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CITIES AND SPATIAL RECONSTRUCTION

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Cities are empirical realities, the concrete dimension of which is fundamental because it is thus that they present themselves through certain architectural styles, certain modes of circulation, habitation, activity, and populations that are more or less heterogeneous. But the sciences concerned with cities that appeared in the twentieth century sought to integrate descriptive intent with theoretical formulations so as to explain the agglomeration as a model, or system, corresponding to a certain type of space.

First defined by all authors in contrast to the rural – in any case, until the mid-twentieth century –, this distinction gradually showed itself to be obsolete as the real and virtual boundaries between urban and rural spaces vanished. This fundamental transformation is one of the most stimulating aspects of contemporary thought on the city.

It is therefore from this theoretical point of view that we shall begin with the presentation of research in this domain, before considering the more concrete aspects constituting the perceptible reality of cities.

A

A COMPLEX SPATIAL ORGANISM

1. A stable representation

The city is an expanse : it develops in space and enjoins the reproduction of its laws of distribution, growth and reconstruction. No consideration of the urban can disregard this spatial characteristic – at the risk of lapsing into tautology, to the effect that phenomena are called urban because they are manifested in the city. It is the relation to a differentiated and

particular space that can justify the definition of a specific discipline – even if and because this differentiation does not cease to evolve and undergo change, at all times, and even if its reformulation is today particularly radical. Thus the presence of surrounding walls varied in the course of time, becoming a necessity when the forms of rivalry between cities were exacerbated, attenuating when the imperial power guaranteed civil peace, as under the Roman Empire.

The approach to the city as a comprehensive reality, system or organism regulated by inherent laws accords with a holistic definition of social facts that is in direct line with Durkheimian theories. **The city, just as society, is more than the sum of its parts.** In other words, it is not only a group of districts, but a whole animated by dynamics that can be termed centripetal and centrifugal. The former involve forms of concentration of functions, of activities and residents, the intensification of rhythms ; the latter unfolds extensive forms with less overlapping, greater specialization and higher dispersion. The fact that the two directions are not impervious constitutes the complexity of the urban, as these two opposed forces are constantly at work at all points of its space, a spatial extension having repercussions directly or indirectly at the centre or in the space between, a central saturation bringing about growth at the periphery.

From this point of view, the town can be said to be a living organism. **The different contributions to a sociological and anthropological interpretation of space have thus developed their own vocabulary to account for this specific body by turning to biological terminology and, in particular, to that of "morphology"**, the latter term being perfectly apposite for characterizing the contours of a city perceived as relatively stable. In France, this stability of the urban frame has served Maurice Halbwachs's analyses of collective memory, since the latter could conceive of the permanence of walls and monuments as a durable framework, and, on this account is favoured by the social memory. In the United States, conceptual contributions by various authors belonging to the Chicago School, in particular Robert Park and Ernest Burgess, have systematized the notion of area :

- that of the *natural area* : it has a particular function (of residence, commerce, activities) and groups populations exhibiting a certain social or cultural homogeneity (which does not exclude symbiotic formations with other types of population) ;
- that of the *concentric area* : it expresses the disposition of natural areas in relation to a centre and a periphery. In the first ring is found the zone of economic activities ; in the

second, encircling the former, is a residential area termed zone of transition where diverse aggregations of immigrants are observed, giving form to "ghettos" ; in the third are properties for low-income home ownership where the second generation immigrants find housing ; in the fourth ring, are found zones of suburban low-rise housing where, as social ascent is continued, assimilation to the American way of life takes place, with, in some cases, a possible return to the ghetto.

2. A kinetic view

To these representations, which give preference to a relatively static approach to urban space and which perceive only the residential mobility of the city dwellers, another more recent perception that emerged in the last decades has been added, expressed by a *kinetic view* of this space : this term attempts to account for the diversity of movements which animate cities over extremely diverse lengths of time. They range from daily movements that alternate diurnal and nocturnal rhythms to long-term movements that witness the displacement of residential zones according to perfectly identifiable axes, for example, those of the Parisian upper middle class, or the disappearance of others, as those of the working-class world. These movements include all forms of displacement : motor car and pedestrian traffic, public transport, moving house, creation of districts, establishment of communication routes, appearance of specialized or minority settings or centralities, etc. This changing nature of an urban reality in constant circulation, reconstruction, growth (or decline), constitutes certain aspects of what we have referred to with the term *urban physiology* (Raulin 1999 and 2001), which rounds off the terminological purview relating to morphology. These aspects will be developed in the second part of this text.

B

A CONCRETE PERCEPTION

1. The urban physiognomy

As important as it is to constitute a theoretical framework making it possible to organize the synthesis of spatial dynamics and components, it is just as essential to point out that the town

constitutes a concrete expanse and, to continue the conceptual metaphors relating to the human body, we shall not hesitate here to speak of *urban physiognomy*. In fact, the city presents a face that town planners and sociologists have analyzed in terms of image. This is in particular the case of the contributions by Kevin Lynch (1960) and Raymond Ledrut (1973). The former considered the perception that city dwellers developed of their city in the North American context, where the question of form, of boundaries, of landmarks could be raised with a particular acuity, in view of the generalization of the orthogonal plan and the relatively young age of built-up areas in that continent. The latter took up the analysis in the European context, where the configuration of the prevalent radioconcentric plan seemed to facilitate location in space, as well as the existence of a historic centre and a dense monumental network. It turns out that the evolution peculiar to the last decades in Europe tends to raise this question again because to this visible and legible city has been added an "invisible city", to employ the expression of Jean Remy in a contribution to which we shall turn in the conclusion.

It is nevertheless true that **this question of physiognomy opens onto the affective dimension of the relation of the city dweller to his city**, for it signifies a perceptible and inter-subjective knowledge, in the sense that the city assumes the form of subject in an interaction with the city dweller. The city evolves in time and the emotions to which it gives rise are continually recomposed, while conserving the same tone (love, for example), or turning into its opposite, according to course of events in urban history and the lives of the city dwellers. What is true of the global image is also true of the local image, considered here as the physiognomy of a neighbourhood (Noschis 1984).

1. The symbolism

It appears to be justified to say that this physiognomy is conveyed by a symbolism that makes it possible to "signify" the town by one of its emblematic elements alone : in Paris, this capacity is recognized in the Eiffel Tower, the Sacré-Coeur or in Notre Dame ; in New York, in the Empire State Building or Central Park, the destroyed Twin Towers representing a case with unprecedented impact. But this symbolization can also adopt clearly less imposing media, such as Manneken Piss in Brussels or, in London, the phone boxes or the double-decker buses, the red colour of which has contributed to this fetishization, as the yellow cabs in New York. Lake Geneva, the canals in Amsterdam – just as emblematic - make it possible

to integrate the dimension of the geographic site upon which cities are built with the problematics of physiognomy. In fact, the crossing of a river, the presence of an estuary, like the Saint-Laurent in Quebec or the Tagus in Lisbon, betoken, with monumental bridges connecting it with the other bank, the personality of a city, as does the opening onto a port that extends the city beyond its shore. An irregular topography is a major asset in the accentuation of the urban personality : one must evoke the mythic seven hills of Rome of which numerous cities – Lisbon, Besançon – pride themselves on being topographic replicas, but also the Parisian hillocks, or the hills of San Francisco or Beacon Hill in Boston, etc.

C

A DOUBLE STRATIFICATION

1. Historical styles and social differentiation

One of the highly significant elements in this urban physiognomy is the architectural style of a city, remarkable both in its specificity (one finds one's way about at once according to the buildings in London, Rome, Algiers, etc.) and in its composite layout : different strata of time can be identified therein (as in Paris, the Roman town, the mediaeval, royal, imperial, Haussmannian, Art Déco, modern, etc., city), as well as the various communities living there. Middle-class and workers' districts oppose each other in space as in style and define the interspaces particular to the middle classes, who sometimes imitate the upper categories, in particular through their large utilization of private, semi-private and public spaces, including green spaces, and sometimes appropriate working-class districts that are losing residents so as to benefit from their convivial atmosphere and their sociable places (Chalvon-Demersay 1998).

This approach to the city, by giving prominence to its social morphology, is certainly one of the strong points of French urban sociology which, taking Paris as a time/space laboratory in the mid term (from the mid-twentieth century until today), has been able to make a connection between the evolution of districts and that of stratification. Under the influence of the Chicago School, Maurice Halbwachs, who resided in Paris in the 1930s, then Paul-Henry Chombart de Lauwe, who undertook to apply, but not without a degree of differentiation, the schema of concentric zones to the capital, initiated the movement. From

this followed, through the works of Henri Coing (1966), for example, a remarkable observation of what could be called a *working-class ecology*, that is to say, a way of living in the city, its private and public spaces. Thus, its places of industrial activities and its commercial establishments can be considered as public, but they are, in fact, privatized by the clients whose constancy and regularity of frequentation lead to a form of appropriation of its groceries, cafés, hairdressers and of its formerly very numerous local cinemas. Less disposed than English researchers, in particular Willmott and Young in their remarkable *Family and Kinship in East London* (1957), to work on familial relations in these specific backgrounds, this research evolved toward questions pertaining to forms of social – and specifically working-class – segregation in the urban world, to culminate in a consideration of the question of voluntary and selective aggregation or segregation.

Michel Pinçon and Monique Pinçon-Charlot (1992) were the leading forces in this evolution. From their numerous publications on the theme of the smart districts of Paris, two paradoxical formulations emerge, among others. On the one hand, the extreme effectiveness of this social segregation makes it possible to perpetuate the "among-itself" and thus repulse to its symbolic and real door, because extraneous to its territory, any proximity or promiscuity with social or cultural diversity, with the exception of the domestic staff (Taboada-Léonetti and Guillon 1987) living in symbiosis with it. On the other hand, the threat that the city, as a living organism, brings to bear on these territorialities, although highly capable of defending themselves as they avail of the financial means, social relations and political assets to preserve their integrity, is nevertheless real. This threat is expressed by the extravagant bidding for real estate by luxury businesses or media desirous of appropriating the *spatial label* or symbolic surplus value associated with these bourgeois districts.

2. Urban minority expressions

At the same time, beginning in the 1980s, studies bearing on the ethnic dimension were conducted, or more exactly, on the multi-ethnic dimension of certain areas of large centres of population : Marseilles, Lyon, Montpellier, Toulouse, Paris count among the cities in which diasporas from the Maghreb, South-East Asia or Africa were established and constituted very active districts openly displaying a cultural specialization. The latter is expressed by the origin or particularity of the goods as well as by that of the shopkeepers, and

by the specific *commercial scenographies*, including the décor and the façade of the premises, and in this manner colouring the perception of the cultural styles of the districts. To this must be added, more recently, the staging of festive events serving to strengthen the definition of the districts : this is particularly the case in Little Asia in Paris, situated in the eighth district, which has undergone in the last two decades a spectacular development of the Chinese New Year festival, progressing from a simple collection carried out by two "Lions" among the Asian shopkeepers of the district, in the mid-1980s, to a gigantic associative parade with fancy dress and chariots bearing diverse deities that attracts a public of several thousand persons from throughout Greater Paris and even from abroad. The researchers' attention was focussed on very diversified aspects of the emergence of these new urban phenomena : Alain Tarrius (1992) has underscored the often informal and "underground" character of these economic networks in Marseilles, and Alain Battegay and Michel Rautenberg in Lyon, while Pascale Faure (Faure 1998) has followed the seasonal diasporic movements between Montpellier and Morocco. Jean-Claude Toubon and Khalifa Messamah, Michéle Guillon, Isabelle Taboada-Léonetti, Emmanuel MaMung, Anne Raulin, Patrick Simon, Sophie Bouly de Lesdain and many others have investigated the different multi-ethnic districts of Paris, located in the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth districts. The differences in approach express, among other things, the fact that these researchers come from several disciplines : town planning, sociology, demography, geography and anthropology. Moreover, the specificity of each of the periods under observation must be considered, the evolution of these districts being extremely rapid. Nevertheless, beyond all specific conditions, the analyses do not lose sight of the diversity of components of these new formations and their economic and cultural function in the cities concerned.

D

EXPANSIVE SUBURBS

1. An unprecedented extension

The growth of suburbs constitutes in France the most characteristic urban phenomenon of the twentieth century, absorbing to begin with the industrial development, then three-fourths of the demographic growth, before being surpassed by peri-urbanization and the forms of "metapolization" that blurred the boundaries between the urban and the rural.

The testimony of the social sciences pertaining to this reality is today extremely diverse and includes socio-historical (Fourcaut (ed.) 1998 ; Magri and Topalov (eds.) 1989), sociological, anthropological and linguistic research as well as that relating to the political sciences. At the outset, however, in the years 1960-1970, this research received a prominent contribution that we would like to term "marginal", for several reasons. First, because its author, Colette Pétonnet, openly invoked ethnology and viewed her subject from the perspective of her knowledge of the shantytowns of Morocco, particularly in Casablanca, and of extended field methods characteristic of the discipline of anthropology. Then, because she embarked on the study of housing on the fringe of the city that were destined to short-lived existence, in this case the shantytowns in the Parisian suburbs where an immigrant population from the Iberian peninsula and the Maghreb found quarters and were dispersed and rehoused in so-called "cités de transit", or in suburban areas. This text, notwithstanding a shortened form and its highly specific character, represented a landmark in the urban field and was recently republished in an unabridged version (2002), coinciding with the resurgence of this type of housing in the suburbs of numerous cities today harbouring a Gypsy population. It continues to raise questions for researchers and architects, in particular on the social and spatial capabilities of the migrant populations.

2. Housing estates and incivilities

The sociological approach focussed its attention on the large housing estates, concerned with their characteristic form of residential mobility. Their multi-class composition at the outset (workers, employees and salaried staff) progressively decreased because, particularly in the case of salaried staff, it was a matter of a marking time with a view to rehousing through home ownership that was not foreseen in the large housing estates (Chamboredon and Lemaire 1970). This situation created a vacancy of premises to let and entailed a homogenization of social categories. Today, in the housing developments on the outskirts of large French cities with a high proportion of populations of foreign origin, the question of home ownership of subsidized housing is again raised, as a means of stabilizing the inhabitants and of enabling of their long-term investment in the local life.

The research then followed the rise of the new generation that was born and grew up in these housing developments, badly in need of integration. Works such as those by François Dubet

(1987) on the "galère", a term established by the actors in this difficult condition, constituted a point of departure for numerous studies on youth in the suburbs, according to specificities of gender (on the young girls of North African origin, see Guénif-Souilamas, 2000), their linguistic (2002) and musical practices, which have strongly coloured the entire cultural landscape in France, as well as their internal structure.

Town planning vocabulary and urban speakers

In an article pertaining to "The city through its words", Jean-Charles Depaule and Christian Topalov distinguish "on the one hand, an "administrating" language, the objective of which is organizational and, on the other hand, ordinary, daily ways of speaking. Two polarities to which two types of markers correspond : one which privileges "the relative positions of objects in comparison to each other", and in which "the subject does not intervene in a central manner", the other which on the contrary implies, for the speaker, a negotiation of words according to situations in which he speaks them. From the vocabulary of institutions and actors, planning professionals, politicians and scholars, who understand to legislate in the domain of the words of the city, to the diversely specialized vocabularies of the different categories of the population, there exists at a given time in history in one and the same language a plurality of registers, the discrepancies between which are markers of social distances and indications of conflicts over the assignment of meaning […].

The city dwellers, in their social diversity, are thus confronted with an official terminology that they can adopt or refuse, most often transforming or distorting it. The migrations of the administrative vocabulary in the common speakers are continual and hold many surprises. Between the jargon of the land laws of 1957 that instituted the "zones à urbaniser en priorité" [priority development areas] to "You live in the zup ?" of today, between the vocabulary of the officials of the Works Projects Administration of the American New Deal and "This is not a project" of those who, a half-century later, above all do not want to appear as living in municipal housing, has intervened both a borrowing and a change in meaning. One case that merits attention, in French, is that of the words "zone", "zoner", "zonard", recent transformations of "la zone" [fortifications ; slum area] and "zonier" [dweller in the military zone around Paris, where only hutments and shanties were permitted] which themselves reinterpreted the "zone *non aedificandi*" established in 1841 at the same time as the new surrounding wall of Paris. Other bureaucratic words, for their part, have not imposed themselves and thus remain confined to the spheres in which they were produced : the *boroughs* that divide New York are without doubt only proper names for the inhabitants, the French "districts" or "urban communities" are probably exotic notions for those who live there.

The circulation of vocabulary between the politico-administrative world and that of the technicians and scholars – notably, engineers, statisticians, geographers or sociologists – is also a phenomenon to be explored because, not only does it contribute to producing the words of the city, but it is also indicative of the relations between these orders of practices. In what circumstances do categories of purely administrative origin solidify in "concepts" in disciplines of the social sciences ? Conversely, by what process does the scholarly world sometimes provide the language which will make it possible for the political world and opinion makers to give shape to situations of turmoil in the social order, such as "urban problems" ? "The inner-city problem" in the United States in the 1960s and its later transformations and "le problème des banlieues" in France in the 1980s

and 1990s can also be studied as what they initially are : facts of language" (Depaule and Topalov 1996 : 251-256).

The linguistic creativity of the city thus concerns the scholarly words that designate it, those which reflect and conceptualise it, and the popular words which create it, that is, which create the urban linguistic modes. As regards "zoner", Jean-Pierre Goudailler (2002) points out that this verb today means : to wander, to hang about, to do nothing, and is a synonym of "rouiller" [to rust]. This "contemporary French of the cities" (FCC) integrates linguistic elements from the old popular argot of the trades, Arabic, Berber, various African, Asian and Romany languages, from West Indian Creole, Portuguese, Italian, Yugoslavian, English, etc. It could be qualified as "inter-ethnic lingua franca" by linguists, but its influence largely exceeds the housing estates : owing to its adoption by the whole age group and by the bias of the media, it spreads in all social background in a more or less selective manner. The stigmatized suburbs today play a role as catalyst on this linguistic plane as well as in other cultural domains such as dance (*hip hop*), music (*rap*) or fashions in clothing.

Some of the studies relating to the emergence of a new generational culture in the suburbs have explicitly discussed their relationship with American works, and more particularly with those which, in the framework of the examination of the phenomena of delinquency in Chicago, have elaborated the concept of "subculture", expressing a process of cultural creativity in response to the problems of social and economic disorder. This is in particular the case of David Lepoutre (2001) who, studying the young schoolchildren of La Courneuve, a large housing estate in the Parisian suburb expressively known as "Quatre-Mille logements" [Four Thousand Dwellings], arrived at his reformulation in the French context, terming it "street culture". One of the particularities of this age-group culture, studied in an original manner by Lepoutre, stems from the value attached to the violent behaviours that enter into the "game of face", or of honour, between individuals and that foster agonistic relations between the groups and their respective territories.

Thus, manifestations of an endemic urban violence have appeared in France, encompassing a very broad spectrum, extending from *incivilities* in the common spaces of housing estates to riots setting fire to commercial centres, via aggressions against local police forces, agents of various institutions and teachers. A certain "etatist" specificity of the targets of this violence, making the brawls between gangs a comparatively smaller part, for a long time led one to think of a "French exception" in the matter of urban violence. However, some authors did not fail to identify a form of ethnicization of social relations (Begag and Delorme, 1994 ; Rinaudo, 1999) that others have denounced as a threat to the form of national integration. In the same manner, the debate was pursued for a long time to determine what place to accord to

the term "ghetto" that entered current language, and that of politics, whereas specialists rejected it because of its performative effects and its conceptual impressionism.

Research of a comparative nature was rapidly instituted in an attempt to grasp the particular dynamics in the United States, Great Britain and in France. Sophie Body-Gendrot (2001) has substantially contributed to putting the surprising parallelisms as well as the differences into perspective that at the same time dependent on cultural behaviours, economic contexts and modes of governance. Generally, **the theme of "disorder" or of "insecurity" has become a prominent political issue, the media serving as relay in the staging of the "moral panic" constitutive of this feeling of insecurity**. While in France, the actions against "urban violence", an expression which has no Anglo-American equivalent, are essentially conducted by the State, the police and the law, in the United States and Great Britain inhabitants and enterprises are associated and a certain local autonomy is manifested in this "co-production". On the other hand, the term incivility, used in the United States to designate minor infractions in the public space, has undergone a significant diffusion in France, in particular owing to the works of Sebastien Roché (1998).

It should be observed that this phenomenon of insecurity does not take account of significant differences in terms of the development of the suburbs, realities with radically differing sociological meanings in France and the United States. As several authors have observed, it is the emergence of an "internal enemy" or "intimate enemy" that appears to set the tone of the reactions, and this perception has *a contrario* a part in promoting the signs of an ordered space. Thus, protective walls are delineated that are not outside the city, but within, defining spatial segregations that are intensified (by refusal to allow the establishment in one's neighbourhood of disruptive public services, detoxification hospitals, for example) or asserted, as in the case of *gated cities* or gated communities.

It therefore appears to be impossible, in the framework of a reflection on the urban, to consider a space (understood in its abstract, conceptual meaning), a place or a (concrete) district without situating them in overall relations that considerably surpass them. The latter include the whole of the traditional urban physical frame, as well as its suburban and peri-urban expansion, but they also take into consideration the phenomena of globalization for which the cities are the essential vectors.

E

METROPOLIZATION

Urbanization has led to new spatial configurations. Metropolises of over one million inhabitants give way to "megapolises" that contain ten times as many. This demographic growth is expressed by a double movement of urban sprawl and of the concentration of centres of decision termed *metropolization*.

Saskian Sassen has spoken of *global cities* (1996) and Manuel Castells (1998) of "megacities" to designate this growth of metropolises and their role in the world economy. The cities of New York, Tokyo and London among themselves effectuate financial operations covering all time zones. For Castells (1998), the nascent "informational society" is expressed in space by the passage of a space of places to a space of flows. The globalization at work creates **new polarities** that, for the most, are foreign to the European-North American space. They are added to older centres or substituted for them. Metropolization is not reducible to an expansion of existing centres, it "presupposes the intense connection of a plurality of cities and localities, the development of which becomes interdependent" (Remy, *in* Bonnet and Desjeux (eds.) 2000 : 179). These spatial configurations are expressed by geographic discontinuity. In the specialized literature, the metaphors to describe them are multiplying. **One speaks of urban nebula, archipelago, of exploded or network cities, or of "metapolises".** Flows and networks link disjunct spatial unities. Mobility therefore plays an important role in these urban reconstructions.

Metropolization and mobility thus appear among the themes that today dominate the field of urban sociology. The latter is concerned both with emergent spatial configurations and with mobilites based on the place of residence. Geography, town planning, economy and anthropology are involved in the discussions centred on these themes.

In an assessment devoted to *Issues in Urban Sociology*, Michel Bassand, Vincent Kaufmann and Dominique Joye (2001) consider that "the passage from the regime of the city to that of metropolises does not entail the end of the cities, but takes the form of a reduction of their spatial and temporal scales". New polarities come to light under the impulse of planners, or "spontaneously", and are added to the existing centres. The new towns or the original

thematic centres (la Défense business district, immigrant centralities) are illustrations of this. These centres are involved in the construction of the city as a whole, even if they are sometimes located outside its walls. Ernest Burgess, of whom we spoke earlier, was one of the first to visualize the city in its suburban and peri-urban environment. The "concentric zones" were thus linked by the residential trajectories of their inhabitants.

In the 1960s, urban expansion brought forth discourses on the "end of the cities". The excrescent and under-equipped suburbs weigh on the inner cities. In the same period, in France, the master plan for development and town planning of the Paris region approved of the creation of several new towns. **The construction of these towns illustrates a possible intertwining of old villages with the more recent urban units.** The new towns were inspired by the *garden cities* developed according to the principles of the Englishman Ebenezer Howard and underwent variations according to country. In France, they are located in continuity with the rest of the built-up area. For the town planner Pierre Merlin, their creation must enable of a "slackening of activities from the centre to the periphery to contribute to the reduction of journeys to work (commuting)" (1991), something they would more or less succeed in doing. These formations must "constitute veritable towns", which implies the presence of a centre, of green spaces, of recreational infrastructures, etc. They have also made it possible to augment the university centres (for example, Villeneuve-d'Ascq near Lille or Cergy-Pontoise in the vicinity of Paris) or again leisure centres (Marne-la-Vallée).

Thus, the establishment of the new town of Marne-la-Vallée creates a hub of activities in the east of the Île-de-France. The Euro Disney theme park benefits from the touristic attraction of the capital and taps flows from all over France and from abroad. Paris remains a reference, which is evident in the buildings of Haussmanian inspiration in the "quartier de la gare" of Marne-la-Vallée. The creation of the new town has modified the landscape that today includes both housing estates of the firm Kaufmann and Broad and farm buildings in the local "Brie tradition". The commercial centre of Val d'Europe is the second major focus of attraction in the town, along with Euro Disney. It is located near a transport node in the town centre which, for the designers, constitutes a town planning stake in the new formations of this type. According to the surveys conducted by the Écomusée of Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, the perception the inhabitants have of this town is limited to its centre, that is, to a group of businesses and services (for example, the theatre).

F

THE MULTIPLICATION OF ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL CENTRES

There are centres of lesser importance in the city or alongside it : this is the case of la Défense business district in Paris. La Défense is a creation of the planners that rises at the old city gates around Paris at the intersection of three communes (Nanterre, Puteaux and Courbevoie). This centre, which officially came up in 1958, attempts to respond to the demand for offices that is made on the capital. Historically, its existence is inscribed in a breach and a continuity : a breach with the working-class suburbs in which the site was established, and a continuity with the shifting of activities from the centre of the capital toward the west of Paris. The CNIT [national centre for technical industries], the shopping centre “Les 4 temps” and the Arche de la Défense contribute to the reputation of the locality. La Défense remains strongly dominated by the regular flows of employees who, from the lower ground floor where the métro, the RER (metropolitan and regional rail system) and the car parks are located, proceed to their work places in the tower blocks. A commerce and financial centre, it brings together a number of head offices and business headquarters that send forth quantities of information and financial flows and which are linked to other centres, in France and elsewhere. It is a centre of power, but mainly of economic power. The “out-of-centre centre” is defined by opposition to the historic city core, where some businesses have kept their headquarters, and to a less prestigious, but also less costly periphery. It is in these relations that the spatial identity is defined.

These interactions are also manifested in the emergence of unplanned areas : those of the Parisian bourgeoisie studied by Michel Pinçon and Monique Pinçon-Charlot have thus been gradually displaced under the pressure of companies and businesses wishing to benefit from the prestige associated with them (1992). La Défense, a state project, is located in the continuation of this shift toward the west, following a historic axis put in place since the century of Louis XIV.

These areas connected with productive activity are sometimes very mobile. The *start ups* born of the “new economy” invaded the Sentier district, before gradually disappearing as the investors no longer placed great hopes in these breeding-grounds of business. The

concentration of activities in a demarcated perimeter attracts subsidiary services (such as restaurants) that take part in the creation of areas having a strong cultural function for specific groups. This is the case of the "immigrant centralities", also termed "minority centralities", of which it was a question above. These urban concentrations contain so-called ethnic shops, places of worship or of cultural consumption, offering the image of a "homogeneous" district that contrasts with the diversity of origins of the shopkeepers, the regular customers and the occupational patterns of the places. **These centres are spaces of the confluence of flows, of goods and of groups that are assimilated in a set of networks linking disjunct places.** Their role in the construction of territories can be considered from several points of view : Alain Tarrius (1992) regards them as poles in "circulatory territories" that link the North African shops of the Belsunce district in Marseilles to a network that extends beyond the seas ; the term "minority centrality" expresses, on the contrary, a form of multicultural sedentary lifestyle that contributes to the definition of the "world city" or cosmopolitan city (2000).

These localities with very different characters (La Défense, the "Golden Triangle" and the "minority centralities") and with specific functions and elaborations nevertheless constitute a general movement of renewal of the centres and of the functional specialization of spaces. They crystallize the most contradictory sentiments, which explains the attraction or repulsion they exert.

The presence of public transport networks favours their appearance, in distinction to the "peripheral centralities" which are located along the major roads and make it necessary to own a car. In the course of the 1960s, the "Courte Paille" and "Buffalo Grill" restaurants appeared in France along the roads, that is, in spaces which, at first glance, are spaces of transition. By the same token, the landscape at the entrance to cities is henceforth marked by the presence of shopping centres created on the model of the North American malls. **These commercial structures are involved in the diffusion of a model of mobility that borrows a number of its referents from the United States**.

Evolution of urban time according to country

The development of a way of life dissociating places of residence and workplaces, increasing the "time constraints", adopting a culture of the car and of frequenting of commercial and recreational centres outside the city began in the 1920s in the United States. This movement began to spread in the years 1930-1940 to Quebec and only asserted itself in Europe in the years 1960-1970, before becoming widespread in France in the last

decades. This did not take place without causing a reduction of the work value, as noted by Gilles Pronovost (*in* Pronovost and Mercure (eds.), 1989 : 50-51).

"In their first *Middletown*, which appeared in 1929, the authors devoted a few chapters to work, one of which deals with work "that has a long arm" and another is in the form of the question "Why work so hard ?" ; mentioned are the long days […] and the repercussions of night work, or so-called rotating schedule, on family and community life ; for, it is observed that the pre-crisis period marks the beginning of quasi physical "decentration" regarding the place of work, that is, an increasingly clear distance, the transport means helping, between [this] place and the other places of activity (family life, leisure and religion) ; another consideration raised by the team of anthropologists is what would be called today the presence of an increasingly "instrumental" significance of work, a decline, as they write, of the "psychological satisfaction" [which is] associated [with it].

It is not certain that the movement was as rapid in Quebec ; on the strength of our research in progress, we propose the hypothesis that, during the period of widespread industrialization, particularly prior to the crisis, work ethics and the sentiment of belonging to the enterprise were without doubt dominant. The observations made by the Lynds would only be able to be applied from the decades of 1930 and 1940, subject, of course, to more extensive research.

It is however only a question of an aspect of the changes between working time and time outside work. The interwar period was also very rich as far as the development of mass culture and organized leisure is concerned. Returning to *Middletown*, the new media, for example, are considered there, particularly popular newspapers and radio, cinema, the importance of the car, the development of associative life, the first holidays, new sports, the construction of parks, stadia, swimming pools, etc."

In France, this evolution "à l'américaine" – which saw, in the 1990s, the establishment of the Disneyland Resort thirty kilometres from Paris – is reinforced by a development in of the reduction of working time through paid holidays, the shorter work week and the involvement of the State and local authorities in the implementation of sports and cultural facilities.

Urban centres are characterized by an integration of political, economic and commercial functions that are set against the specialized character of spaces of supply in outlying zones. Some are open to all and sundry, but their access is reserved to those who avail of the cultural and social means to appropriate them ; others rest on a logic of closure, but remain symbolically more accessible. The urban centre "is, in the beginning, the place from which power is exercized and the group is unified" (Remy and Voyé, 1981), while Marc Augé (1992) has described the commercial centres as "non-places", not being subject to any prior appropriation. Finally, researchers have made punctual reference to the role occupied by stations (railway, métro, RER, etc.) in the structuration of territories of particular groups. The centralities of transport become urban centralities.

G

TRANSPORT AND "MOVEMENT PLACES"

The interest of historians in transport networks and stations has been renewed in the last years, with the publication of diverse research devoted to the formation of suburbs. The works by Annie Fourcaut (1988) or Susanna Magri and Christian Topalov (1989) contain several contributions pertaining to their role in the localization of industrial activity or of housing, ways of life connected with daily movements of workers. But it is above all on the scale of the city and its outskirts that the role of networks in the structuration of space has been considered. Historians and then sociologists (Joseph (ed.) 1999) have therefore been interested in the urban integration of stations. Historically, the latter are assimilated with an entrance to the city, and their monumental architecture is its showcase. They are a succession of enclosures (it was only in 1973 that platform tickets were eliminated in France) that one endeavours to control by restricting the intrusion of undesirables. Little by little they opened to the outside and became a "piece of the city". The historian Georges Ribeill (1996) observed that the stations have become in one century "a multifunctional public place, open to activities and flows unconnected with the railway activity properly speaking, places of refuge for undesirables, presenting thus an extreme contrast to the rigorous, technical and policed order that imbued its original conception". Places of passage, the stations become stopovers where one has something to eat, makes purchases, etc. This consideration extends to "poles of exchange" in general, which includes the métro. Georges Amar (1996) coined the concept of "**movement place**" to designate this **fixed place intended for all types of mobility**, as well as that of "complex of urban exchanges" (COEUR), which illustrates both its vital character and its "hydraulic" dimension as a flow pump. These two concepts have been widely taken up and disseminated in works concerned with this subject. With the métro, the role of transport networks in spatial structuration extends to the underground levels that are historically devoted to the circulation of fluids (water and gas). The circulation of flows of travellers underground decongests the public road network on the surface and makes it possible to respond to a lack of space. Thus, **the urban space appears to be drawn out in two opposite directions : one toward the heights, attained with skyscrapers ; the other, underground, where the transport networks, as well as commercial enclaves, find room**.

Other than these questions of morphology and flow, research approaches the subject of the relations that prevail in these places. In France, Isaac Joseph calls for a reversal of the approach that consists in seeing the streets as a continuation of the networks of railway lines and emphasizes "the public character of the transport space as a continuation of the street" (1999). The stations are then a privileged laboratory for the study of urban life and public spaces. Ulf Hannerz (1983) was one of the first to describe "traffic relations" as "typically urban" and to underscore the interest to be accorded them.

The nature of relations entered into during a trip reopens the question of transport time that, since the 1970s, has been of interest in the sociology of work and sustained the problematics of the time budget. "Shuttling", or occupational commuting is therefore a focus of attention : to the length of the working day is added journey time. It proves to be necessary to consider all practices and interactions during a trip, whatever the reason for it : transport time is a form of passage from one domain and from one role to another.

H

MOBILITIES AND TEMPORALITIES

1. Trajectories and residences

The observed spatial discontinuity is accompanied by a desynchronization of social times. A kinetic view replaces a morphological view of space. To employ the expression of François Ascher (*in* Bonnet and Desjeux (eds.) 2000), the "temporal configuration" of the industrial town was marked by the regularity of working time, while that of the urban tends toward a diversification of rhythms. The daily territories become more complex. To account for this reality, new terms appear. Thus, the "Provinciliens" live outside the city and at the same time work in Paris, or conversely. The "ways of living" offer a source for fruitful reflection on current urban evolutions.

Residential trajectories are coupled with mobilities within an enlarged space. Multi-residence is spreading in society (Bonnin and de Villanova (eds.) 1999). The works by Jean-Didier Urbain (2002) on the notions associated with leisure spaces and holidays show that the "country house" is an "alternative home" far from the turmoil of the cities and seaside or ski

resorts. Initially reserved for an elite, the ownership of a country house is becoming more democratic, marking a new relation to this space and to housing. This territorial anchorage is no longer "secondary".

The relations maintained between town and country are in the midst of recomposition. What remains of the nineteenth-century utopia that would have it that new towns were "towns in the country" ? Today, the greater part of the working population who live in rural areas have a non-agricultural job. The boundaries separating the rural and urban worlds are becoming blurred. The geographers of the journal *Villes en parallèle*, but also historians and sociologists, are interested in forms of housing, suburban low-rise or subsidized, in their relations to spaces. The interest of researchers has recently shifted toward the study of the spatial practices based on the place of residence. **The present, in fact, is marked by frequent movements over extended areas, based on a strong, or even multiple, residential anchorage.** Daily mobility, starting from the place of residence, is therefore an alternative to moving house.

2. The problematics of inequalities

The current evolutions call for an interrogation of the near and the far, henceforth defined more by accessibility than by contiguity. For Alain Bourdin (2000), alongside the neighbourhood and the logic of physical contiguity appears the "urban site". It is developed from an activity or a service, such as a station or a shopping centre ; it is then transformed into a complex whole in which diversified and derived activities multiply, until reaching a point of coalescence which gives the site its identity. This notion reinstates an interpretation sensitive to the urban setting in which different scales of proximity combine, those of pedestrians or passers-by, those of residents, those of the working population or users, which can vary from one location to another in a balanced manner.

The consideration of inequalities is therefore concerned with the accessibility of the territories and infrastructures. These inequalities are measured by distance to the networks. Thus, the territorial separation between the zones of employment and the settlement areas, the *spatial dismatch*, restricts the access of the poorest to employment. The connection of territories is not a simple matter of infrastructures. Mobility is a social competence, which explains that it would be more frequent for the categories on the higher rungs of the social ladder. Residential

mobility, as an indicator of social mobility, is added to the "reversible" mobilities, starting from the place of residence. The authors, however, note the difficulty in interpreting these practices in an unequivocal manner. Thus, "a positive mobility for a privileged group can change into precariousness for underprivileged groups" (Bonnet and Desjeux (eds.) 2000) . The poorest do not benefit from an attractive wage to compensate for the transport costs and the distance that separates their place of residence from the workplace.

The question of accessibility is involved in the debate on urban violence. For Michel Wieviorka (1999), the tariff policy of public transport puts the most destitute under house arrest or forces them to journey without paying, that is, consigns them to a form of criminality.

3. The desynchronization of social times

The territories covered in daily life extend in space, but also in time. The desynchronization of social times brings about a lengthening of the hours of activity. Work and school are no longer the major regulators of temporality. In Italy, France and elsewhere, "time bureaux" centralize information pertaining to rhythms and schedules of city dwellers (residents, administrations, urban services and businesses). The need to display the opening hours of urban services is called for as much to respond to a diversification of time worked as to an increase in mobilities connected with leisure activities. Jean-Paul Bailly and Édith Heurgon (2001) describe the case of the town of Saint-Denis, which has several centralities, each living in different rhythms and channelling flows from diverse origins. The sequences in the daily lives of the inhabitants (work, leisure, day nurseries, businesses) are added to those caused by the basilica located in the city centre, or by the Stade de France, which draws up to 80 000 spectators, the market toward which converge up to 70 000 persons on Sundays, or by the Pleyel business area, which concentrates 13 000 employees, without taking into account the presence of the University of Paris VIII.

This diversity of rhythms contributes to an urban theatricality that makes the city a focus of attraction. At night, territories shift and the business districts empty, to the advantage of the animated quarters that are most often located in the centre. These are daily, weekly or yearly rhythms. They are also connected with festive cycles, religious or not, some of which recall the heterogeneity of the city. "Gangs" of tourists, marshalled according to age-

group, roam up and down the city streets, which themselves become the aim of visits ; others cross them from end to end on roller blades, appropriating them in a sportive manner.

Conclusion

The question of temporalities is becoming more and more invasive : one is moving toward hitherto uncharted conceptualizations of space/time. But the question of spatial definitions remains central. It is observed that the notion of area – already inflected in several ways by the Chicago School – is today being adapted in diverse contexts. It henceforth occurs in the vocabulary of the INSEE [national institute of statistics and economic studies] (to the detriment of the notion of zone as earlier used, for example : Zone de Peuplement Industriel ou Urbain [zone of industrial or urban settlement]), which today adopts the term "Aire Urbaine" [urban area] to define a space comprising the flows and movements of its population.

This question of spatial definition is also to be found in original formulations such as that coined by Jean Remy : the "areolar network" describes the forms of contemporary development that spread by patches interconnected with each other. These areolae (or small areas) designate the nodes of exchange and "sites" that are both discontinuous and interconnected, constituting a raster in which the city is reconstructed in the classic, physical meaning of the term. These two urban dynamics "maintain regular and reciprocal relations. The concept of city finds its relevance within this conjunction. The relations between the visible and the invisible cities are modified by new modes of mobility. On the one hand, it must be recognized that the potentialities of the invisible city are growing ; on the other hand, the visible city continues to be relevant, even if it must undergo a metamorphosis" (2002 : 305). This conception appears to be satisfying to the extent that it makes it possible to integrate the profound changes that the urban is today undergoing, changes which seem to lead to its negation, with the permanence of an old form urbanity. The latter is experiencing a revival within the walls of the city, but it begins to be exported (or imported) in a specific manner in the areolae, through a new configuration of public and private, individual and collective spaces.

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