further fragmentation and while extending the reach of the corporatist state.\textsuperscript{425} \textit{Politique de la ville} according to Nicholls is guilty of “associationalism from above,” whereby the state fosters partnerships with third party organizations to generate benefits for the state while bureaucratizing civil society.\textsuperscript{426} He writes that “With associations providing or delivering welfare services, the public sector could satisfy its obligations at a reduced cost and with greater flexibility.” The explosion in partnerships initiated by public officials aimed to increase state capacity and to provide appropriate services to those left out of policy decisions, and while initially targeted to increase the participation of socially excluded groups, through professionalizing and fragmenting the service sector, it prevents any

\textsuperscript{423} Walter Nicholls, “Associationalism from Above: Explaining Failure through France’s Politique De La Ville,” \textit{Urban Studies} 43, no. 10 (September 1, 2006): 1779–1802.
\textsuperscript{424} Sintomer and De Maillard, “The Limits to Local Participation and Deliberation in the French ‘Politique De La Ville’.” The participatory process according to Sintomer and Maillard has “selective effects” due to the unequal interest of institutions, the political financing of projects and symbolic over substantive recognition of local needs. They note especially the failure of residents of the impoverished Seine-Saint-Denis to have control over the conditions of the neighborhood through this policy.
\textsuperscript{425} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{426} Nicholls, “Associationalism from Above.”
broad coalitions, and radical reorientation of policy and any criticism of the centralized state itself.

Unlike the bureaucratic reforms of the mid twentieth century, this new form of governance is flexible, integrative and participatory, yet the outcomes are not necessarily more communal or public. The corporatist state absolves itself of social responsibility while domesticating and fragmenting opposition. It also consolidates a more technocratic and individualized approach to policy. The tools of contract and participation in *politique de la ville* profoundly change local democratic representation and the incentives of policy-making, but the rescaling of the state to the urban level, however, does not fundamentally alter the class relationships of who has accesses to controlling regimes of accumulation, divisions of labor or how space is produced.

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427 Erik Swyngedouw, “Governance Innovation and the Citizen: The Janus Face of Governance-beyond-the-State,” *Urban Studies* 42, no. 11 (October 1, 2005): 1991–2006. This is indicative of a broader problem with associational practices of urban governance. Inclusion of stakeholders into policy-making venues often serves to de-politicize and routinize what are highly contentious issues. Swyngedouw refers to the use of associational or “innovative” governance practices as being “decidedly Janus faced.” While they may prevent new venues for civil society participation in planning and policy making, they also change the role and expectations of citizen participation, and thus limit democratic horizons. Drawing on the extensive literature on “governance-beyond-the-state” Swyngedouw shows how horizontally organized self-management of social and economic actors is highly contradictory. According to Swyngedouw, “governance-beyond-the-state is embedded within autocratic modes of governing that mobilize technologies of performance and of agency as a means of disciplining forms of operation within an overall programme of responsibilisation, individuation, calculation and pluralist fragmentation. The socially innovative figures of horizontally organized stakeholder arrangements of governance that appear to empower civil society in the face of an apparently overcrowded and ‘excessive’ state, may, in the end, prove to be the Trojan Horse that diffuses and consolidates the ‘market’ as the principal institutional form.”
With changes in the international economic system and a global movement toward neoliberal policies, both states and local administrations become less able to control global flows of people, goods and information, leading to new players, especially private enterprise, obtaining important capacities of spatial governance. Territorial reform today is increasingly influenced by those who do not claim to speak for a common good. This indicates profound changes in the structuring of the city, in patterns of governance and in the role of democratic institutions.

Post-1989 there is a reconstruction of European scales at all levels and the creation of what Neil Smith has called “New Europe.” Central to this restructuring of geographic scale is the internationalization of economic markets, the transnationalization of labor, and the rise of new social movements. Together, these alter the spaces at which command of the economy, and state management of production can operate. In France, this describes the restructuring of the French state further away from an authoritarian dirigist system and toward a more diffuse form of governance, albeit one still heavily influenced by the ideas of republicanism and by a strong state traditions. This form of political rationality produces new spaces and arises upon and through the creation of the urban scale, and in particular, through the global city. More than simply a place to manage consumption following the movement of industry, the consolidation of competition ideals and the rise of global finance mean that the urban territory takes on a

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429 Dikeç, “Two Decades of French Urban Policy.”
new character in this stage, one of production itself. Two important and related elements are worth noting here: the use of a project-based “New Urban Policy” and what Vincent Renard has poignantly described as “the city seized by finance.”

The global competition between states is today expressed through the competition of city regions for coveted world city status. This creates territorial competition within states as well as between them. Brenner argues that under this extended form of state competition, “[t]he congruence between the economic and political functions of the nation state have become more tenuous. In the current geopolitical climate, the project of promoting territorial equalization within national or subnational political units is generally seen as a luxury of a bygone era that can no longer be afforded in an age of globalized capital, lean management and fiscal austerity.”

The pretensions of equality redistribution and welfare are no longer tenable policy goals. Instead social policy becomes articulated within the hegemonic economistic framework of competition, entrepreneurialism, and local and individual responsibilization.

In response to these conditions, site-specific “projects” have become a privileged form of public and private investment under 21st century New Urban Policy. Aspiring global cities around Europe, led by a wide variety of partisan officials, and under pressure from international competition and stagnating post industrial economies, pursue development projects such as Olympic bids, waterfront parks, site-specific art projects, architectural legacy buildings and renewed heritage centers. In France, this project-based growth is articulated in part out of the histories of decentralization,

contractualized policies such as *politique de la ville* and the pluralization of corporatist governance. It is also related to the increasing dominance of the real estate sector.

Many authors have noted that the urban “growth machine,” used to explain the cooperation of party officials and local business elite in North American urbanism is limited in its applicability to France and Europe because large companies are not as weighty as in American towns and the mix of public and private land ownership is smaller.\(^\text{432}\) Nevertheless, there have been a wide range of actors incorporated into urban policy making processes in France. Contrary to those Girondists who equate the local with direct democracy and access to decision making, the urban scale of planning is often accompanied by the depoliticization of neoliberal governance. Pursued in market terms, cooperative urban policies can limit the scope of reform, reduce outlier opinions and reproduce the status quo. Elected entities can no longer decide independently, but must cooperate around policies. When coalitions of state and private actors devise policies in pursuit of growth, they create an elite environment that encourages very particular types of development.\(^\text{433}\) Gilles Pinson argues, for example that “[t]he
pluralization of systems of decision and action that have been installed, inversely, become paired with a stratification of structures of power and influence.” It is the very complexity of governance that adds to neoliberal hegemony today.

Pinson demonstrates how the “urban project” is one of the main tools being used in this context to organize local political systems, as a “new instrument of urban policy” that brings together plural forces of government and private actors. He analyzes the Euroméditerranée project in Marseilles as well as the Île-de-Nantes, and other European urban projects in Venice and Turin and Manchester, showing how “projects” of prestige and growth bring together a broad range of actors in an attempt to generate a new image of the city and new sites for consumption—by tourists, elite residents, businesses etc. He writes, “These new tools of urban public action—major projects, strategic planning, major events, etc.—are not unambiguous. Designed to mobilize internally, they are also designed to position the cities in the territorial competition.”

No longer bound to supporting the social life of urban inhabitants, policy makers forge an elite consensus around the need for growth and competitiveness, leading to institutional evasion and political demobilization, especially of the working class.

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association, recruitment and mobilization intended to enable coherent collective action in a context of organizational fragmentation and dispersion of resources, which are now commonly designated by the term "urban governance"…So some see signs of submission of urban governments to the demands of global capitalism and desires and lifestyles of the privileged mobile social groups. This dimension is not absent but should not overshadow the fact that these initiatives have often urban societies to mobilize and to develop shared visions and a capacity for collective action.”

435 Ibid., 35.
436 Pinson, “Des métropoles ingouvernables aux métropoles oligarchiques.”
Projects do not aim at class or welfare concerns, but the “new political culture” of urban governance is oriented around the liberal individual, and around populist and postmaterialist ideals. This is characterized by the emergence of new interest groups, which are now focused on cultural classes, the environment, tourism and leisure rather than redistribution and services. Projects are a popular form of development because in appealing to “image,” “lifestyle” and “culture,” they seem to speak beyond class and party lines to cross-sectional interests. Yet not only do an elite cadre decide the fate of projects (often with some “public deliberation” for show), but the projects are designed for consumption by the ideal inhabitants of the global city (rich, whitewashed disciplined subjects), not the actual inhabitants of the city.

The urban project sells a vision of the city which becomes tied to an elite class that can see that vision to fruition. Not merely a matter of national or local representatives, the pluralization of policy-making into networks but also includes business leaders, developers, and urban “experts.” What counts as the end of urban policy thus becomes a private matter. Pinson suggests that

the increasing complexity of the production of urban politics has profoundly transformed the role of the top elected officials, in particular that of “mayors” whose role is ever less structured by activities encompassing mediation, access to the center to obtain the adjustment of rules or the maintenance of electoral clienteles, and increasingly by activities related to the production of visions and projects that lend sense and direction to policy networks and to the mobilisation of scarce resources for policies.

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438 Pinson, “The Governance of French Towns. From the Centre-periphery Scheme to Urban Regimes.”
Tied to development projects, the disjunct between what is produced in and through the city, and what the “real” urban needs are is growing.

The project is also an attractive form because it captures the real estate sector, which as Hackworth notes, is at “the leading edge of neoliberal urbanization at the local scale.”

No longer is real estate used to pursue individual spatial fixes on the margins of cities, but these “fixes,” specifically in already developed areas, are generalized as urban policy. Furthermore, real estate in particular enables wealth not through industry and manufacture, but finance. Vincent Renard claims that that it is precisely the “financial aspect” that defines 21st century real estate. “The novelty is to give autonomy to the financial aspect of a building: the architectural object defined by a certain number of technical characteristics and its use, the building becomes a “financial product” represented by securities, shares, listed on the stock exchange.”

Buildings are defined less by their use value, then by their exchange value determined through the public debt they produce and the property values that they inflate.

One consequence of financializing real estate production is that the future of buildings becomes less predictable and less secure. The temporality of debt-financed projects is different than that of tax-financed general growth. Project-based growth requires that redevelopers garner their funding up front which gaining returns on capital in the future. Under this framework the future promise of increased land values is used to promote investment in the present. The state must borrow to invest money in projects, claiming the rent increase will provide fiscal revenues in years to come. There is

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440 Renard, “La Ville saisie par la finance.”
thus a deferral of benefits into the future, while costs to those who suffer either from material dispossession or opportunity costs are experienced immediately. Indeed, investment here only occurs in those areas deemed profitable in the short and medium term, not in elements of welfare and service that enhance quality of life in the long term.

All levels of the state have been forced to adopt a more “financial logic” thus lessening the macroeconomic hold of *dirigisme*. The move toward the urban project is tied then to the growing power of local administrations, which in turn reinforces and drives the reliance on real estate and finance. Unlike in the 1970s, when capital investment funds were more readily available from the state then from private investment firms, today both the state and the market provide for investment, particularly in infrastructural projects. As a result, departments have increasingly sought loans in the private capital market to finance investment. In 1982 alone, after the first transfers of autonomy to local governments, bond markets rose 83%, while securities became more attractive, and whereas prior to decentralizing reforms, central government controlled nearly all capital loans to local governments, by 1987, however, local governments retained 86% of loans from open market.  

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441 Cerny, “The ‘Little Big Bang’ in Paris.” Regulation enabled adjustments to financialization, especially in dismantling the restrictive *encadrement* system, opening up the *Bourse*, previously structured as a corporatist body. Importantly, it is the PS that enacts these reforms. As Cerny notes, “In an apparent paradox, Socialist governments took measures to strengthen private capital markets: at first to supplement the state-based system; but later as part of a more comprehensive policy—not only deregulating markets but also modifying the *dirigiste* system itself. But these changes were also seen as imperative for maintaining competitiveness in a volatile and rapidly evolving international financial environment.”

442 Bernier, “Decentralizing The French State.” Departments provide all but a few social services and obtain revenues from their own sources (taxes, loans, fees, or from intergovernmental transfers, shared taxes, grants, loans). Primary local taxes include land
continued to the present. This worsens inequality between communes. Paradoxically, it is in poor neighborhoods where property taxes are often highest, in order to make up for the non-existent revenue from commercial entities.

Local governments no longer receiving large transfers from national sources invest in real estate because it is the most convenient and immediate way to economic growth, while public spending can be partially financed through taxes on new developments. As production becomes oriented to projects and the real estate sector, the political economy of scale tends to metropoltanization.

To some extent, the privatization of land and its exchangeability on the market is nothing new to urbanism, but real estate today has changed this relation both quantitatively and qualitatively. Real estate has long been subordinated to the so-called primary productive sector, but is now entering the normal production-consumption circuit by fully commodifying space. Real estate based planning unites the appropriation of space with socioeconomic organization. This is linked to increases in private development, but it also bespeaks a public financialization. The state’s role in development and in promoting the use of urban projects as development would suggest that increasingly, even public funds and fiscal policies are determined by a logic of increased financial revenues.

Since the 1970s, the global financial sector has grown in size and influence. This has taken place for the most part in the private sector, although, increasingly, public finance is becoming a key element of governance. Capitalism today is marked by an

and building taxes and professional taxes by firms over a certain size. Revenues also come from the general account subsidy (DGF) and the general investment subsidy (DGE).
institutional form and process by which whereby “income streams from a wide range of assets are converted into new investment products for dispersed investors through techniques that disaggregate and continually reassign ownership to allow for more and faster-paced exchanges.” The degree of financialization of a city is marked for Rachel Weber, by “the increase in municipal debt, the privatization and securitization of public assets, the size and scope of the financial services available to city governments, and the investor-orientation of critical collective consumption decisions.” Financialization then can refer to two related processes in the city: both the rise in financial actors (investment funds, banks) and what Weber refers to as the “generalization of their logics and techniques (use of mortgage debt, securitization, derivatives) to the entire urban fabric.” Instruments such as securities and derivatives, as is evident in the housing crisis accompanying the global financial crisis 2007-2009, are not just epiphenomenal but are linked to particular asset geographies, here localized in individual residences. Finance is visible in real estate and thus in territorial management through the form and function of cities.

A number of people have noted that local and city governments have been penetrated by the financial sector, both in the United States and in France, and that cities increasingly rely on financial sector for new growth and for the provision of social services. Rather than being a universal process however, the degree to which finance is

444 Ibid.
able to penetrate localities, and its mode of doing so is embedded within particular institutional, cultural and material conditions. Furthermore, active policies on behalf of states and local institutions can have huge effects in the extent to which they are able to attract financial investment. Weber stresses that “the ability to create and monetize new asset classes is one of the most valuable functions in a financialized economy.” She, for example, has traced how particular mechanisms (particularly the Tax Increment Financing in Chicago) and instruments enable global financial markets to influence the construction and governance of U.S. cities. In cities “seized by finance,” democratic bodies can no longer control or manage urbanism in a manner other than flexible, short term project-based reforms. All levels of government as well as non-governmental bodies are subject to the force of finance.


447 Weber, “Selling City Futures.”

448 Ibid. “TIF is an increasingly popular local redevelopment policy that allows municipalities to designate a ‘blighted’ areas for redevelopment and use the expected increase in property (and occasionally sales) taxes there to pay for initial and ongoing redevelopment expenditures, such as land acquisition, demolition, construction, and project financing. Because developers require cash up front, cities transform promises of future tax revenues into securities that far-flung buyers and sellers exchange through global markets.” It also has detrimental consequences for democracy. “Local officials controlled opposition by compromising some of the democratic principles to which citizens hold their representatives. Officials actively discouraged public participation in the TIF designation process. And, for the most part, project planning decisions were made without transparency or disclosure. Critical decisions about TIF allocations became public only when the consultants, developers, and financial intermediaries were already lined up.”
One of the most profound consequences of this is that public debt becomes an attractive commodity that can be bought and sold on a derivative market. Weber claims that

Municipalities extended the power of financial markets throughout the economy by issuing and purchasing vast amounts of debt. They also developed new domains of governance (e.g. special districts), new instrument, and new asset classes that could be bought, sold, and securitized. They financed and lent their legitimacy to the creation of new secondary markets where assets once thought to be valued only for their use (infrastructure, pensions, and tax revenues) were converted into securities and traded at a distance.

This forces local and states to orient policies toward those mechanisms which allow income streams (property tax and business tax revenues) generated from locally assets to be converted into financial instruments and exchanged in global market. There is no incentive to fiscal balance and only by raising residential taxes (which in poor areas is untenable) or continually investing in new developments are governments able to maintain the bond ratings required to procure funds.

While only some of these initiatives that Weber describes as “place based articulations of global finance” come under the generalized rubric of Grand Paris, the pattern of public investing in private real estate development is widespread as is the mentality of betting on the present through promised future growth. Increasingly, the determinations of who builds, what, where and how are vested in private hands but

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449 Ibid.
450 The Grand Paris strategy of targeting peripheral areas for development is not new. A shift began to occur however, when priority zones to be targeted for social services and job creation became less important than strategic territories of economic growth and international investment to create debt and revenue. What Grand Paris does is extend earlier discourses of intervention and translate them into narrative of global competition, flexibility, mixity and profitability.
supported by public expenditures. A relationship between the fiscal and the financial
where fiscal power is increasingly dependent on bond markets suggests that leverage is
more important than in the past. The faith of credit in the state thus relies upon the
promotion of growth. Typically, this would also rely upon either a higher population in
the future or a population that has a higher income, giving the state has a fundamental
interest in the wealth of its base because it relies upon taxation. Yet without a clear
correlation any longer between increases in wealth and increases in household income,
however, it is no longer taxpayers who must be courted, but investment itself. Regions
are populated by tax-payers (residential low income) are underutilized rent. Projects to
bring in funds are pursued interminably.

The measure of value added is no longer incomes earned, but the ability to
financialize, to produce speculative rents in the long term and maximize future revenue
streams. For Pinson, “the daily immersion in policymaker networks and the mobilisation
of support in the heart of social groups that hold the resources for action tends to
replace the structuring of social groups whose only resource is the vote.”451 Urban
politics is no longer primarily concerned then with a particular population base, but with
a particular revenue base. A number of important consequences follow. Traditional party
affiliations are less salient than forty years ago. As policy is firmly oriented toward the
capacity to generate revenues, the ideological spectrum converges toward a networked
and plural center. In addition to elected officials, stakeholders, businesses, bureaucracy

451 Pinson, “The Governance of French Towns. From the Centre-periphery Scheme to
Urban Regimes.”
and interests groups co-create policy, and thus come to define the local level of governance. It is in this context that *Grand Paris* emerges.

**Emergent Political Institutions**

The contemporary Republican state of the 21st century has consolidated itself in and through the arrangement and maintenance of urban space. Parisian metropolitanization did not originate with Sarkozy’s *Grand Paris* proclamation of 2007, but has been developing for a long time. While there have been undercurrents of a metropolitan identity and organizations to promote regional interests of commerce, labor, transit etc. for at least the past century, the concerted move toward the metropolitan scale in the 21st century is more recent. The need for a coordinated metropolitan region is desired by local officials who need to coordinate policy, the nation state which benefits from a recognizable global city, and local enterprise who benefit from tax breaks, deregulation and an improved atmosphere of competition and investment.

The governance of Île-de-France in this context is situated between the competing trends of steering from the center, urbanism and financialization. Not only do states speak in metropolitan global city terms today, but cities too recognize that global connections necessitate a change of scale. Christian Lefèvre, an urbanist and consultant to the national planning agency and the city of Paris, for example, argues that metropolitanization requires central cities to look beyond their borders to global concerns, while at the same time refashioning their suburbs environs.
If the central cities agree to play the game [of metropolitan cooperation], it is because they are now aware that they need the peripheries in order to develop, or quite simply to keep their place, in the ranks of world cities… Whether it be a question of land for facilities and housing, financial resources for building, or political agreements to bring an area-wide policy to successful conclusion, the central cities need their peripheries to keep their place in international competition. In this respect, the metropolitan territory has become the scale on which the central cities reason. To do so, they must free themselves and go beyond their administrative limits. The metropolitan government is to them, both a necessary instrument and an advantage in attaining their objective. 452

The metropolitan fact is not a natural or organic phenomenon, but is a strategy pursued to adjust to the abstract logics of late capital. This is one pursued directly by the French government and local mayors each vying for more control over this process.

In 2004, Lefèvre undertook a study commissioned by the Paris Mayor’s Office comparing the metropolitanization of Paris to other developed cities, including Barcelona, Berlin, Lisbon, London, Madrid, Manchester, Milan, Montreal, Rome, Stuttgart and Toronto. Lefèvre defines the purest form of metropolitanization as consisting of four characteristics:

1) strong political legitimacy, obtained by the direct election of its political representatives; 2) meaningful autonomy from both ‘senior governments’ and basic local authorities, acquired as a result of adequate financial and human resources; 3) wide-ranging jurisdiction; and 4) “relevant” territorial cover, consisting, roughly speaking, of the functional urban area. 453

Roughly corresponding to legitimacy, autonomy, competences, and size, these features are not present in an institutionalized way in Paris. This is contrasted to a city such as Greater London, an exemplary metropolitan model, which since 1963 has had an area-wide Greater London Council with legitimate power over a large territory. Drawing from

452 In Brenner, New State Spaces, 281.
cases of successful metropolitanization, Lefèvre’s study indicates in particular that strategic political action and public accession is necessary to combat the problems of metropolitanization and agglomeration in Paris.\(^{454}\) *Grand Paris* achieves the latter, but new institutions are required for the former.

What Lefèvre refers to as a “metropolitan plan” is the attempt to directly and intentionally address the fragmentation of urban governance and policy provision.\(^{455}\) He identifies elements that are favorable to this endeavor and the political work that leaders (individual or collective) must undertake to bring a metropolitan plan to fruition.\(^{456}\) The leadership must be supported by political structure and institutional support as well as technical and administrative guidance. A concrete document or plan should accompany these changes as well as concrete actions in their direction. *Grand Paris* is such a plan.

\(^{454}\) Christian Lefèvre, “Paris et les grandes agglomerations occidentales: Comparison de modèles de gouvernance,” http://www.paris.fr/accueil/Portal.lut?page_id=8684&document_type_id=4&document_id=54856&portlet_id=20594&multileveldocument_sheet_id=10203. Lefèvre suggests that strong leadership piloting projects of agglomeration should be coupled with decentralizing moves to involve both supranational actors, at the level of the European Union and local representatives as well as economic and social interests. As the problems of metropolitan governance stem in many cases form a fragmentation of interests and a multiplicity of actors, one of the challenges addressed by the study is how to incorporate more actors into policy-making programs. The changing role of the state, especially with respect to decentralization and European integration is identified as a key element of these reforms through scaling up and scaling down governance as well as giving to non-state actors more powers and influence in territorial changes, while a polycentric system is suggested to take the place of the centralized state in public affairs.

\(^{455}\) Many factors influence the transformational process of the state—the type of state (unitary or federal the institutional architectures, the institutional weight of the capital as compared to the rest of the country, the degree of metropolitan fragmentation, financial dynamics, sharing of competences, cooperative opportunities, strength of local democracies etc.

\(^{456}\) Lefèvre, “Paris et les grandes agglomerations occidentales: Comparison de modèles de gouvernance.”
Yet the creation of a metropole was by no means a unilaterally agreed upon affair and both the left and the right critiqued this endeavor. When Sarkozy suggested the creation of an urban community of *Grand Paris* in June 2007, he was immediately met with opposition from both local officials and media who denounced the plan as a political maneuver to take over positions of power. Although later a collaborator with the state on the Grand Paris Express transportation plan, Jean Paul Huchon described *Grand Paris* at the times as “the death of the Île-de-France in its cohesion and its solidarity.”\(^{457}\) He held that a structure of government of agglomeration would completely invert the powers of the region which has been slowly growing since the 1980s and reassign the management of the territory, economic development and transportation to the national state, leaving the region as a figurehead with a toothless SDRIF masterplan.\(^{458}\) Sarkozy’s initial proclamation was also strategically timed before the municipal elections, and was understood to be a partisan attempt to take back control of the region and the three most powerful institutions—the City of Paris, the Île-de-France and the general council of the Hauts-de-Seine—from the left. The presidential proclamation was hardly met with enthusiasm from the right either, and of many across the political spectrum, the plan spelled political catastrophe and a loss of powers for the region and its authorities.

\(^{457}\) In Subra, *Le Grand Paris*, 95.

\(^{458}\) Ibid., 101. The debate of *Grand Paris* took place while the SDRIF of 1994 was in the process of being adopted. This, the first master plan elaborated by the Île-de-France region was set to be in effect until 2015, and was amended in 2004 to meet the changing demands of the region and take into account contemporary issues. The SDRIF was thus a “symbol of political autonomy” to the regional actor faces with an invasive state.” This was also the first plan to take into account the city of Paris alongside the remainder of the region.
A number of changes to the institutional landscape have emerged in the subsequent five years indicating the gradual convergence of ideologies in favor of metropolitanization, and in favor of centralized Grand Paris planning in particular, often to do with the attraction of urban projects.

Territorial Administrative Units

Paris does not (yet) have an overarching government on the urban scale. In its absence, an overlapping and multilevel fabric of institutions governs the region. Consisting of one region, seven departments, over twelve hundred communes and dozens of public intercommunal establishments, the institutional landscape of metropolitan Paris is complex, perhaps more so than any other European agglomeration. Philippe Subra argues that one of the main reasons for Grand Paris is to establish a governmental authority that could incarnate agglomeration—this is, for him, its raison d’être.⁴⁵⁹ A number of strategies have been proposed to address the creation of a metropolitan government.

For example beginning in 2003, constitutional reforms aimed to change the relationships between the various levels of administration in service provision and in territorial development. In terms of the organization of the French State, the reforms allow for more administrative decentralization. The reform allows for experimental transfers of functions across levels of the state and from one level to another. This internal process allows, for example, ministries to transfer their functions to subsidiary bodies, “coming close to admitting subsidiarity as a principle of the organization of the

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., 8–10.
Subnational authorities also can bid to take over control of functions previously under the responsibility of the central state. This paved the way for a range of reforms that could increase local autonomy.

There have also been efforts to reconfigure the administrative landscape altogether. Concerned with the thickening of the *mille feuilles* of France, former Prime Minister, Eduoard Balladur headed a commission on democratic governance and institutional arrangements. Published in March 2009, his “Balladur Report,” as it is commonly known, outlines plans to change the political map of France by shaking up regional and local government. The Balladur Report aims to create “a more democratic fifth republic” and proposes 77 amendments to the constitution over the control of the executive, the strength of parliament and new rights to administrative bodies. It also proposes changes in property and building taxes and suggests the creation of 11 metropolitan regions with special rights and responsibilities, similar to those of departments.\(^{461}\) Included in this proposal is a new administrative unit, “territorial collective” of Grand Paris. The report recommends that all changes be undertaken on a “voluntary basis” and while the official proposals were met with almost unanimous opposition prompting Sarkozy to send the authoring commission back to the drawing board, the plans of consolidating the city of Paris with the *petite couronne* inner suburbs have still lingered in debates at both the state level and in more local discussions.\(^{462, 463}\)

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\(^{460}\) Cole, “Decentralization in France.”


\(^{463}\) The report suggested an increase in the number of intercommunal bodies and the development of cooperation between municipalities. In particular, it recommends
The mayor of Paris, Bertrand Delanoë, has also become a central figure in agglomeration, though from a position of local power since his election in 2001. He has set out to improve relations between the center and periphery and has encouraged the promotion of bilateral accords between Paris and other communes. At the level of state appointees over the region, Maurice Leroy, Minister of Cities, announced the appointment of Pierre Charon (UMP), a former representative for Paris at the municipal level, to be a “facilitator” in the development of Grand Paris at the urban level. Leroy hopes that Charon will “propose guidance and paths for concrete actions that will involve and bring together national and local elected officials, the responsible socio-economic and associations involved in its fields of competence.”

Resembling the reinstatement of a state-appointed prefect overseeing the region, Charon will ensure that national priorities are met by local policies.

Despite these efforts, there are persistent limits to coordination. In addition to the problems of symbolically bringing together a range of institutions under the same umbrella, institutional reform is stalled specifically when it comes to finances. The inequalities that mark the region are not just class-based but exist within the territorial collectivities and their systems of taxation and distribution. The budget of Puteaux, for

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turning existing Public Establishments of Intercommunal Cooperation (EPCIs) into proper local authorities with directly elected officials and official responsibilities. EPCIs are groups of municipalities for the purpose of development of "joint development projects within the boundaries of solidarity." INSEE, “Établissement public de coopération intercommunale/EPCI,” http://www.insee.fr/fr/methodes/default.asp?page=definitions/etab-pub-cooper-intercom.htm.

example is 2.5 times that of Garges-les-Gonesse in Val d’Oise, despite them having the same size population. Communes located in employment poles benefit from professional and property taxes above the usual inhabitation tax, creating a regime of “fiscal emirates” across the region. One way to compensate for the fiscal shortage in an underachieving commune (one without enterprise) is to raise further inhabitation taxes. Paris under this schema has relatively low taxes, despite high property values, while Clichy-Sous-Bois on the other hand has little revenue from professional tax and many social housing units exempt from inhabitation taxes. Municipal equalization today mainly takes place through vertical mechanisms of state funding such as the 1990 dotation de solidarité urbaine (DSU) and the fonds au solidarité de la région (FSRIDF) which provides a levy on the richest municipalities in Île-de-France to be redistributed to the poorest. These are inadequate and other measures are demanded by poorer municipalities in order to provide the expanded social services the territory demands. Given the inequality, those communes with relative financial security are more reluctant to surrender economic control to a large body. Financial balance and solidarity remain elusive. A number of equalization schemes have been proposed, but these have been unsuccessful. Attempts have been made, for example, to mutualize the professional tax across the region and redistribute it equally but little concrete has come of this initiative. The French financial system and system of business tax adds to the

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466 See the proposals of Paris Métropole in this regard. Pierre Mansat has also attempted to develop financial solidarity in the region through a Metropolitan Investment Fund which would pool money from individual communes, a suggestion that was rejected
production of conflicts between local communities in a way that is detrimental to the emergence of cities as political territories. The lack of feasible distributive measures means that Grand Paris continues to rely upon the competition between and among its constituted parts with individual communes and departments vying to court investment and residents. At the level of official administrative units there is a mixture of cooperation and competition both vertically and horizontally.

*Intercommunalities*

Intercommunality is another prominent way to address the problems of a complex official administrative structure. Intercommunality refers to any of several types of cooperation between communes or between communes and other intercommunal organizations. In order to make up for the fact that the 36700 municipalities in France make local politics difficult, the constitution has created the possibility of intercommunal cooperation, adding another 18000 structures of inter-municipal cooperation to the patterns of government. Intercommunal structures, according to Négrier have been after the financial crisis in 2008.

These have taken a variety of forms over time: syndicats intercommunaux à vocation unique, à vocation multiple, districts, communautés de communes, communautés de ville, syndicats mixtes, chartes intercommunales, etc. There are two basic forms of intercommunality—those with fiscal power and those without. The intercommunal structures without fiscal power are traditionally referred to as syndicates of communes and they are voluntary organizations to deal with one or multiple matters. While such a practice dates to 1890 allowing single purpose entities, it is seen increasing use since the Chèvenement law of 1999 which also expanded the role and functions of these organizations. The provision of water and sewage is often organized, for example through these entities, while more all-encompassing entities are clamoring to direct larger initiatives like regional economic development, tax collection, social welfare and physical infrastructures including public transportation.
“attempts to compensate for the political incapacity to merge municipalities.”469 Weil echoes these sentiments stating that “[i]t is paradoxical but finally normal that the most centralized European state is also the most institutionally fragmented,” and that intercommunality was essentially created “by default.”470

The problems stemming from the large number of municipalities are often compounded by the intercommunal cooperation that aims at its remedy. Nègrier calls this “overcrowding for solving overcrowded patterns of government.”471 For Subra, Paris has “to much and not enough intercommunality.”472 In many ways, the intercommunal structure was a means to avoid having a single structure for all of Paris, or as Subra writes, it is both “the problem and solution” of agglomeration. The Chèvenement Law of July 1999 in many ways attempted to reign in these proliferating structures and to simplify institutions of cooperation. They established three main categories to replace the existing web of arrangements: the communauté de communes (for less than 50 000 inhabitants), the communauté d’agglomération (for between 50 000 and 500 000 inhabitants) and the communauté urbaine (for more than 500 000 inhabitants).

According to Nègrier, within only three years, the entire financial capacities of the communautés d’agglomération had exceeded the entire budgets of regional councils and employed more than 30 000 persons.473 Between 1988 and 1999 the number of intercommunal organizations went from 15 940 to 18 051 and those of the EPCI (with

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471 Nègrier, “A French Urban Powershift?”
473 Nègrier, “A French Urban Powershift?”
taxation structures) passed from 192 to 2679. Powers thus have been accruing in non-
elected structures. These structures of agglomeration tend to elide political contestation
and create an apolitical attitude. Policy making becomes further removed from the
citizens and actual elected bodies such as regional councils are seen as unrepresentative
and antiquated. For Nègrier,

The progressive visibility of metropolitan policies will pose the problem of their distance from the citizen. In parallel, the mayors will have more and more difficulties to base their election campaigns on projects for which their own responsibility is neither autonomous nor important. If such a gap would remain, it would signify that the vote would only be justified for inefficient politics and that, consequently, voting for ‘great’ policy and politics is not necessary anymore.\footnote{Ibid.}

Intercommunal structures can therefore create a gap between functional and political
territories. This is especially relevant for urban areas where intercommunal structures are
common, often fueled by the necessity of city-suburban cooperation.

Because the members of intercommunal organizations are not directly elected
they have been accused of creating a democratic deficit in governance. Often,
bureaucrats, civil society actors and private interests and stakeholders are the majority
members of the communities, and they direct policy, with the participating communes
merely rubber stamping at the end. In addition, intercommunal structures can be used as
weapons of exclusivity, structured so as to not include all of the communes in the area,
or to only include rich communes for fear of pooling property taxes. (On the flip side,
these are also used to structure resistance to the hegemony of Paris against other
communes in the region. Intercommunal structures have been created not only without
Paris, but often times against the dominance of Paris.) Despite \textit{Grand Paris} efforts, Paris
has no established intercommunal structure that encompasses the region, and has repeatedly avoided creating a communauté urbain. The closest entity is Paris Métropole.

Paris Métropole is a “syndicat mixte d'études,” or joint research union, established in June 2009. It is a collaborative initiative consisting of over 100 communities across Île-de-France at a number of levels: communes, intercommunalities, departments and the region. Any community broadly-defined in Paris who wishes to join may do so. This entity builds upon the Metropolitan Conference of 2006 which brought together 63 communes at a series of meetings to discuss joint efforts to address regional concerns, in particular housing and transportation. A number of protocols of association (protocoles d’accord) involving informal linkages between Paris and inner suburbs over sharing resources, technical expertise and policy service provisions led up to the formation of Paris Métropole in February 2009 as an open joint association study that included 75 founding members: 54 communes, 15 EPCI, five departmental councils and the Regional Council of Île-de-France. As of 2011 it has grown to encompass 188 partners, 9140 088 inhabitants and 2 288 km2.475

Paris Métropole is an organization that aims to fulfill the role of a regional coordinating body, as well as a center of research and expertise on Parisian affairs. There are four fundamental axes upon which Paris Métropole acts: development and solidarity, commuting, housing and metropolitan projects. The organization states that “[t]he metropole is not a geographical concept resting on a delimited perimeter. It designates on the other hand, agglomeration in its capacity to organize around projects written

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from a supranational perspective and in its faculty to concentrate command functions. The form of metropolitan governance supported by Paris Métropole defines regional-coordination as an overlapping series of cooperations rooted in the status of Paris as a global city, and not as an overarching structure of national centrality.

While in many ways working in conjunction with the official Grand Paris projects, Paris Métropole is not directly associated with the national state nor is it a formal representative body. Despite being opposed to Grand Paris on a number of fronts, it is nevertheless a consultant on many of the projects and works through a variety of initiatives to consolidate the goals of better territorial and social relations across the region. Paris Métropole was consulted, for example, and served as an interlocutor in the creation of the Grand Paris Express accord. They describe this relationship saying, “Paris Métropole hopes to bring its light to the projects of Grand Paris undertaken by the state: from regional transport to territorial development contracts. At the same time new collaborations are taken to pursue the reflections of the ten architectural and urbanist teams of Grand Paris.” Paris Métropole is also a member of the International Studio of Grand Paris (AIGP) and as such, has a mandate to see through the ideas of the 2009 Grand Paris exhibition.

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476 Ibid.
477 Ibid.
Informal or semi-formal intercommunal bodies are becoming increasingly more important in governance and help to establish the imaginary of the metropole. They have significant force, and in the case of Paris Métropole, a high public profile, but no competence to put in place new metropolitan policies on a large scale. The complex network of apparatuses (intellectual, material, legal) that are established through the provision of intercommunality enables a dense profusion of the state into all aspects of life, yet in a manner that does not incorporate the desires and wishes of inhabitants into the processes of building and managing space but through non-democratic means—a “marketplace” of ideas where collaborative policy-making quells alternatives. In a context of a strong national state working to provide the conditions for financialized metropolitan economies, the web is flexible enough to bend where needed, while rarely providing a venue for resistance.

*Society of Grand Paris*

The first legislation for the “official” realization of *Grand Paris* was passed in October 2009 under the *Projet de loi relative au Grand Paris*. The document of the National Assembly outlines the legal provisions necessary for the creation of the Society of Grand Paris (SGP) the development of a transit network, new development in economic

involved the ten architectural teams as well as local representatives and international experts. These were to “act concretely in favor of coherence and cohesion of metropolitan territory. In working in an ambitious and collective manner, representative of this innovative political scene attach themselves to lift up the challenge posed today to the great metropolises of the world. For sustainable development, they hope to reconcile attractiveness and solidarity through valorizing the formidable resources of the territories in the service of inhabitants.”
clusters, and the establishment of intercommunal bodies to ensure the plan of Grand Paris is put into place. The preamble to the law introduces the plan as follows:

The current crisis of unprecedented proportions increases the urgency for strong government action to increase the capacity for adaptation and allow, in time, recovery for the benefit of all. Current challenges justify emergency measures, and the exception of this bill which permits the expansion and strengthening of measures of consultation and contracting, with its dedication to transparency and to efficiency, in the image of what the British are doing to achieve the London Olympics.479

There are at least two themes that are starkly illuminated here: Grand Paris as a state of “exception” and “emergency” in a time of urgent economic and political crisis, and project-based real estate redevelopment as the means to “recovery.” Not only are the normal democratic procedures and institutional venues insufficient to face the challenges of an economic crisis (emerging mainly after Grand Paris was first announced, but conveniently incorporated into its foundings), but gentrification and image-building are the means to restoration.480

The mission of the SGP “public institution” is to design and oversee the infrastructural projects composing the transit network of Grand Paris.481 The SGP thus must oversee development and construction of the transit infrastructure itself, but also

479 Assemblée Nationale, “No. 1961 Projet de loi relatif au Grand Paris.”
480 This is indicative of broader trends of post-crisis reactions. As Kevin Gotham and Miriam Greenberg, write in “From 9/11 to 8/29: Post-Disaster Recovery and Rebuilding in New York and New Orleans,” Social Forces 87, no. 2 (December 2008): 1039-1062, “moments of crisis have presented the best opportunities to experiment with…contradictory and often unpopular forms of governance, and to do so with less public scrutiny and challenge.” Neil Brenner also notes how reactionary policies in wake of crises are not just about altering how a site is managed, but actually aim to change the site itself. He writes that when crises erupt, “state spatial regulation may be thoroughly reworked, in part as a means to reconfigure established geographies of capital accumulation and uneven spatial development.” Neil Brenner et al., “State Space in Question,” in State/Space: A Reader, ed. Neil Brenner (Boston: Blackwell, 2003), 10.
provide direction for the additional private development to surround the new stations. SGP has unprecedented powers of preemption and may acquire “as required by appropriation or preemption, property of all kinds, mobile and fixed, necessary for the creation and the operation of the public transit network of Grand Paris.”\textsuperscript{482} To do this it has the ability to establish subsidiary groups or companies and organization to contribute to this mission, and the legal capacity to create new tax instruments and structures to ensure revenue flows.

Criticized for ignoring both the local councils, intercommunal organizations, Paris Métropole and the myriad proposals of the \textit{Grand Pari} architectural consultation, the commercially oriented (SGP) is a tool of the national state for the creation of the desired metropolitan landscape. Christian Blanc, the inaugural director of SGP, argues that the Society is a necessary corrective to do away with outmoded scalar economies, blaming the post-war redistribution efforts for creating a “deficit in dynamism” for the capital region, and suggesting that the loss of a potential world-city pole is a danger to the rest of the country.\textsuperscript{483} Blanc holds that perpetual growth, piloted by a strong leader or cadre is the only way to develop the region and prevent stagnancy from taking over.

All, in fact, must bow to this unit. “The State, local authorities, their associations and their public institutions and companies whose majority stake is help by the State can transfer to the public institution Société du Grand Paris, at its request, in full ownership, and free of charge, the assets necessary for the performance of its duties.”\textsuperscript{484} Not only does the SGP represent a crisis regime to facilitate major policy changes under the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[482] Ibid.
\item[483] Blanc, “L’Ambition nationale du Grand Paris.”
\item[484] Assemblée Nationale, “No. 1961 Projet de loi relatif au Grand Paris.”
\end{footnotes}
emergency powers granted to it by the central state, but it also performs this task by relying on the private sector, further removing it from democratic norms, accountability and oversight.

The SGP model of arbitration and exceptional decision seems at odds when paired with the culture of negotiation of intercommunal arrangements, and intergovernmental cooperation. Yet these are not mutually exclusive. The existing structure often provides an established framework and veneer of legitimacy to SGP. Indeed, the extension of government to private actors, the horizontal rescalings through informal arrangements is central to SGP philosophy, and to the functioning of *Grand Paris* more broadly.

*Public-Private Networks*

Governance in metropolitan Paris is marked by extreme pluralization. Elected officials, civil servants, economic actors and civilian organizations are now involved in the composition and implementation of urban policies.²⁸⁵ With the turn from service provision and social development to project-based reconstruction and revival, there is also a growing influence of infrastructural firms such as Suez and Veolia as well as real estate investment associations in determining the physical landscape of the city and influencing both its economic development and social composition. *Grand Paris* aims to capture the existing governing structure of the metropolis in order to realize the image of the global city it has set out for itself.

²⁸⁵ Pinson, “The Governance of French Towns. From the Centre-periphery Scheme to Urban Regimes.”
The “urban regime” of Paris is complex and due to the continued presence of the central state in directing economic activities, weaker than most American cities. Nevertheless, local elites and growth coalitions are crucial to the embeddedness of global city norms into existing networks of power and thus, the rescaling of governance. A matrix of actors, both public and private, render competitive spaces, mobilize financial means, coordinate decision making and disseminate practices under the guise of *Grand Paris*. Recent developments in the real estate market, in conjunction with the Territorial Development Contracts outlined to implement the Grand Paris Express set up a condition whereby the real estate sector is on the forefront of urban planning strategies.

Enterprise has always been involved in the fabrication of the city, and especially in the post-World War II boom of development, companies of manufacturing, real estate and service provision have dominated the urban landscape in France. Large real estate firms like Veolia, Suez, Keolis, Nexity, Unibail have long been involved in changing patterns of land use, while manufactures such as Vinci, Bouygues, Eiffage also heavily mark the landscape. Mega projects such as Grand Paris Express, but more generally the developments associated with *Grand Paris*, however, change the ways in which urban reforms are carried out, with potentially profound consequences.

*Grand Paris* fits smoothly into what Isabel Baraud-Sefarty identifies a new type of privatization, heightened in recent years, that is linked to post-reconstruction emphasis on real estate and urban infrastructure, and the increasing financialization of capital. Caused by a general trend to worldwide increases in financial production, and

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486 Phelps and Parsons, “Edge Urban Geographies.” Phelps and Parsons find that in Europe, networks and institutions of growth machines are less influential and have less “local gravitas” as the central state and public sector play a more important role.
accentuated by the crisis of 2008-2009 which tightened further financial transfers from the state to local governments, the departments and communes are forced to look for alternative finding sources. In addition to increasing taxes and borrowing and reducing services, they are also engaging in somewhat new strategies: in asset sales, public private partnerships, concession of services to private entities and real estate production. (In Paris, for example, the iconic market turned shopping mall of Les Halles was transferred from the City of Paris to Unibail in November 2010.)

Though the use of public-private partnerships (PPPs) has been historically limited in France, Ordinance 2004-559 of 17 June 2004 sets up a legal framework for their development and lends support for their adoption by French government bodies. This created a new form of contract which reworked the partnership models of *politique de la ville*. A recent Ministry of the Economy report suggests that between now and 2020 PPPs will generate 60 Billion Euro, compared to the 3.5 billion 2004-2010. With a vision based on development projects, a map for investment and a legal regime that enables more private involvement in development, *Grand Paris* further facilitates the growth of PPP use.

While privatization is a widespread neoliberal phenomenon, and public investments, particularly in infrastructures have long relied upon “private”

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487 Baraud-Serfaty, “La Nouvelle Privatisation des villes.”
488 Ibid. The PPP contract “is an administrative contract under which the State or a State-run entity entrusts to a third party, for a period set according to investment amortization or agreed financing terms, a comprehensive project related to the construction or conversion, upkeep, maintenance, operation or management of works, equipment or intangible assets necessary to public service, as well as to the total or partial financing of the latter, with the exception of any form of equity financing.”
489 Ibid.
manufacturing, Baraud-Serfaty notes how even the distinction between private and public is becoming increasingly blurred today. Often there is little difference between public development contracts (DSP) and public private partnerships (PPP). Stadium projects associated with the Euro 2016, for example, (also associated with Grand Paris) illustrate the range of funding options from a strict PPP, to a public concession of land, to private legal projects financed by local communes. For Baraud-Serfarty “beyond the great differences, the choice of this or that type of contract often follow very fine technical considerations.” In the case of the future stadium of Racing-Métro “Arena 92,” the construction of which will be directed by Grand Paris architect Christian de Portzamparc (associated with the developer, Vinci), financing will come though entirely private funds, but the land is given in a lease by the mayor of Nanterre for a period of 99 years.

Grand Paris provides the groundwork for PPPs to increase even more through the instrument of Territorial Development Contracts (CDTs). CDTs were legally created with the establishment of SGP to carry out the official work of transit infrastructure, and to manage the growth around new transit poles. Negotiated and co-signed by the municipality and the state representative (prefect) in the region, each contract outlines development goals for the proposed site and lays out a plan for their implementation. Seventeen CDTs are currently registered to develop areas around proposed stations, while some twenty odd are in negotiation under Grand Paris including in all major targeted enterprise hubs. In the absence of an official CDT, SGP will decide directly on the development within a 400 m radius of any new station, giving local authorities

490 Ibid.
incentive to forge contracts, lest their interests be entirely unheeded. Contracts can either pursue private or public development, or some combination thereof. While all CDTs are subject to public inquiry, this takes place after the contracts are negotiated, but before they are finalized. This mechanism is essentially a gift to private investors, while at the same time providing capital gains in the form of taxes to ensure the public expenditures can continue. CDTs thus enable public bodies to recoup some surplus value while pursuing a metropolitan strategy.

Public private partnerships however also rely increasingly on shared investments. *Grand Paris* must also be understood then in relation to the development of U.S. style real estate investment trusts, “*foncières cotées*,” or “*Sociétés d’investissement immobilier cotées*” (SIIC) which collect capital for investment in buildings to be rented on the behalf of shareholders. These trusts list on the market and manage portfolios of shareholders in the real estate sector. For these organizations for whom assets are rent with fixed debt rates, debt itself becomes valuable. These real estate investment funds were initiated in 2001 and approved in 2002 by the Federation of Real Estate and Financial Societies as well as by the Senate. The trusts are supported by the state for their ability to ensure “regular financing of real estate assets, streamline and consolidate real estate markets and

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491 The Law of June 2 2010 allows for the creation of a flat tax on the valuation of vacant land and buildings payable within a radius of 800 m from the entrance of a new station to ensure the “sustainable resources for financing infrastructure.” This allows the state to recover a portion of value added on an amount equal to 80% of the difference between the sale and purchase price (15% for the central state, 15% for the region) so long as the tax does not exceed 5% of the sale price.

492 “Fédération des sociétés immobilières et foncières.” http://www.fsif.fr/SITE%202%20FSIF/index.html. With the aim to create an internationally competitive investment vehicle for real estate, in September 2001 a working group was formed to strategize as to how to “improve the competitiveness of property companies listed on the Paris Bourse.”
the overall activities of the building and construction." At a committee meeting in 2002, Senator Phillipe Marni (UMP) states the importance of adjusting regulations to allow these entities to compete on a global market:

We searched the methods, ideas, modes that would allow us to do our part in building the new economic policy... The phase of depression experienced by financial markets... is a handicap for investment and employment... It is in the interest of all that the stock market in Paris and properties develop once again... From the standpoint of the general economy, if these companies [SIIC] are growing... they can feed industries that are far negligible in terms of investment and employment.493

In addition to market stabilization and rescue, these are also purported to contribute to environmental sustainability, and the social aspect of urban by integrating with the urban fabric in local developments, now becoming a model for other European states. Yet they do so with a purely-market based model.

Icade is the first French SIIC to develop a strategy and appoint management to deal specifically with Grand Paris, representing an informal yet important aspect of "public" policy. Not only does Icade have investments in areas that will benefit from Grand Paris (in the vicinity of emergent development poles), but Icade’s majority shareholder is the French state financing institution, the Caisse des Dépôts.494 Their involvement in the planning and implementation of reconstruction and growth strategies demonstrates the extent to which the private is embedded in public infrastructures of governance.

493 Ibid.
In France today, the real estate companies of SIIC play an increasingly important role in urban development.\textsuperscript{495} Yet their accountability and objectives should be questioned. As they operated on a logic of financialization, growth and competition, they are inadequate planners of the city and exacerbate existing problems of inequality and marginalization. At the same time, for example, that ratings agencies heralded the attractiveness of the city of Paris for real estate in 2007 and 2008, tents were pitched on the Canal Saint Martin between the stock exchange and the headquarters of several real estate firms, a testament to the lack of affordable housing in the metropolis and the continued underachievement of affordable housing goals, despite new developments.\textsuperscript{496} This sharply reveals the contradiction between the existing power configuration of the city and its social life.

Not only is real estate development based on accumulation by dispossession, but property markets are extremely volatile. This is enhanced by the financialization of real estate, and the securitization of buildings introduces a disconnect between urban policies and financial mechanisms. Short term investment is not compatible with long term perspective of urban politics as the collective life for all. The “city seized by finance,” as Renard describes it is inhospitable to many forms of life.\textsuperscript{497}

\textsuperscript{495} Renard, “La Ville saisie par la finance.”
\textsuperscript{496} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{497} Ibid.
Toward an Analysis of the Contemporary State

According to Pierre Mansat, “the time of Grand Paris is a long time” and that we are now in a period of consolidation of metropolitan governance. Grand Paris is an attempt to articulate a metropolitan market and an institutional structure adequate to regulate it through privatization programs, economic regulation and state reforms. Centralized national planning and targeted urban social performs no longer seems adequate to meet these objectives and so the political rationalities and the knowledges of control and management are in the midst of being altered, giving rise to a new form of urban and regional governance.

Grand Paris is not completely understandable from the perspective of the financialization of urban space. Indeed, many aspects of the plan, such as the high tax rates on new developments, are seen to be contrary to the goals of courting investment. Similarly, recent moves have been made by Sarkozy himself to limit the power of finance. The central state maintains control over many aspects of development and the SGP, though pro-enterprise, is also an instrument with decidedly national priorities. Yet the changes of Grand Paris are poised to provide a crucial illustration of how the financialization of cities operates and the corresponding spatial arrangements that facilitate and result from this process. In these transformations there is a coalition of the state, finance capital and elite interests, each of which are themselves adjusting through the process of transformation.

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498 Chapon, “‘Le Temps des collectivités est un temps long’ ou Le Grand-Paris à petits pas de Pierre Mansat.”
Neither the dichotomies of the state and the market, nor the central state and local constituencies are able to capture these changes. What we witness in *Grand Paris* is not a shift from an interventionist to a non-interventionist state or vice versa, nor a pure decentralization of state power. Rather, the political rationalities of the metropole, along with institutional forms, economic policies and legal arrangements are beginning to align with a global city mode of state productivism. This chapter has not aimed to find an optimal form of government for the metropolis, but to identify the means which facilitate or obscure the structuration of exchange and the concretization of projects as well as the implications of new policy programs for democracy.

What we see in *Grand Paris* is a regime of accumulation both contiguous with neoliberal entrepreneurial governance but subsumed within in a grand state vision. While there are competing and coexisting regional governance approaches, both formal and informal that render coherent and straightforward policy implementation impossible, increasingly, these competing forces are dovetailing around similar strategies of global city productivism whereby governance at all levels is oriented toward production within global financial markets. With this, there is a centralization of power and of the right to effect the future of the city, yet a simultaneous disinvestment of the rights and duties of the state into the hands of private developers and investors. In an era of revived, or perhaps refigured, state capitalism, attention to the implications of this mode of economic growth, political organization and spatial organization is needed.500

500 The most obvious model of this mode of growth is in authoritarian regimes such as China and Russia. See Stefan Halper, *The Beijing Consensus: How China’s Authoritarian Model Will Dominate the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Basic Books, 2010); Golubchikov, “World-city-entrepreneurialism.” Yet evidence of the continued role of the state in
A technocracy of planners and architects who are not bound to the electorate or population increasingly formulate knowledge of the metropolis, while contracts are negotiated at a level abstracted from democratically elected councils. Combined with the fact that local electoral representatives are losing their legitimacy in the eyes of the electorate, governance is moving farther away from accountability and from the majority of those who live in the city, instead concentrating in the hands of a “plural” but elite class. This implies a different conception of public action than forty years ago—a public-private “co-production” of the urban.

The state and investors claim to build financial instruments that are not against social welfare and solidarity and that do not exploit the most vulnerable classes (ex. sub-prime loans) but it is not altogether clear whether any form of financialized planning can be democratic and “sustainable” in the most robust sense. Balancing profit and public investment is the challenge of cities under the global mode of production, but one that is fraught from the start, as the pursuit of an urban lifestyle and urbanity is not the same as the pursuit of quality of life and equality.

One potentially profound implication of the emerging regime is that it is no longer mass parties who support the system, but private investment and the ability to raise both tax dollars and global capital. Production of the urban becomes production for exchange and even democratic life becomes commodified. This aligns with the managing large-scale production through development is also seen across social democratic Europe. See also Baeten, “Resilient Neoliberal Practices: Continuation, Restoration, Appropriation.”

501 In the 2011 cantonales, elections for the departmental general councils, abstention rates in the Île-de-France ranged from 60-75% (compared to 56% national abstention). Departments are no longer seen as legitimate even though they are the most local and directly elected bodies of representatives.
movement away from mass partisan politics of the 20th century, toward what Eleanora Pasotti has called “brand politics.” Urban representatives are no longer relying on mass parties for their resources, ideology or organization support or patronage, which is often, in neoliberal times, no longer available. This has led to a new form of politics that relies on a “brand” or vision of the city to be enacted through redevelopment.

The necessary breadth of these brands undermines the formerly divisive discourses over how the city should be organized and the values it should embrace and thus the scope of debate and contention narrows significantly. This depoliticization turns citizens into consumers of space and consumers of services, and not active participants in deliberative processes. The logics driving politics and markets have converged as “both spheres increasingly pursue their goals of consensus and profit maximization by manipulating preferences and striving to shape new values and identities.” When the state itself, the institutional field into which different parties are situated is implicated in the planning of space for capitalist accumulation, and when that accumulation is tied to the buying and selling of space and production of urban rent, then the seemingly partisan divides narrow considerably. Both the left and right are complicit, and are incentivized to reinvent Paris as a 21st century global city through courting high finance and enterprise.

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502 Pasotti, Political Branding in Cities. While Paris does not fall under Pasotti’s typology of brand politics because of the complex institutional spheres in Île-de-France and the diminished power of the mayor who is not directly elected, the overall analysis is still useful for understanding the dynamics.

503 Ibid., 3. For Pasotti, “politics is no longer articulated along oppositions validated by the mutually recognized cleave that separates them (as in labor-capital or left-right). Rather than being about what side one is on politics becomes bout how close one is to a center of influence that embodies the new vision of citizenship.”

504 Ibid., 13.
This new paradigm also has implications for the relationship of the citizen and the taxpayer. Local politicians need a constant flow of resources in order to implement their visions and increasingly, gather this support not from blocs of voters, but from courting high value revenue. This implies the need for gentrification and the creation of high property values. Mass support is less important than raising capital. Spatial planning and the ability to manage fiscal locations and taxes (both residential and business) depend on the state not as a dispenser of resources but of regulator of the possibilities to invest and to tax. This economic model is the responsibility of diverse institutions and investors for whom it is assumed that growth will provide all of the necessary elements for inhabitation and for convivial city life. As local governments rely less and less on taxes, they become beholden not to the taxpayer base or to inhabitants, but to businesses. Policies reflect this. Socioeconomic inequality and racism as well as other urban social concerns such as housing, itinerant labor, precarity and unemployment are placed outside the realm of government intervention, even as government initiatives may perpetuate these.

Furthermore, redevelopment through projects entails enormous resources form the state, offsetting those of real estate capital and as with any future-based investment, there is no guarantee that these developments will be successful. The overall paradigm changes as governing in terms of risk replaces governing based on social concerns. This is bound to have immense effects on notions of the cityoyen, metropolitan subject and on the future life of the city.
Conclusion: Making Space for Whom?

On our horizon, the city and the urban are outlined as virtual objects, as projects of a synthetic reconstitution....Aspects, elements and fragments. It places before our eyes the spectre, the spectral analysis of the city. When we speak of spectral analysis, its meaning is almost literal not metaphorical. Before our eyes, under our gaze, we have the ‘spectre’ of the city, that of urban society and perhaps simply of society.505

Don’t dream. It will not be reiterated, a century and a half later and on a grand scale, the authoritarian enterprise of annexation begun by Baron Haussmann in 1860.506

Plus ça change...

This dissertation has shown how various understandings of space, politics and urban life have been created, deployed and operationalized through the policy sites of Grand Paris and how an amalgam of urban planning tools are working to produce a new metropolitan space.

In particular, I have considered Grand Paris from three main dimensions: the imaginary, the economic and the juridico-political. In Chapter One, I identified the aesthetic and intellectual conditions of Grand Paris. Projecting the face of the metropolitan Paris region thirty years into the future, the Grand Paris architectural exhibit provides a synthetic ersatz city to be reified through subsequent policies, and an unquestioned language of global urbanism that justifies neoliberal reforms. Giving an artificial unified representation to a fragmented region, the exhibit created a collective dream of urban life and shared affective citizenship for all those who partake in the dream. This “shared dream” is then concretized in large part through the Grand Paris

505 Lefebvre, Writings on Cities, 144.
Express mass transit initiative, the subject of Chapter Two. The vast public
infrastructure of Grand Paris Express enables the state to mobilize the suburban
territories of Paris for capitalist production by linking future transit stations with
strategic enterprise zones to be developed as hubs in a global knowledge economy. Mass
transit here is not pursued for its functional end as a mode of travel for urban dwellers,
but as a means to catalyze speculative real estate development around new stations,
closing the rent gap in underdeveloped areas around the city. As I show in Chapter
Three, this regime of speculative urbanization is supported by a shifting and inchoate
regional institutional structure that provides the legal framework and enforcement
mechanisms to make the dream of Grand Paris into a reality.

In many ways, Grand Paris is a continuation of earlier modes of governance and
production. For centuries there has been collusion in France between the state and the
elite economic classes to organize and regulate social and economic life in order to
maintain capitalist relations. From Haussmannization through to Grand Paris, the state
has pursued massive investments in territory to channel the productive capacities of
space. The national state has retained a primary importance in spatial patterning and
urban planning, and through a variety of means, has capitalized upon national and
extranational sites through a hierarchical differentiation of spaces and populations.
Urban production and the management of urban affairs have been crucial to many of
these colonial processes and save few events, have been undertaken largely out of the
hands of inhabitants. Centers and peripheries are continually being redrawn in this
process; enabling some to have access to the creative capacities of the urban while
denying it to others.
Despite a number of continuities in the relationship between the state and market, governance and production today are not the same as under Napoleon’s empire or under the post-war rule of social democracy. In particular, the changes undergone in the past forty years—the subjects of the dissertation—are important to thinking through how space gets built and the consequences of this question for collective life and democracy. Under a system of Fordist production and Keynesian economic management, the production of space was dominated by national planning schemes which emphasized the rational parceling of space, homogeneity of form and function, strict zoning, regulations and state control. National territory was channeled into productive circuits by a support for large industry and (at least in theory) an equitable distribution of jobs and wealth across France. Cities grew according to a unipolar model of growth, with highways and the automobile providing the means of expansion from the urban core to suburban workplaces and dwellings. This large-scale planning with broad social application idealized the equal status of all communes. Particular French cities such as Paris were not privileged in the sense of production, but were rather seen as sites of consumption for mass commodities. Spatial policy was oriented toward widespread social concerns and the secure, long-term welfare of the citizenry. Meanwhile public expenditures were undertaken on the grounds of the common good and public growth. During this time mass parties and powerful regimes supported a corporatist state based on a wide spectrum of ideological debate.

In today’s mode of global city production, on the other hand, it is the mechanisms of dezoning, decoding and deregulation that entrench the power of the state and of capital. Spatial planning aims to create polycentric, networked and rhizomatic
cities where designated clusters and hubs of excellence produce value in the global knowledge economy. Mass transit is a privileged means to urban growth as it promises to link these priority territories to one another, while also promoting green urbanism and environmental sustainability. Public expenditures are undertaken for private growth through debt-financed public works. Leading the metropolitan process, flagship territories and site-specific mega-projects are created and supported through an emphasis on polarity itself as a model of growth. Uneven development of territory is no longer an externality or unforeseen consequence of planning strategies, but is the very pillar of urbanization and urban transformation. In this regime real estate and property markets are paramount. Governance is polymorphic, consensual participatory and contractual and spatial policies are increasingly oriented toward private concerns of business, finance and economic growth.

In pointing out these changes, the dissertation does not aim to reminisce wistfully for a “golden age” of urban life in Paris. Clearly such an age has never existed for each mode of production and form of governance is wrought with its own difficulties and its unique forms of suffering. Problems of racisms, housing, economic stratification and sexual exploitation have specific contours and specific regional geographies in historical context. Rather, the dissertation aims to draw out the main features of the emerging global city mode of state productivism in order to clarify its workings and its specific limits. In so doing it gestures to critical aspects of urbanization that can be productively mined in future studies.

The dissertation finds that in each of the Grand Paris policy sites studied, there is a consensus among lawmakers, urban planners, architects, developers and public
officials, and even “participating” citizens around the goals of global competition and economic growth. In response to the overarching question of *Grand Paris—What makes a city great?*—the answer is a resounding chorus of the global city. As a process of “polic(y)ing,” *Grand Paris* distributes the populations spaces and functions that comprise the 21st century city in capitulation to the demands of global finance capital.507

Emphasizing the exchange value of space over its use-value, the commodification of the city intensifies and modes of collective inhabitation are degraded. The dissertation finds that Paris is being physically transformed by a cadre of state officials, technical experts, aesthetic and intellectual leaders and financial institutions in order to improve its resiliency as a high-ranking global city metropolis. City space is commodified to increase the competitiveness of the region, while people, inhabitation and everyday life are ignored or simply reduced to a ‘lifestyle’ to be sold to elite resident/investors.

Tying together its ideological, material and institutional reforms, the dissertation considers how *Grand Paris* reconfigures the specific meaning of “centrality” in urban Paris today. Not merely a physical relation of distance between the urban core of Paris and the peripheral banlieue, the *Grand Paris* regime of centrality changes the morphology of the city in a new, more diffuse, expression of exploitative economic relations, exclusionary cultural forms and differentiated access to decision making. While Paris’ long-dominant unipolar layout is transforming into that of a polycentric urban region, the dissertation demonstrates that this does not entail a radical break with economic, social and political relations of hegemony and oppression upon which geographic polarity is based. These findings indicate that *Grand Paris* revitalizes earlier modes of

507 Swyngedouw, “The Antinomies of the Postpolitical City.”
colonial and modernist spatial management, bringing questions of territorial mastery and socioeconomic exploitation into the new century.

Although the dissertation has claimed that *Grand Paris* is delusional and problematic, the aim of the dissertation is not to reject the project outright. Clearly the project contains a wealth of insight on the particular history of Paris and on the contemporary metropolitan form. It also serves as a prescient reminder of the revolutionary potential of spatial transformation. Rather, this dissertation attempts to track the logics and deployments of architectural practice, development initiatives and urban governance in *Grand Paris* that work to depoliticize the city. The dissertation shows that from utopian projects of urban representation, to the declarations of regional cohesion, to the branding of city spaces, to shallow attempts at public participation and debate, to the privatization of governance, democracy is clearly suffering under the *Grand Paris* reforms and is set to suffer in the future. Everyday inhabitants are denied the ability to collectively produce spaces according to their desires and needs, decision-making capacity is concentrated in an elite class of state functionaries and business leaders, and opposition is made incomprehensible according to the accepted terms of urban deliberation. Moreover the logic of economic growth which is the lodestone of urbanization is poised to exacerbate existing social, economic and political problems, while contributing to peripheralization of unwanted populations, critical ideas and radical praxis at all scales. If the analysis presented here reveals the specter of the future Île-de-France, it is increasingly a neoliberal dreamscape of social fragmentation, inequality, poverty and complacency.
A New Urban Centrality

The Grand Paris process of metropolitanization recasts the polycentric urban-region as the essential scale of social organization, realm of coordinated economic activity and level of shared governance in Paris. These transformations in production and belonging are primarily organized in the global city of Paris through recasting border and refiguring the meanings of center and periphery. There are three primary dynamics of urban centrality and urban peripherality that the analysis of Grand Paris illuminates: alterations of the physical morphology of the city and the transfer of infrastructure, populations and enterprise from the historic core to the suburbs; the centralization and decentralization of power and of governance through changes in territorial administrative units as well as sub and supranational units; and the relations of domination and exploitation that enable some to have access to centers of power, wealth and decision making and others to be rendered to marginal positions, unable to invent the conditions of their own and collective lives, including the ability to create spaces according to collective desires.

This has particular relevance for Paris, which has historically been one of the most “centralized” cities in the world. “Paris is centrality itself” claimed Napoleon in the Second Empire. Yet this physical and economic centralization is being called into question today. The apparent loss of a concentrated dominance calls for a restoration of territorial and class power.

The metropolitanization of Paris works through what has been identified as a process of ‘unification through decentering.’ With the creation of priority suburban

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508 Harvey, Paris, Capital of Modernity, 114.
growth centers, a functional hierarchy of urban space is created. Rather than a Fordist-Keynesian universal management of national territory, the French state has singled out a handful of enterprise hubs to be the beneficiaries of state infrastructures and investment and declared to be future nodes of command power in the global financial network. With gentrification, the poor and poverty classes are forgotten.

Invisible in the bloodless narrative of the Grand Paris global city, for example are the daily sufferings that this regime is set to perpetuate. There are urgent problems in Paris that will not be solved with the medium term-plan set thirty years into the future. Few benefits can be expected to trickle down from renewed investment and economic gains. Thousands in the Île-de-France live in substandard living conditions, unemployment is high, especially among youth, deep poverty abounds, precarity is becoming the new normal for the lower and middle classes. 509

Not only are the poor expelled from the traditional historical center of Paris and from the new poles through prohibitive costs of living and increased surveillance, but they are also made undesirable through a new governmentality that declares the acceptable parameters for a global city inhabitant who meets the Grand Paris style of beauty, grandeur, wealth and European-ness.

509 For example, the 75 000 new units a year in recent years of Grand Paris will do little to solve the housing deficit as it currently exists, especially when the units are oriented toward wealthy inhabitants. Currently there are 1.3 million people waiting for HLM housing across France, 823 000 persons living with third-parties (friends of families), 41 000 in makeshift shelters, 350 000 tenants or subtenants. In total, across France 2.1 million people are estimated to lack even the most elementary services (running water, sewage). An additional 3.6 million are living in overcrowded quarters and 86 000 are without any shelter. Add to this the 5.7 million made precarious by financial reasons and approximately 12% of the population is affected by the so-called “housing question.” Garnier, Une Violence éminemment contemporaine, 136.
The multidimensional centrality of *Grand Paris* can neither be described according to the Chicago school narrative of city growth where the urban radiates from a central business district through successive rings of commercial, industrial and residential zones, nor the centrifugal and centripetal forces of urban sprawl of the L.A. school of postmodern geography. Even more nuanced accounts of the changing political and economic geographies of the urban like Sassen’s global city agglomerations or Neil Brenner’s urban rescalings tend to elide questions of how changes in governance imply important changes in the distribution of populations and in the ability to access wealth and decision making. While Sassen’s and Brenner’s ideas of the global city provide an adequate model for the spatial arrangements of territorial diffusion, they miss the ways in which the accumulated histories of space determine these processes.

Instead, it is my contention that the dynamic of *Grand Paris* is best described by Henri Lefebvre’s dialectical notion of centrality as the essential power geometry of urbanization. Centralization for Lefebvre is the general condition of the urban under capital and the general exchangeability of space. “Cities,” he says, “are paradoxical spaces, which seem to bring people close to each other while simultaneously generating isolation and social frustration…Marked simultaneously by centrifugal and centripetal forces, they are places of attraction and repulsion, integration and disintegration, social promotion and declasement, proximity and distance.”\(^{510}\) Cities, as the public spaces of citizenship, and are exemplary sites of solidarity and feelings of togetherness, yet urban spaces are sites of unevenness and the history of urbanization and industrialization goes hand in hand with the creation of vast inequality, exploitation and social division. These

\(^{510}\) Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, 35.
are not separate and competing forces, but overlapping, mutually reinforcing and
dialectically related tendencies.

Urban centrality is key to the realization of surplus in production, but this
surplus is not invested or distributed evenly across the urban territory. If rent is produced
everywhere in the city through collective life and interdependence, the surplus is
appropriated by a select few and channeled into very particular locational investments.
Under metropolitanization, these configurations are undergoing rapid changes. The
transformations today give credence to Lefebvre’s poignant claim that “the essential
aspect of the urban phenomenon is its centrality, but a centrality that is understood in
conjunction with the dialectical movement that creates or destroys it. The fact that any
point can become central is the meaning of urban space-time.”511 The constantly
changing flexible center of urban networked space rings truer today than when he made
the claim in the 1970s. A diffusion of activities in space facilitates concentrations in
wealth and decision while unifying the city further marginalizes it.

The responses to a perceived loss of urban territorial centrality bifurcate along
political lines with both the left and right reclaiming centrality as a class relation. While
the right announces the end to physical centrality and praises the multipolar, networked
global city, the left tries to retain the essence of the urban as being about centrality as
density and conviviality (green, mixed use communities, public spaces of encounter etc.)
and nostalgically tries to recreate this through sustainable development both in the core
and in new poles of the periphery. The rightwing response consists of what Lefebvre

511 Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, 116. “Any centrality, once established, is destined to
suffer dispersal, to dissolve, or to explode from the effects of saturation, attrition,
outside aggressiveness and so on.” Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 399.
describes in the 1970s as a “double centrality composed of two aspects: the network of commercial centers, and the centrality of decisions, decision-making centers, veritable forces of the state that neoliberal ideology attempts to conceal.” The left also unabashedly invokes this “double centrality” albeit within a more social democratic discourse.

Those on the right say that minimalist government and *laissez-faire* are best and that the government should intervene to make city-building more flexible, efficient and cost-effective. In opposition to this, the left call for a more activist government and capacity to provide for communities through the same flexible, efficient building practices. The right laud free markets while the left hails the return of “state providence” and a ‘social Europe’. The left-critique today which supports the growth of more “local” neighborhoods and municipal autonomy (to decide which investors to attract) thus comes to look very similar to the neoliberal model of growth and to gentrification. The transport system is exemplary here, while creating proximate communities around new stations, still submits everything and everyone to the law of circulation. The differences between these plans no doubt matter in the streets, but they both rest fundamentally on pillars of project-led economic growth.

Neither of these, then, question the logic of the metropole that fragments as it unifies. As the dissertation has demonstrated, not only is an undoctored free market productive of inequalities, but there is a ground rent incompatibility between the achievement of a livable, self-sustaining, democratic and just communities and the maintenance of relations of capitalist production. The right to centrality, to the control

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512 Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 176.
over the means of urban production and to participation and appropriation of space is today actually reduced by well-meaning socialists to an apology for the conditions of peripheralization that necessitate such a right in the first place. To truly question the manner in which urban space is productive of peripherality and centrality, urban planning cannot be merely a matter of balancing the forces of growth and durability or competition and equality. The vision of a world-class global city is the \textit{a priori} condition of decision making. When the city is orientated toward rent production (the urban as a productive entity and a site of inhabitation), and the real estate market becomes prominent the appropriation of space becomes a means of socioeconomic organization, not all have access to the surplus that the city produces and peripheralization is guaranteed.

\textbf{Where one no longer speaks of the \textit{banlieue}}

Sarkozy’s ominous announcement in 2009 that \textit{Grand Paris} entails a future “where one no longer speaks of the \textit{banlieue}” betrays the violence upon which his polycentric global city utopia is predicated. In creating a metropole on the model of the capitalist city, the existing city must be destroyed. Not only are \textit{banlieue} residents dispossessed of their homes and forced to live even farther away from sites of work and leisure under \textit{Grand Paris}, but the history of the \textit{banlieue} and its racialized and classed determinations are erased.

It is clear that across all of its policy manifestations that \textit{Grand Paris} is being conducted on a “civilizational” scale. The state uses its panoramic perspective to cast a far-reaching policy channeling immense resources into territorial development. The
Grand Paris project continues in the line of Haussmann’s notorious Second Empire reforms, and the massive modernization and reconstruction efforts post WWII in this way. Attempting to master and control of the flux of urban life, extracting the resources of common life through urban rent, and bringing unity to a subjecting populations to a common rule of the global financial network, Grand Paris colonizes the Île-de-France through the justifications of the global city.

Yet this is not an ambiguous, coherent or fully consolidated process, but one wrought through competing ideological and economic conditions. In many ways, the ideological support for the destruction and renovation of earlier spatial arrangements relies upon the same grand narratives of French modernization that created these arrangements in the first place. In addition to the new paradigm of innovation, growth and competition, the global city also trades in time-honoured colonial discourses. Implicit in the Grand Paris ideas of agglomeration are notions of social cohesion, immigration and integration, but integration is framed here purely as a spatial question. In the 21st century, one no longer speaks of the colonies or the banlieue, but the project to unify the territory of the Île-de-France is a tool of nation building equally as a tool of economic growth.

Indeed, as the broader context to the Grand Paris reforms, the colonial nature of French society cannot be ignored. This is reflected in a number of policy decisions, from reactionary violence toward Islam to debates over national identity and dual citizenship, to depictions of the national football team. The colonial rule is illuminated in all its violence in laws that strip citizenship to cop killers, the expulsion of Roma camps and the increased police surveillance of poor and immigrant neighborhoods. Indeed, for
Sarkozy, the *Grand Paris* plan on which he ran for president in 2007, is fundamentally tied to his more general vision of delivering France (back) to the pinnacle of civilization. Resembling speeches of the Algerian war or the imperial republican discourses of the Third republic, he stated at a campaign rally in February 2007, just months before the announcement of *Grand Paris*, his plan for France:

> To make a politics of civilization as the philosophers of the Enlightenment wanted, as the Republicans of the time of Jules Ferry attempted. To make a politics of civilization to respond to the identity crisis, to the moral crisis, to confusion faced with globalization. To make a politics of civilization, this is what incites us the Mediterranean where all is great, the passions as well as the crimes, where nothing is done mediocre, where the Republic shone in the sky of art and of thought, where the human genius raised itself so high that it is impossible to resign ourselves to believing that the source is dried up.\(^{513}\)

The French imperial world is composed of *grand* and *petit* nations, *grand* and *petit* cities. Republican and modernist notions are reappropriated into new modes of growth to ensure that France and Paris each remain *grand*. For Sarkozy, the genealogy of exceptional men and exemplary and monumental history, the triumph of the nation is all important, and the main objective of *Grand Paris* is to restore a France to presumed height of cultural, economic and political might.\(^{514}\) This vision appropriates the modern beliefs in unbridled growth, natural hierarchies of power, and inevitable progress. In what has been called a “demagogical instrumentalization of history” Sarkozy rehabilitates a colonial discourse elaborated by the founders of the third republic and modern tropes.

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\(^{514}\) Ibid.
of progress as a reactionary stance against an imperiled 21st century republic. \(^{515}\) *Grand Paris* is a prime example of this.

**The (Grand) Paris Commune?**

It has been suggested throughout the dissertation that *Grand Paris* defuses opposition through a consensual mode of post-planning. The operational logic of the mega-project relies on broad agreement by a plurality of interests, public accession or indifference and a nomos of neoliberalism that occludes alternatives. Widespread agreement is secured through a mega-project that promises benefits to all, a “thoughtful” rationale that considers environmental impacts and communal spaces, and public participation at each step of the process. It has also been argued that through these mechanisms of consensus, *Grand Paris* obfuscates its ideological makeup as well as its true beneficiaries and disenfranchises *citoyens* from the capacity to produce spaces of their own. Furthermore, behind these consensual practices remains an underlying recentralization of power to manage territory through the productivism of the state.

If there is broad consensus of *Grand Paris* among political parties across the board, and populist support for the plan from the general population, how then might the peripheralization and colonization of *Grand Paris* contested? Against the centrality of power and decision cemented through capitalist urbanization and the state productive apparatus and colonial formations, Lefebvre proposes its opposite, the experimental democratic collective production of urban space through what he various terms practices

\(^{515}\) Ibid.
of urban revolution, autogestion (inhabitant/worker control) and (the now somewhat toothless) “right to the city.” These provide models for repoliticizing Paris.

To exclude the urban form groups, classes, individuals, is also to exclude them from civilization, if from not society itself. The right to the city legitimates the refusal to allow oneself to be removed from urban reality by a discriminatory and segregative organization. This right of the citizen (if one wants, of ‘man’) proclaims the inevitable crisis of city centers based upon segregation and establishing it: centers of decision-making, wealth, power, of information and knowledge, which reject towards peripheral spaces all those who do not participate in political privileges…The right to the city therefore signifies the constitution or reconstitution of a spatial-temporal unit, of a gathering together instead of a fragmentation. It does not abolish confrontations and struggles. On the contrary.\footnote{Lefebvre, \textit{Writings on Cities}, 195.}

Against the consensus of \textit{Grand Paris}, resistance must stress the agonistic nature of democracy and the productive nature of conflict in building social alliances as well as material environments. And as production today occurs through real estate, rent and finance, then inhabitants must seize the means of urban production to produce a space for and by all those whose lives will be effected.

While \textit{Grand Paris} has thus far proceeded mainly unopposed except for disagreements within the establishment, there are reasons to be hopeful that it may condition a new form of large-scale anti-gentrification, anti-capitalist resistance.

In his work on Second Empire Paris, Harvey writes that the 1871 commune “was wrought in part out of a nostalgia for the urban world that Haussmann had destroyed… and the desire to take back their city on the part of those dispossessed by Haussmann’s works.” He thus identifies a continuity between massive changes in urban space and lifestyle caused by movements of surplus value and responding emancipator
movements. This is also evident in the 20th century. Movements against expressways and high-rises in central Paris, as well as the increasing visibility of the dilapidated living conditions in the banlieues around university campuses played important roles in inspiring the processes of May 1968. Elite planning initiatives and spectacular bourgeois policies do not go unnoticed, especially when they affect quotidian life, and when they can be articulated within broad concerns over urban life. To bring these to light is the challenge posed to those opposed to Grand Paris.

Under contemporary conditions of urban fragmentation and critical cooptation, this may seem implausible, yet there is opposition mounting to Grand Paris in some forms. Thus far, opposition has mainly taken the form of site-specific neighborhood organizations resisting gentrification of middle class or agricultural neighborhoods. For example, the group Ecology Europe and the Neighbors of Saclay oppose the extension of the metro through the agricultural plateau. Similarly, the Community for the Gonesse Triangle denounces the gigantism of the project and the financing of the contract-based development plan. Local groups have also opposed developments in Nanterre, in Sevran and in Clichy-sous-Bois. Yet on the level of the metropolis, these individual expressions of dissent do little to challenge the general logic upon which Grand Paris is based. Without a single locus of exploitation, the domination is spread across the territory, resistance becomes difficult. The conceptual basis of the Grand Paris plan is rarely if ever discussed alongside its specific manifestations. This is the first step

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in generating a conceptual apparatus and a movement of support that might challenge the way *Grand Pairs* is being built.

In fact, there are glimmers across *Grand Pari* of critical practices that would see the building of Paris reshape the city in a form other than in the image of capital given by the powers of developers backed by finance, corporate capital, and an interventionist state. These should be drawn forth and mined for their political purchase. In his workbook of designs and research produced alongside his final presentation, for example, architect Jean Nouvel writes a short but striking vignette under the title “*Un abri pour la democratie*” (“Shelter for democracy”) that is worth quoting at some length here:

Let’s imagine the workshop of the building site on one side sounding with discussions, explanations, where, in moments mix peals of laughter, and also, certain evenings, a choir of songs. One sees there, all day long, entering and leaving, men, women, children, dressed for work or for jogging, in dresses in flowers or in jeans. They rest there for five minutes, a half-hour, an afternoon, take a coffee a sandwich, a meal. The workshop lasts one year. A building is constructed. The people of the building site are architects, engineers, artisans, promoter, but also artists, neighborhood venders, residents, students. The mayor, the city representative for urbanism, the police commissary, representatives of associations, and of course, the future residents of the building all pass through. The elders pass on to the youth. The professionals do their work, they take responsibilities, but they do it in permanently listening to those for whom they are building, in discussion with them. Nothing is preconceived, imposed. The architect interprets as he goes along that which he receives as the habitat constructs itself, as the neighborhood forms, as the city emerges. He departs from the plan and the model and uses all of this sensible material to give to the project emotion, in leaving the place to enchantment which births surprise.

The cabin of the workshop becomes a place of encounter, reflection and exchange, like a tent, planted there some months, in the shelter of which speech frees itself in view of the construction of the communal home (be it a building, a neighborhood or a city). The workshop, place of the transmission of experiences and of public knowledge is thus a cultural act
and a social commons. In this open space a living architecture can elaborate itself in the image of participative democracy, where everyone respects the other and his word, takes pleasure in confrontation of ideas and in experiment, a place where errors can nourish the communal project—or even make new works.518

In this intergenerational, interactive dream of building community, the solidarity of shared creativity and encounter is cemented in the solidity of the built environment. A process of interaction and discussion, space is created collectively, and equally through laughter and surprise as it is through technicity and expertise. Equally in encounters between neighbors as in the physical laying of bricks. Instead of this still global model of planning that the *Grand Paris* project performs overall, here the nature of spatial practice and democracy are more experimental, more radical. Replacing the violence of universalization and generalization with a creative worlding practice, planning here challenges hierarchical models of how space is made, distributed and lived. It aims to think from a place of heterogeneity and to use this as a platform, albeit an unstable and contested one, from which to build.

Urban planning and architecture are quintessential techniques of spatial production, practices to design, construct, and concretize material environments. They are self-defined disciplines of organizing, distributing and delimiting spaces. Yet these spaces do not only consist of buildings in the sense of immovable walls and fixed locations, they also come into being through lived interactions and relationships, through collective activities of building, by the enumerable encounters of bodies and their

surroundings. Acknowledging and enabling these collective buildings in a democratic manner is a task toward which the Grand Paris project purportedly aims but ultimately fails to achieve. Serious consideration of how this collective building might work in ways that are not coopted into the state productive machinery is needed.

**Neoliberalism, où allons-nous?**

The Grand Paris project cements capitalist urbanization and the neoliberal values of privatization, economic growth and deregulation into the spatial organization of the city. It works to make marketization and commodification commonsensical, reinforces the priorities of state intervention in regional redevelopment, and naturalizes a speculative logic of urban growth and change. Built on the ruins of social democracy, the mongrel assemblage of Grand Paris involves competing and seemingly incommensurable modes of production and economic management, but the 21st century alliance of the state and market is not, as the dissertation has shown, as idiosyncratic as it might first appear.

The state-led investment for elite purposes has been identified as a new form of neoliberal restructuring involving massive investments in territory and infrastructure for the purpose of private growth and increased competition. The state here leads capital accumulation, through territorial reform and spatial planning. New built spaces are the economic pillar of this regime and represent a restoration of class power through the building of a new city over and above the existing one. Policies determined by position of state within network of financial power, and capitalism here is without disguise, unfettered. Unlike the bureaucratic reforms of the mid twentieth century, this new form
of governance is flexible, integrative and participatory, yet the outcomes are not necessarily more communal or public. The corporatist state absolves itself of social responsibility while domesticating and fragmenting opposition.

The basic scaffolding of Grand Paris is becoming a model for urbanization projects worldwide. The knowledge created in Grand Paris, for example, comes from architects who have a global presence, and the international teams of architects are prime examples of how ideas translate across sites. Similarly, due to networks of information sharing between metropolitan governments, urbanism is now a global practice. Because of this, Grand Paris bears uncanny resemblance to other major urban development mega-projects such as PlaNYC in New York and Plan Abu Dhabi 2030. Not only does Grand Paris adopt norms from other cities and planning initiatives, but Grand Paris planners and officials have advised Sydney, Hong Kong, Moscow, Tokyo, São Paulo, Buenos Aires, Caracas, Berlin, Brussels and other cities on the merits of the project. Laurence Cassegrain, project director for Public Politics relating to le Grand Paris, comments in an interview with architect Tim Williams that “Cities around the world have sought to understand, develop and apply similar processes. The list is growing quickly, as the cities of the world realize that they have to find a new way to address their issues. What is being forged in Grand Paris could soon find its way into other urban planning initiatives in diverse contexts.

Indeed, what I have described throughout the dissertation as project-based global city state productivism, others have called authoritarian neoliberalism,

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“Keynesianism for the rich,” or “private Keynesianism.’" The preponderance of state-led investment schemes to spur investment across a variety of situations suggests that the *Grand Paris* mode of governance is becoming increasingly widespread today. Global reforms from courting business in post-socialist St. Petersburg, to rapidly constructed infrastructural projects in China, to evental projects such as the 2012 London Olympics and 2014 World Cup in Brazil all involve the prominent involvement of the state in delivering flagship projects, ordering territory and ensuring the regulatory framework for competition.

Yet this is not simply state capitalism as we have known it in the 20th century. Consistent across these reforms are the language of the global city itself and the hegemony of sustainability, growth and competition as goals of urbanization. The cooption of critical urban knowledge begun in the 1970s has reached new heights today, such that there is little alternative. There is, to put it differently, little discursive space to think about urbanization outside of this overriding agenda. *Grand Paris* acts as if this is the end of ideological contest over the values of city life and the end of planning through the reign of the global city. It is presumed that all must now bow the necessity of financial markets and the variations of policy among states and cities are determined by their respective positions in the increasingly broad network of aspiring global cities.

Also consistent across these reforms are contractual politics where dissent is taken out of the project through a privatization of governance itself where private companies increasing manage research and implementation. Democracy here is “re-

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520 The terms “Keynesianism for the rich” and "private Keynesianism are from Baeten, “Resilient Neoliberal Practices: Continuation, Restoration, Appropriation.”
placed” from the site of mass involvement to consultation meetings, constrained public debates and review processes that make up the participatory and stakeholder planning. Commercial interests replace “public” interest and the pursuit of capital gains becomes the ultimate and sole goal of human action and arbiter of collective urban life.

In order to contest this increasingly prevalent doxa almost imperceptible in its ubiquity, this dissertation has challenged the precise mechanisms through which it is produced and imposed. The workings of Grand Paris are not universal, but they are nevertheless worthy of attention. In order to understand how neoliberalism continues to work in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century, more work of this kind, especially in comparative perspective is needed. Through this, we can begin to forge lines of resistance and to build cities that are decidedly not grand.
Bibliography


