

Inventing Grand Paris

Cross-perspectives on metropolitan areas from the 1970s to 2000

International Conference - 1er & 2 décembre 2016
Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Paris-Belleville

CALL FOR PAPERS

The fourth international conference *Inventing "Grand Paris"* will be held on 1 and 2 December 2016 in Paris, at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Paris-Belleville. This conference is part of a multi-year programme on the history of the Greater Paris region, developed in an international, interdisciplinary perspective. Using key dates in the history of Greater Paris as starting points, this programme aims to cast light on current events by comparing the planning and development of Greater Paris with other metropolitan areas around the world. Thus, the first conference (2013) began by studying the work of the Commission d'extension de Paris in 1913; this commission is considered to be the first expression of a project for "Grand Paris" (or Greater Paris). The second conference (2014) covered the period of the first plan for the Paris Region, the *Plan d'aménagement de la région parisienne* known as the "Prost Plan", published in 1934. The third conference (2015) focused on the period from the 1940s until the strategic *Schéma directeur d'aménagement et d'urbanisme de la région de Paris* was published in 1965.

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The 2016 conference will focus on the last few decades of the twentieth century: from 1970, the end of a period of strong growth, to 2001, with the start of a new cycle marked by the revival of the Greater Paris theme. While the French context saw a long transition between the proactive policies of the post-war period and decentralisation, or even liberalisation, of urban affairs, this period also saw metropolitisation spread on a global scale, with a strengthening of the network of world cities (notably after 1989) and a relative decline of older metropolitan areas. On a more strictly urban planning level, the so-called "functionalist" period was apparently coming to a close. Strategic planning in the 1970s, design-led urbanism in the 1980s, then "urban renewal" in the 1990s, all brought up to date the rhetoric of public policies related to urban mutations. For Greater Paris, this period was marked by the 1976 publication of the first regional strategic plan to have gone through the full legal process, coinciding with the institutional creation of the Île-de-France regional authority. This was followed,

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nearly twenty years later, by another regional strategic plan in 1994, which remained in effect until the 2000s. Between these two publications, a certain number of new themes were introduced, which were shared with other metropolitan areas in France and around the world:

- A growing number of players involved in metropolitan planning

After a period dominated by the central state administration, the period 1970-2000 saw a new division of tasks in terms of development, with decentralisation of this administration followed by a real devolution, notably on transportation matters, which were transferred to the Île-de-France regional authority in 1976, then via the transfer of urban planning responsibility to the municipal level in the 1980s. Between these two events, the position of elected mayor for all of central Paris was created again in 1977, and given responsibility for urban planning. This change called into question the planning between Paris and its suburbs. The metropolitan area became a field of tensions between the local level, sometimes turned inward, and the global level, increasingly integrated. With the build-up of the new *départements* created by the 1964 reform, then the emergence in the 1980s of new inter-communal territories organised around urban projects and then administrative grouping of municipalities, the Greater Paris region's famous "administrative layer cake" took shape. And this overlapping of various administrative layers appears, paradoxically, to have made the city of Paris even more isolated, a situation that is probably unique among metropolitan areas worldwide. Through urban activism, the inhabitants attempted to become players themselves.

Lastly, in this framework, the planning agencies of the Region (Institut d'aménagement et d'urbanisme de la région Île de France, IAURIF) and of the City of Paris (Atelier parisien d'urbanisme, APUR) developed expertise on overlapping territories, an area of expertise that they later exported. What about the other French metropolitan areas, where the implementation of grouping of municipalities stabilised this complexity much earlier on, and where urban activism played a much more important role? Was this situation typical for a major metropolitan area, or was it a specifically Parisian disorder? Here, international comparisons will be particularly welcome. These comparisons could, for example, be based on cases related to the exportation of the expertise of the two abovementioned entities.

- From planned urbanism to project urbanism

The five new towns (Evry, Cergy, Marne-La-Vallée, St Quentin en Yvelines, and Sénart), as well as the restructured poles in the inner suburbs (La Défense-Nanterre, Bobigny, Créteil, etc.), all of which were clearly identified in the 1976 master plan, hosted vast development projects directed by specific operators (mixed economy companies, public development corporations). In the 1994 master plan, these operational mechanisms appeared to be even

more loosely interconnected with the regional planning efforts through a number of “project-based territories” resulting from local dynamics. Thus, regional development gradually focused on what players called “*projets urbains*”, often based on highly publicised architectural creations or symbolic public spaces. A history of some of these projects, many of which are not very well known, and of their interaction with the planning of the Greater Paris region would be a welcome contribution to the conference. It would also be interesting to compare the situation in Paris with other French metropolitan areas, where this project urbanism was able to take on a more strategic dimension. The ways in which projects and planning have interacted in other metropolitan areas would provide an interesting counterpoint.

- Regeneration and a “return to the city”

Rather unexpectedly, the 1976 master plan contains a section on “urban composition” on the agglomeration level. This “revival” of the question of urban forms developed in parallel with the APUR through a doctrine based on an in-depth analysis of the urban fabric from the Haussmann era. This design-led doctrine, embedded in post-modernism, guided the entire development policy of the City of Paris until the late 1990s – and in its name, certain urban renovation projects were interrupted or redesigned (Belleville, Amandiers, les Halles, etc.). This discourse about “returning to the city” developed elsewhere in Europe (in Italy, Germany, etc.) and the rest of the world, deriving its legitimacy from the issue of cultural heritage. It would also take hold in many other French cities. How did this paradigm shift become apparent in the planning and development of Greater Paris? In what way did it emerge much earlier in other metropolitan areas?

More generally, after the period of “growth urban planning”, the “housing renewal” theme of the 1976 scheme and the “redevelopment sites” of the 1994 master plan attest to the emergence of new development modes. The Paris metropolitan area did not escape this “re-” urban planning (regeneration, revitalisation, etc.), even though it appears to have greater inertia than other smaller French metropolitan areas faced with the reconversion of industrial brownfield sites into part of the urban core. To understand this stance, we must also analyse groundbreaking local experiments in poor and excluded districts or observe the impact of national policies such as the *Banlieue 89* programme, whose history has yet to be written, or all the measures implemented as part of the national policy aimed at tackling urban poverty and exclusion. An analysis of foreign examples will offer counterpoints to this dialectic between protecting the urban centres and urban renewal of suburban areas.

- An evolution of environmental themes: ecology, landscape, agriculture

Beginning with the first oil shock in 1973, followed by the *trame verte* (green corridor) in the 1976 master plan and the promotion of regional natural parks in the 1994 plan, the protection of nature and

the environment has gathered strength. The importance of the landscape issue, beginning in the 1990s, was reflected in new planning tools on a larger territorial scale focusing on this issue such as charters and atlases. Lastly, the questioning of urban sprawl consuming rural land and the idea of the city as an area for cultivation have started to bring agriculture into the sphere of planning, through certain pioneering cases. But the history of this field is still fragmented, either for Greater Paris or other French metropolitan areas. How do the experiments of local associations interact with heightened political awareness? Which foreign models were precursors, and which ones became references? At the end of the period covered by this conference, a planetary ecological challenge has taken shape. By casting light on these aspects, we can investigate what urban development has contributed to this global environmental awareness.

While many of these questions open up to current events, this call for papers is part of a history-based approach that gives priority to primary source research and papers that analyze the changes over time in the planning of the Greater Paris region or other metropolitan areas, with the latter addressed in a comparative approach. In this respect, the conference aims to apply an historical perspective to the very recent period. We therefore hope that it will be of interest to a wide range of fields: history, geography, planning, architecture, political science, etc.

Proposals for 20-minute papers in French or English should be sent by e-mail to the following address:

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These should be in Word format and one-half of an A4 page maximum (about 200 words), and be accompanied by a brief curriculum vitae (name, address, education and degrees, current position and institutional affiliation, research areas and main publications).

Submission deadline: 31 May 2016.